

NEXTGEN Tourism

Skills for Tourism Business Succession

Your guide to
**The research-
based
Competence
Framework for
succession
readiness in
tourism SMEs**



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1.1 About Us

Next GEN Tourism is an Erasmus+ KA220-VET cooperation project running from **November 2025 to October 2027**. Coordinated by the **University of Akureyri**, the partnership brings together six organisations from **Iceland, Austria, Slovenia, Ireland, and Germany**. Together, we combine expertise from higher education, vocational education and training, business support, and digital development to help tourism SMEs prepare for sustainable ownership and leadership transitions. Our shared goal is to equip VET educators and tourism businesses with practical, research-based tools that strengthen business continuity, succession planning, and long-term resilience.

Tourism in Europe depends heavily on small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), many of which are family-owned and deeply rooted in local communities. Yet succession remains a major challenge. Many tourism SMEs are not sufficiently prepared, which puts business continuity, jobs, local know-how, and regional resilience at risk. At

the same time, vocational education (VET) and training providers often lack dedicated resources to implement practical, sector-specific succession planning.

Next GEN Tourism responds to this challenge by developing a **Tourism Succession Readiness Competence Framework**, a modular curriculum, educational resources, a digital assessment application, and a knowledge hub. The project is designed to help VET educators, SMEs, and business support actors better understand the competences needed for successful succession in tourism businesses.

Through research, focus groups, expert consultation, testing, and co-creation, the project aims to strengthen VET capacity, improve succession literacy, and support more structured and sustainable transitions in tourism SMEs across Europe.



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á Akureyri
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of Akureyri

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SRCA SLOVENIJE

DEVELOPMENT CENTRE
OF THE HEART OF SLOVENIA

Razvojni Center Srca Slovenije
(Slovenia)

momentum
[educate + innovate]

Momentum Marketing Services
(Ireland)

gairmeach
TRAINING

Gairmeach Training (Ireland)

1.2 Key terms used in this Framework

Some terms in succession planning can overlap. This glossary provides short explanations to support clear understanding, especially for non-native English speakers, SME owners and trainers using the curriculum in different contexts.

- 1. Succession readiness:** The extent to which a business, owner and successor are prepared for a future ownership or leadership transition.
- 2. Ownership transfer:** The process of transferring legal ownership or control of the business to a successor, buyer, family member, employee or another party.
- 3. Leadership transition:** The gradual handover of leadership roles, responsibilities, decision-making and authority from the current leader to the successor.
- 4. Governance:** The way decisions, responsibilities and rules are organised in the business, including who has authority to decide what.
- 5. Business continuity:** The ability of the business to continue operating successfully during and after transition, without major disruption to staff, customers, finances or operations.
- 6. Valuation:** The process of estimating the financial value of a business. This may include assets, income, profit, market position, goodwill, debt and future potential.
- 7. Stakeholder relationships:** Important relationships with people and organisations connected to the business, such as family members, employees, customers, suppliers, advisors, local communities, tourism organisations and destination partners.
- 8. ESG:** Environmental, Social and Governance factors. In this curriculum, ESG refers to practical actions that support responsible, sustainable and well-managed tourism businesses.
- 9. Digital transition:** The handover, update or improvement of digital systems and online assets, such as websites, booking platforms, social media accounts, customer databases, online reviews and digital tools.

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Next GEN Tourism Framework
Development and Validation

- 2.1 Background & Rationale
- 2.2 Objectives of the Competence Framework
- 2.3 Competence Framework Development and Validation
- 2.4 Learning Pathway: From the Competence Framework to the Curriculum
- 2.5 Target Groups & Beneficiaries

2.1 Background & Rationale

Despite their crucial contribution to local and regional economies, over 60% of European tourism SMEs lack a formal succession plan. Without structured succession strategies and effective knowledge transfer, these businesses become highly vulnerable when owners retire.

Targeted resources, digital tools and well-designed learning solutions can make a real difference to how ready small and medium-sized enterprises are to manage succession. Practical instruments such as interactive self-assessments, blended learning programs and structured online mentoring offer accessible guidance and genuine, real-world support at exactly the moments when ownership and leadership change hands.

This matters a great deal in European tourism, where SMEs make up more than ninety per cent of all businesses (European Commission, 2023) and form the backbone of employment, regional development and local cultural identity. Many of them are family-owned, and it is these firms that face the sharpest succession challenges. Without proper preparation and a clear plan for the transition, otherwise healthy businesses can end up closing, taking jobs and regional stability with them in areas that depend heavily on tourism.

Vocational Education and Training is well placed to close this gap, because it sits directly between the worlds of education and enterprise. In practice, however, few VET providers currently offer training built specifically around SME succession. As a result, owners and their potential successors are often left underprepared for the strategic, legal and managerial demands of handing a business on. Strengthening VET curricula with succession-focused content is therefore essential if SMEs are to remain sustainable over the long term.

“60% of European tourism SMEs lack a formal succession plan”

The Next GEN Tourism initiative responds directly to this need by equipping VET educators with tailored tools and methods that support effective succession planning in tourism SMEs. In doing so, by protecting business continuity, retaining skilled staff and reinforcing regional economic resilience, the project supports wider European priorities and contributes to a more sustainable and competitive future for the sector.

2.2 Objectives of the NextGen Tourism Framework

The framework defines the core knowledge areas, practical methodologies, and proven best practices required for effective business transfer. By providing a clear and structured model, it will enable VET providers to deliver targeted training that equips SMEs with robust succession planning strategies.

The Next GEN Tourism Framework sets out the core competences needed to support successful succession in tourism SMEs. It identifies the knowledge, skills and strategic capacities that owners and successors require in order to approach the handover in a structured and sustainable way.

The framework rests on a solid research base and draws in particular on the three-circle model of ownership, family and business (Tagiuri & Davis, 1996). This foundation was then tested against practice through expert consultation and sector-specific examples, so that it reflects the day-to-day realities and pressures faced by tourism enterprises.

Building on this foundation, a modular and practice-oriented curriculum helps VET educators turn these competences into actual teaching. It is designed to work across different settings, whether in the classroom, in hybrid formats or through self-paced study, and it includes applied learning elements throughout to keep the material grounded in real situations.

The framework is closely aligned with the wider aims of the project, namely strengthening the capacity of VET to respond to the labour-market needs of the tourism sector across Europe. In doing so, it encourages structured succession planning in SMEs while keeping inclusion, accessibility and equal opportunity firmly in view for the full range of owners and successors it seeks to reach.

“60% of European tourism SMEs lack a formal succession plan”



2.3 Competence Framework Development and Validation

The Next GEN Tourism Competence Framework was developed through an iterative and evidence-based process combining desk research, focus groups, expert consultation, internal partner review, and pilot testing.

The development process started with a literature review and desk research on tourism succession, family business transition, SME resilience, entrepreneurial leadership and business continuity. This provided the theoretical foundation for the initial competence model.

To ensure practical relevance, focus groups were conducted in Austria, Iceland, and Slovenia with tourism SMEs, VET providers, and succession experts. These discussions highlighted that succession in tourism SMEs extends far beyond ownership transfer and is strongly shaped by leadership transition, intergenerational relationships, organisational continuity, customer trust, and changing market conditions.

Based on these insights, the initial competence model was refined and expanded. Additional

emphasis was placed on areas such as Intergenerational Transition & Relationships, Leadership Transition & Organisational Continuity, and Marketing & Branding to better reflect the realities of succession in family-owned tourism businesses.

The framework was subsequently reviewed and validated through expert consultation and internal partner feedback. Finally, pilot testing with VET educators, tourism SMEs, and other relevant stakeholders was conducted to assess the framework's clarity, relevance, practicality, and applicability for future educational and support activities.

The resulting framework therefore represents a combination of academic evidence, practitioner insights, and international stakeholder validation across partner countries.

2.3 Competence Framework Development and Validation

The framework includes seven individual components:



2.4 Learning Pathway: From the Competence Framework to the Curriculum

All resources developed under the framework are grounded in **structured co-creation processes and continuous expert engagement**, forming the foundation of both the competence framework and the associated curriculum.

01. Framework Foundation

The foundation of the framework is validated through the formal completion of the competence framework and curriculum, structured stakeholder consultation and pilot testing, and high levels of approval regarding relevance, usability, and applicability among VET educators and tourism SMEs.

02. Curriculum

The curriculum builds directly on the competence framework, translating its defined competences into practical, application-oriented training resources. It includes modular course materials, lesson plans, case studies, and structured learning pathways. The curriculum went through an internal quality review and user testing, with regional partners piloting the materials among VET educators and SMEs to ensure relevance, clarity, and usability in real training contexts.

03. Training Resources

The training resources integrate tourism-specific succession knowledge, interactive tools, real-life case studies, scenario-based learning, and hands-on exercises adaptable to in-person, hybrid, and self-directed formats. By providing coherent, actionable content, the project enhances educators’ ability to deliver targeted, impactful support to tourism SMEs.

The following table presents the **links between the competence framework and the curriculum structure**, demonstrating how individual competence areas are operationalized through the training modules.

Alignment of Competence Areas and Curriculum Modules	
Leadership Transition & Organizational Continuity	Module 1 & 4
Ownership Transfer, Governance & Control	Module 1, 2 & 3
Strategic Direction, Sustainability & Business Renewal	Module 2
Financial Planning & Risk Management	Module 6
Tourism Ecosystems, Market Context & External Pressures	Module 1 & 5
Inter-generational Transition & Relationships	Module 1 & 5
Marketing & Branding	Module 4 & 7

2.4 Learning Pathway: From the Competence Framework to the Curriculum

The Competence Framework provides the foundation for the curriculum, the four transition phases structure the learning process, and the seven modules translate this into practical training. Case studies, tools, the assessment application and the Knowledge Hub support practical application.



The pathway can be followed as a full learning journey or used selectively.

2.5 Profile of Target Groups and Beneficiaries

The **Next GEN Competence Framework** is designed as an open and adaptable resource, structured to respond to the diverse learning and transition needs of tourism SMEs and their successors. It enables the personalization of learning pathways, acknowledging that succession readiness requirements vary according to socio-economic background, educational level, business origin and ownership structure, enterprise size and performance, as well as strategic growth or continuity ambitions.

Target groups and beneficiaries include:

- **Primary users**
VET educators, trainers, tourism SME support organisations, business advisors, entrepreneurship and adult education providers, and HEI actors.
- **Wider stakeholders**
Chambers of commerce, development agencies, tourism organisations, policymakers, succession specialists and local communities benefiting from business continuity and regional stability.
- **Final beneficiaries**
Tourism SME owners/managers, family business successors, external and first-time successors, employees, rural business owners, women entrepreneurs and tourism communities.



3. Research findings

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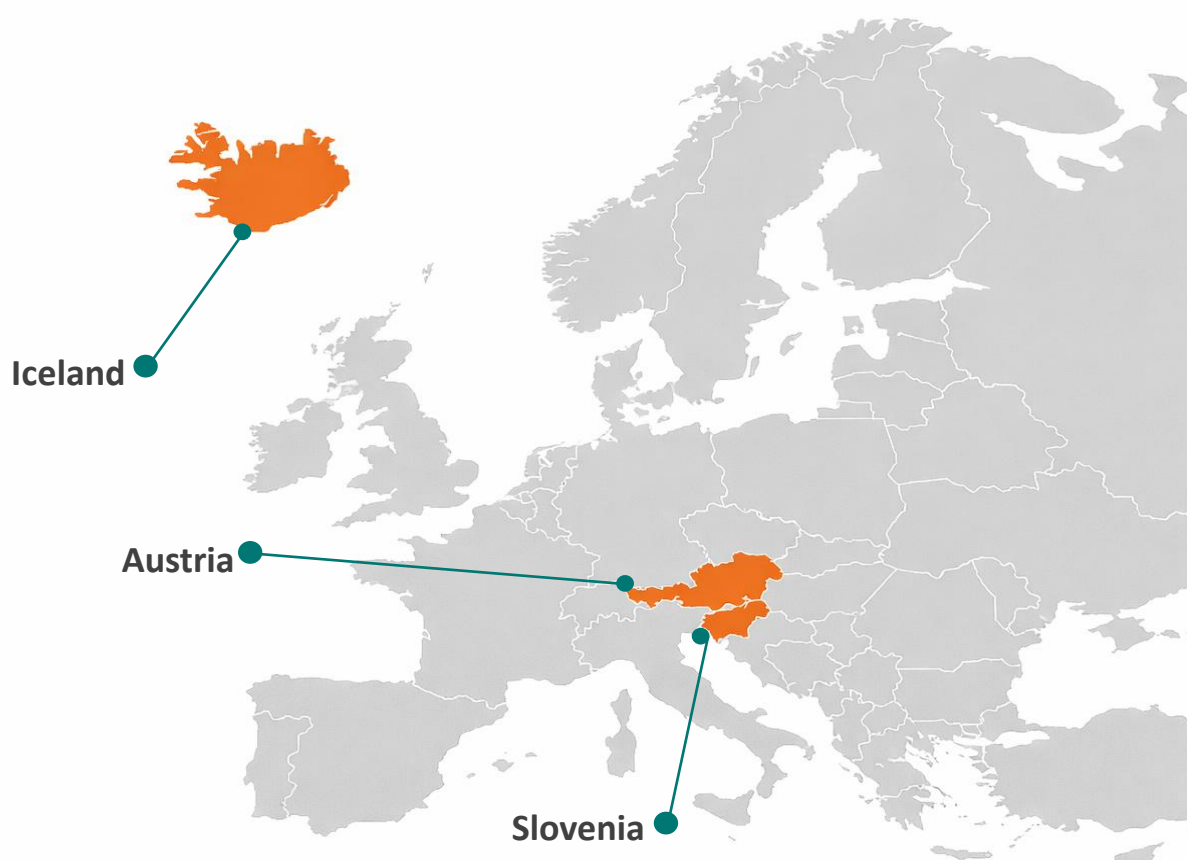
Skills for Tourism Business Succession

- 3.1 Country Profiles and Key Findings
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3.1 Country Profiles & Key Findings

Austria, Iceland, and Slovenia were selected as empirical cases for the **focus group study** within the Next GEN Tourism project. Together, they represent three distinct tourism and business contexts within Europe. **Austria** reflects a mature Alpine tourism economy with a strong tradition of family-run hospitality businesses. **Iceland** represents a highly dynamic, internationally exposed tourism market dominated by small firms and shaped by rapid growth, seasonality, and founder-led entrepreneurship. **Slovenia** provides a smaller but diverse destination context in which tourism SMEs operate in a mix of regional and family-business

environments. Comparing these settings allows the project to examine how succession is shaped by **different market conditions, institutional frameworks, and business cultures**. The country profiles that follow draw on policy reports and statistical data and provide the contextual basis for interpreting the focus-group findings and developing the Competence Framework, Curriculum, and Assessment Tool.



3.1.1 Country Profile Austria

Tourism and Family Business Environment

Austria is one of **Europe's most tourism-intensive economies**, sitting at the heart of the continent with a well-developed tourism infrastructure and a rich mix of natural and cultural attractions. In 2025 Austrian tourism reached an **all-time high**, with around **157 million overnight stays** and some **48 million guest arrivals**, a result that points to continued growth and sustained international demand. Most of these overnight stays came from foreign visitors, and **Germany remained by far the most important source market** (Statistik Austria, 2026; Austria National Tourism Office, 2026).

Tourism remains **central to the Austrian economy**. In 2024 the sector generated substantial economic output: direct and indirect tourism value-added is estimated at **66.8 billion euros**, with employment effects of **more than 311,000 full-time equivalents**, or roughly **7.6 per cent of total employment** (Chamber of Commerce, 2025).

The Austrian tourism landscape is made up of a wide range of enterprises, **most of them small and medium-sized**. Sector statistics record **73,174 accommodation establishments** in the 2024/25 tourism year, offering **over 1.2 million guest beds** across the country (Statistik Austria, 2026). Taken together with gastronomy and related services, the broader tourism and leisure industry comprises tens of thousands of businesses and forms **a significant part of Austria's SME base**.

This mirrors the economy as a whole, where **SMEs account for 99.7 per cent of all enterprises** and employ a large share of the workforce, underlining just how dominant **small-scale, family-oriented business models** are in the Austrian market (KMU Forschung Austria, 2024). Within tourism in particular, **many accommodation providers, restaurants and service businesses are family-owned**, especially outside the larger cities, and in that role they contribute both to regional identity and to local employment.

Taken together, this strong and high-quality tourism performance, the high share of SMEs and a business environment shaped by family ownership provide **an important backdrop for understanding the succession challenges and competence needs** that face Austria's tourism family businesses.

3.1.2 Country Profile Slovenia

Tourism and Family Business Environment

Slovenia represents a small but **well-established Central European tourism destination** with a diversified structure including Alpine, spa, cultural and nature-based tourism. According to the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia (2024), the **country recorded approximately 6.5 million tourist arrivals and around 16.8 million overnight stays in 2023.**

Tourism plays a significant role in the Slovenian economy. According to the latest Tourism Satellite Account data, tourism direct **GDP amounted to EUR 3,333 million in 2023 (5.2% of total GDP)**, while total GDP generated by tourism consumption, including indirect effects, reached EUR 5,478 million (8.6% of GDP) (Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, 2023). The sector contributes substantially to regional employment and is particularly important in rural, Alpine, and spa regions.

The Slovenian economy is strongly SME-dominated. **Small and medium-sized enterprises account for more than 99% of all enterprises** and represent a significant share of employment and value added (OECD, 2023). This structural characteristic is reflected in the tourism sector, where accommodation providers, hospitality firms, and tourism service businesses are predominantly small-scale and locally embedded. **Family involvement in ownership and management is common within Slovenian SMEs**, particularly outside major urban centers. While precise statistical data on the share of family-owned tourism firms is limited, the broader enterprise structure suggests a business environment characterized by closely held ownership and intergenerational continuity.

Slovenia reflects an established tourism trajectory with institutionalized governance structures and long-standing hospitality traditions (Slovenian Tourism Board, 2025). At the same time, Slovenian tourism SMEs face structural challenges related to digital transformation, professionalization, and generational transition within family-owned enterprises.

3.1.2 Country Profile Iceland

Tourism and Family Business Environment

Iceland has become **one of the most tourism-intensive economies in Europe** in recent years, particularly in terms of visitor numbers relative to population size. In 2024, the country **welcomed just under 2.3 million international visitors**, a figure that far exceeds the domestic population of around 390,000 people (Ferðamálastofa – Iceland Tourist Board, 2024). Tourism's direct contribution to **national gross domestic product (GDP) was estimated at 8.7 %** in 2024 (Statistics Iceland, 2025).

Employment data indicate that around **34,800 people worked in tourism-related industries in mid-2025**, showing the sector's continued importance for the Icelandic labor market (Statistics Iceland, 2025).

Although tourism has existed in Iceland for several decades, the sector experienced **particularly rapid expansion after 2010**, driven by increased international air connectivity and intensified destination marketing efforts (Iceland Tourist Board, 2024). A considerable number of tourism enterprises were established during this period of accelerated growth. This suggests a comparatively young ownership and organizational structure relative to more mature European tourism economies.

The **Icelandic business landscape is predominantly composed of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)**, which account for a high share of firms across the economy (OECD, 2023). In the tourism sector specifically, most accommodation providers, service operators and tour businesses are small in scale, founder-led and locally embedded. While precise data on the share of family-owned tourism firms are limited, the broader SME dominance suggests a business environment where micro and small enterprises play a central role in employment, innovation and regional development.

The relatively recent expansion of the tourism sector implies distinct developmental challenges compared to long-established multi-generational tourism destinations. Rather than focusing primarily on succession within entrenched family traditions, many Icelandic tourism businesses face questions related to organizational consolidation, governance formalization and the prospective transition from founder-led to second-generation management.

3.1 Country Profiles & Key Findings

The table below summarizes key **tourism and economic indicators** for the three countries under study. It provides a concise overview of the **scale** and **economic relevance** of tourism as well as the importance of SMEs in each national context.

Indicator	Austria	Iceland	Slovenia
Tourist Arrivals	48 million (2025)	2.3 million (2025)	6.5 million (2023)
Overnights Stays	157 million (2025)	10.16 million (2025)	16.8 million (2023)
Tourism Value added/GDP Contribution	€66.8 billion direct & indirect tourism value added (2023), 6.2% of GDP	8.7% of GDP (2024)	€3.33 billion direct tourism GDP (5.2%); €5.48 billion incl. indirect (8.6%)
Tourism Employment	311,000 FTE (7.6% of total employment)	35,000 jobs (September 2025)	Not specified in Statistics
SME Share in economy	99.7% of enterprises	SME-dominated economy	> 99% of enterprises

Note: Definitions differ by country. Austria and Slovenia report guest arrivals in accommodation; Iceland reports foreign overnight visitors/passenger departures. Figures are therefore indicative country profiles, not strictly identical measures.

3.1 Country Profiles & Key Findings

The comparison below synthesizes the **key contextual insights** across the three selected countries. It highlights how **structural characteristics** of the tourism sector and the **family business environment** shape succession challenges and influence the competencies required for successful transitions.

Austria	Iceland	Slovenia
• Highly developed and institutionalised tourism system • Tourism contributes significantly to GDP and employment • Strong regional embedding of SMEs in accommodation and hospitality • Long-standing tourism traditions and established governance structures • Family-owned and owner-managed SMEs play a central role in regional tourism economies	• Tourism-intensive economy with rapid expansion after 2010 • High international visitor-to-population ratio • SME-driven and entrepreneur-led tourism landscape • Comparatively young organisational and ownership structures • Many tourism businesses remain founder-led with emerging intergenerational transition dynamics	• Diversified tourism portfolio Tourism economically relevant at national and regional level • SME-dominated enterprise structure • Tourism development supported by national governance and strategic planning frameworks • Closely held ownership structures and family involvement are common within SMEs

3.2 Focus Group: Main Themes and Discoveries

The aim of conducting focus group discussions across the selected countries was to capture **qualitative in-depth insights** from tourism SMEs, VET providers, and succession experts on **generational transition processes in family-owned businesses**.

Three focus groups were organized in Austria, Slovenia, and Iceland with a total of **15 participants** (Austria: 6, Slovenia: 6, Iceland: 3). Participants represented **different perspectives within the succession process**, including SME owners and entrepreneurs, members of the succeeding as well as of the transferring generation, VET providers, and consultants supporting family business transitions.

The discussions addressed **current succession practices, implementation barriers, and perceived competence gaps** within the tourism SME environment.

The **semi-structured focus group guideline** was conceptually anchored in the project's **preliminary competence framework**, which provided the thematic structure for the discussions and ensured **cross-country alignment**. The qualitative insights generated in the focus groups subsequently served as **iterative input for validating and refining the framework**. The graph below presents the initial version of the competence framework that informed the focus group design.



3.2 Focus Group: Main Themes and Discoveries

The focus group discussions began with an open, general exchange to capture participants' perspectives on succession in tourism SMEs. The **introductory question** aimed to identify **perceived challenges, emerging concerns, and contextual factors** shaping generational transition processes.

What key challenges do you envision in regards to succession of tourism SMEs?

Across the three countries, the focus group discussions highlighted distinct but related challenges shaping succession processes in tourism SMEs. In Austria, participants emphasized **intergenerational tensions** arising from divergent values, expectations, and leadership styles, often accompanied by authority- and power-related conflicts during leadership transitions. A strong **emotional attachment on the part of transferors** to both the business and their professional role frequently complicates the process of letting go. At the same time, succession tends to be approached through formal structures, contracts, and procedural planning, while **emotional preparation and relational dynamics receive less attention**. The **lack of safe and moderated dialogue spaces** further limits open communication and the constructive discussion of sensitive transition-related issues.

In Iceland, succession challenges are strongly shaped by **structural pressures** within a rapidly evolving tourism environment. **Persistent staffing shortages** create operational constraints that limit time and organizational capacity for structured succession planning.

Increasing market acceleration and **rising competence expectations** for successors add further pressure, while growing **public scrutiny** requires tourism businesses to continuously justify their societal and economic role. Participants also highlighted policy instability and shifting political priorities, which undermine long-term planning and reinforce compressed decision-making processes.

In Slovenia, discussions pointed to **delayed initiation of succession processes** as a central concern, often reducing opportunities for gradual learning and strategic preparation. **Trust deficits** between generations were frequently mentioned as **barriers to open communication** and leadership transfer. In addition, succession processes tend to **prioritize legal, financial, or technical aspects**, while **relational and leadership dimensions remain underdeveloped**. Participants further stressed the challenge of **managing heterogeneous successor profiles**, as differences in experience, motivation and readiness complicate structured development pathways.

3.2 Focus Group: Main Themes and Discoveries

Across all countries, succession in tourism SMEs is constrained by **time pressure** and **limited organisational capacity**, **intergenerational tensions** and **trust issues**, and **strong contextual uncertainty** related to markets, policy, and public discourse.

What key challenges do you envision in regards to succession of tourism SMEs?

Austria	Iceland	Slovenia
• Intergenerational Tensions • ‘Letting Go’ on the Transferor Side • Overemphasis on Structure and Formalization • Lack of Safe and Moderated Dialogue Spaces • Gap Between Knowledge and Leadership Practice	• Staffing constraints • Market acceleration and visibility pressure • Overemphasis on Structure and Formalization • Legitimacy pressure and public scrutiny • Time pressure	• Delayed preparation • Trust deficits between generations • Over-technical succession approaches • One-size-fits-all models • Managing heterogeneity

3.2 Focus Group: Main Themes and Discoveries

Following the exploration of succession-related challenges, the discussion shifted towards **identifying key competencies** required for **successful succession in tourism SMEs**. The exchange focused on capabilities considered essential for managing leadership transition and supporting sustainable business development across generations.

What competences are important in regards to succession of tourism SMEs?

The focus group discussions brought out both **shared and country-specific competence needs** for managing succession in tourism SMEs. In **Austria**, participants placed strong emphasis on **social and emotional competences** such as empathy, good communication, resilience and self-reflection, seeing these as the real foundation for a successful handover of leadership. They gave particular weight to the **relational side of leadership**, meaning the ability to manage relationships across generations, deal with conflict and handle the shift in authority from the outgoing to the incoming generation. **Strategic thinking was closely tied to emotional intelligence**, since long-term planning only works when role changes are also handled with sensitivity. **Learning and development** mattered a great deal too, above all learning by doing, mentoring and a genuine openness to keep growing, while ownership, financial and tourism-specific knowledge were regarded as **the structural basis that makes everything else possible**.

In **Iceland**, the focus fell on **learning through practice and handing over responsibility step by step**. Participants pointed to **mentoring, job shadowing and hands-on experience** as the main ways to prepare a successor. They saw **early, forward-looking planning** as essential, so

that succession can be treated as a long-term process even when day-to-day operational pressure is high. Beyond that, **the ability to adapt to changing markets, digitalization and AI** became especially relevant. **Governance and coordination**, in particular working together with external advisors, were also stressed as important for dealing with the legal and organizational complexity of fast-moving tourism markets.

In **Slovenia**, succession was seen above all as a **strategic and relational process** that needs a long-term outlook and **trust built up between the generations**. Participants underlined the value of **context-sensitive competences** that let each succession path be shaped around the specific business, the family and the destination it belongs to. Once again, **learning by doing and being gradually drawn into real responsibilities** stood out as central to development. **Mentoring relationships and the good use of external advisors** were seen as important sources of support, especially when leadership is being transferred and lines of authority are still shifting. **Structural competences** covering ownership, finance, ESG considerations and tourism expertise were viewed as the supportive foundation that keeps a business stable over the long term.

3.2 Focus Group: Main Themes and Discoveries

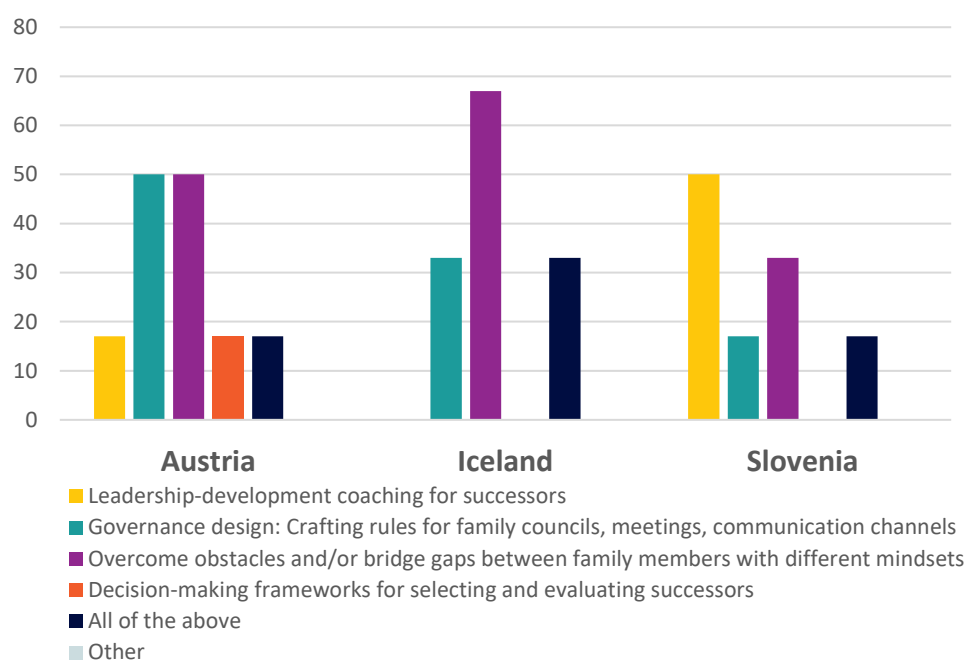
Across all countries, effective succession in tourism SMEs was closely **linked to early and practice-based preparation, strong emotional, relational and leadership competences, and trust between generations**. Participants also highlighted the importance of **context-sensitive** and **long-term strategic thinking** to ensure sustainable business continuity.



Austria	Iceland	Slovenia
• Social & Emotional Competences • Leadership & Relational Competences • Strategic-emotional Leadership Competence • Learning & Development Competences • Structural enabling competences	• Practice-based learning competence • Early & anticipatory planning competence • Adaptive market & digital competence • Governance & coordination competence • Context-sensitive career navigation competence	• Strategic competence • Relational competence • Contextual competence • Practice-based learning competence • Leadership transfer competence • Structural stability competences (supportive)

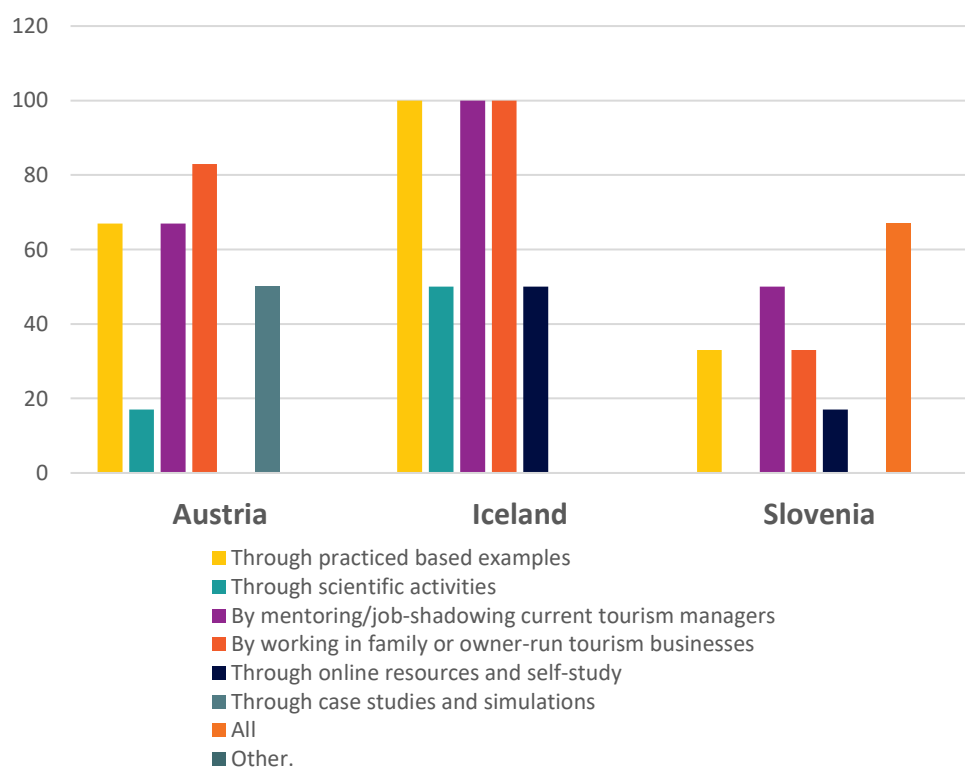
3.2.1 Leadership Transition

Which knowledge & skills are important for Leadership Transition?



Relational and governance competencies dominate across countries: Austria emphasizes governance design and bridging family mindset gaps, reflecting the importance of trust and clarity amid sibling ownership risks. Iceland prioritizes conflict management and coordinating specialists due to fragmented ownership, while Slovenia focuses more on leadership coaching and expert coordination in its legally complex, episodic succession process.

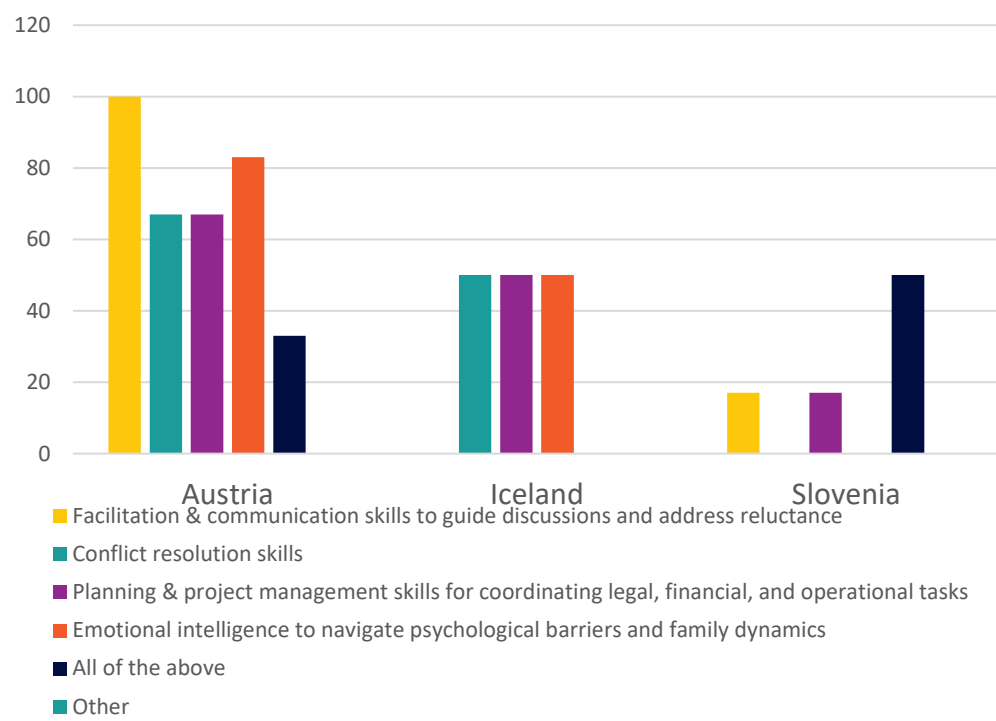
How to develop this knowledge & these skills?



Experiential learning is the main pathway: Austria relies on working in family businesses, mentoring, and case-based learning to build relational readiness. Iceland and Slovenia emphasize mentoring and direct operational experience, supporting stronger communication, conflict management, and collaboration with legal, tax, and governance experts.

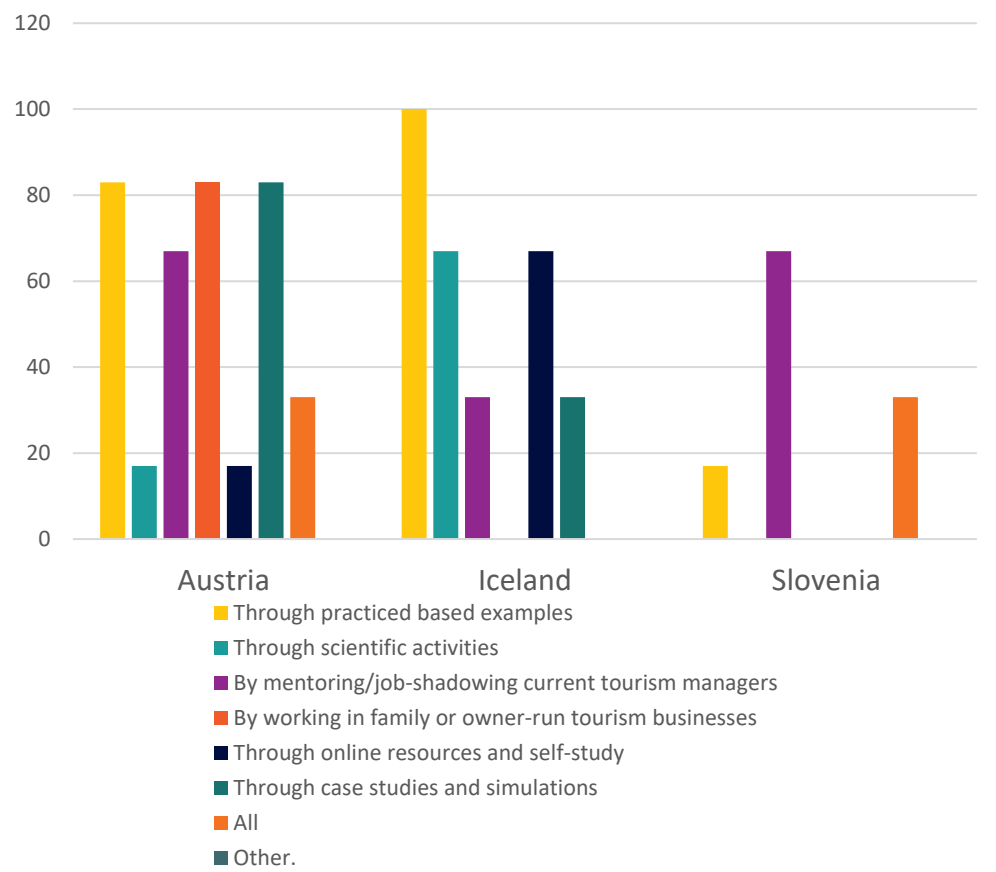
3.2.2 Ownership Transition

Which knowledge & skills are important for Ownership Transition?



Relational competences dominate ownership transition across countries. Austria strongly emphasizes facilitation, communication and emotional intelligence to manage family dynamics. Iceland shows a balanced emphasis on conflict resolution, planning and relational skills, while Slovenia highlights the need for integrated competence profiles combining multiple leadership and management capabilities.

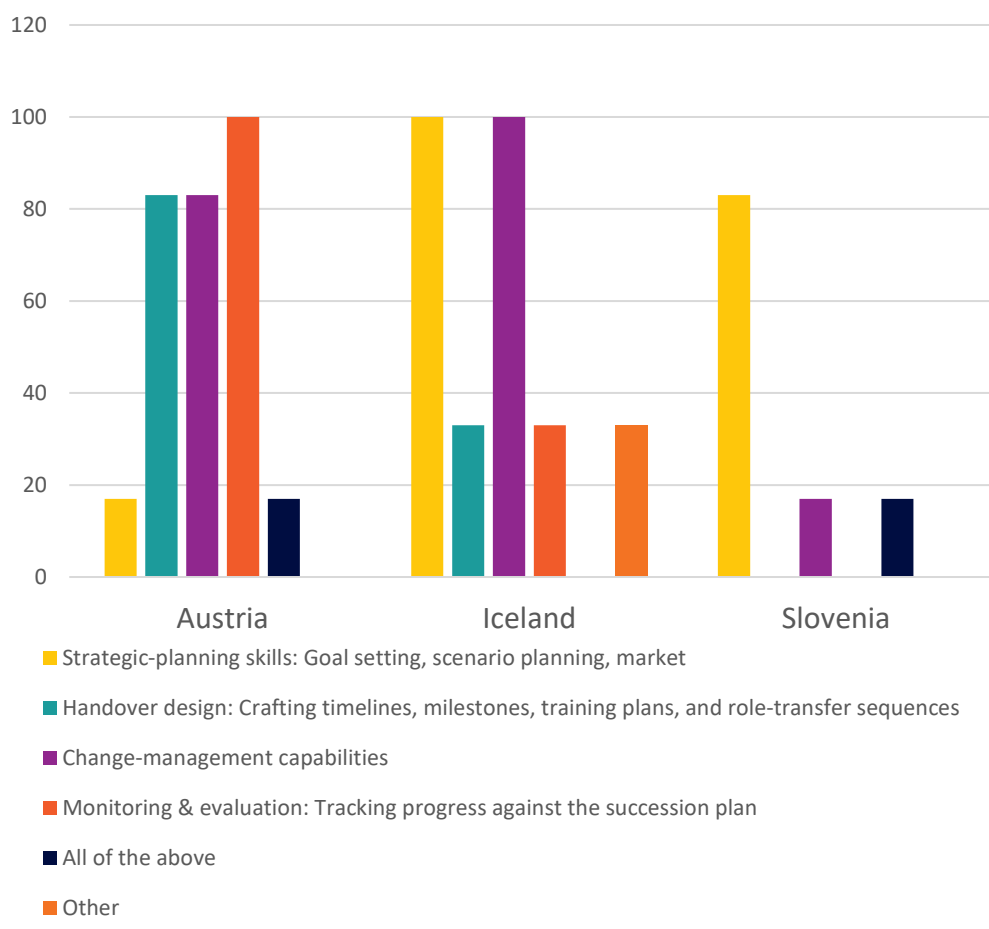
How to develop this knowledge & these skills?



Practice-based learning emerges as the key driver of competence development across countries: Austria emphasizes applied learning, real business exposure and case-based learning environments that support relational and managerial readiness. Iceland and Slovenia rely more strongly on mentoring, job shadowing and hands-on operational involvement, enabling successors to gradually develop leadership capabilities and navigate the practical complexities of ownership transition..

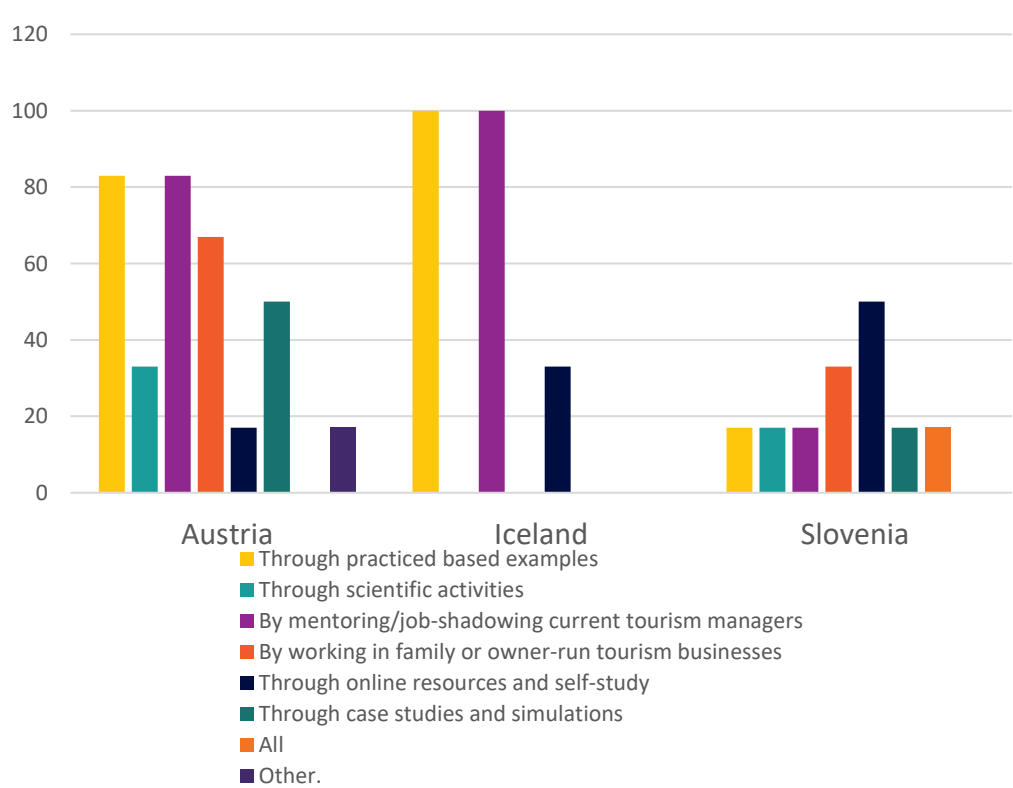
3.2.3 Strategic Planning

Which knowledge & skills are important for Strategic Planning?



Strategic planning competences emerge as a central requirement across countries, though with different emphases. Iceland and Slovenia strongly prioritize core strategic-planning skills such as goal setting and scenario development, highlighting the importance of long-term orientation in succession processes. Austria places greater emphasis on handover design, change management and monitoring, reflecting a stronger focus on structuring and managing the transition itself.

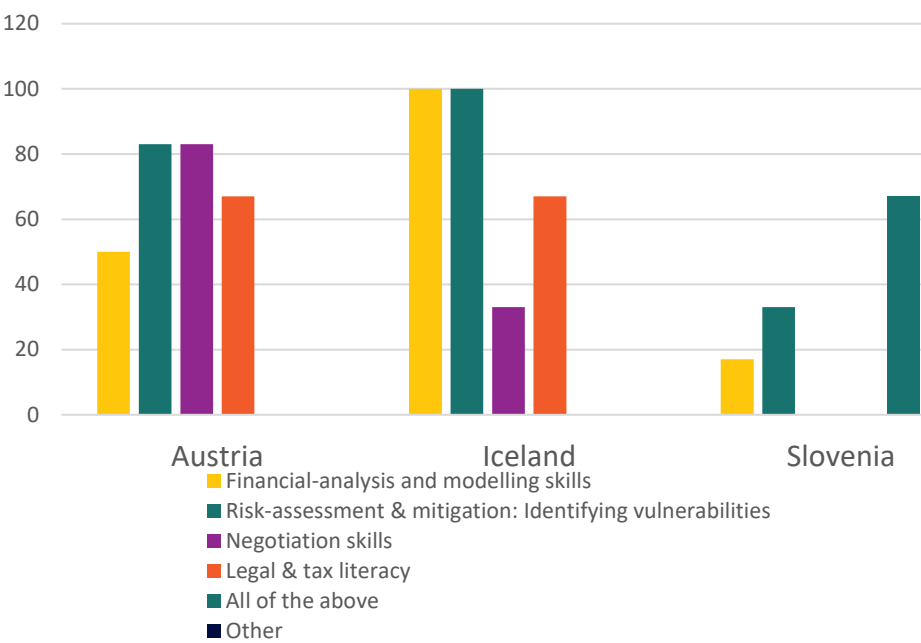
How to develop this knowledge & these skills?



Mentoring and practice-based learning emerge as the dominant approaches to competence development across countries. Austria combines mentoring, practical examples and direct involvement in family businesses to support learning in real succession contexts. Iceland places the strongest emphasis on mentoring and hands-on operational experience, highlighting gradual responsibility transfer. Slovenia shows a more diversified approach, with greater relevance of online learning and combined development formats alongside practical experience.

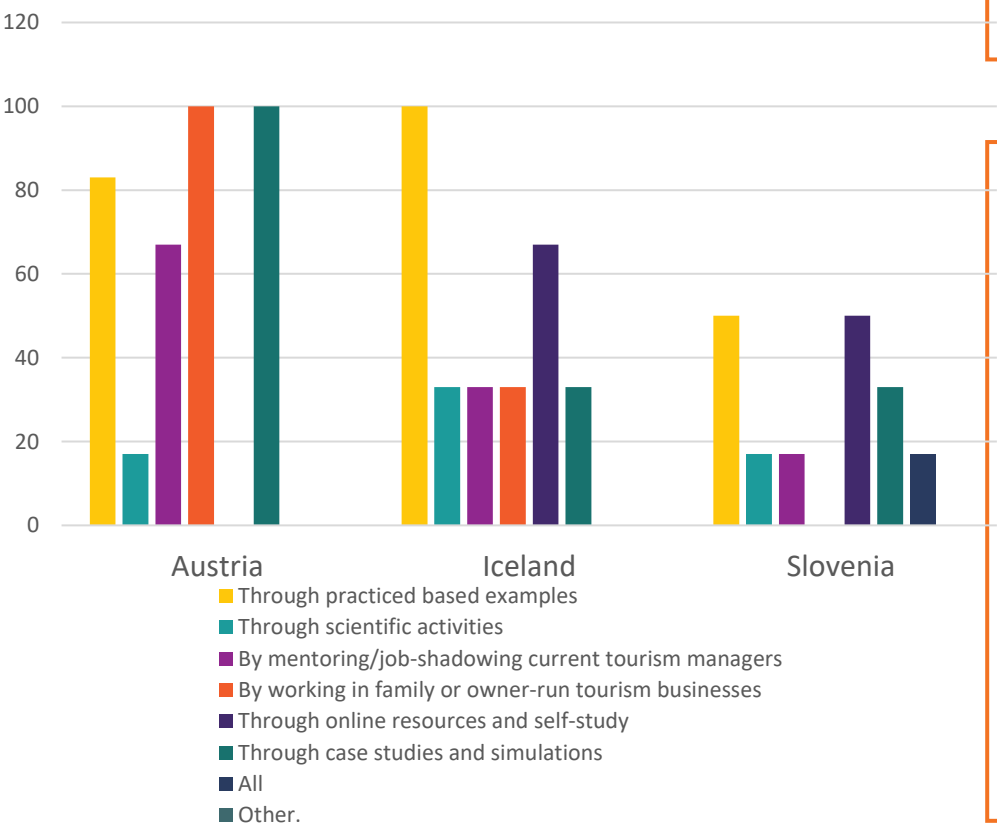
3.2.4 Financial Planning & Risk Management

Which knowledge & skills are important for:
Financial Planning & Risk Management?



Risk assessment and financial literacy emerge as the most important competences across countries. Austria emphasizes risk identification and negotiation skills alongside legal and tax knowledge, reflecting the complexity of ownership arrangements. Iceland places strongest emphasis on financial analysis and risk mitigation capabilities, highlighting the need for structured financial decision-making. In Slovenia, risk awareness dominates, indicating a stronger focus on managing uncertainty and ensuring financial stability.

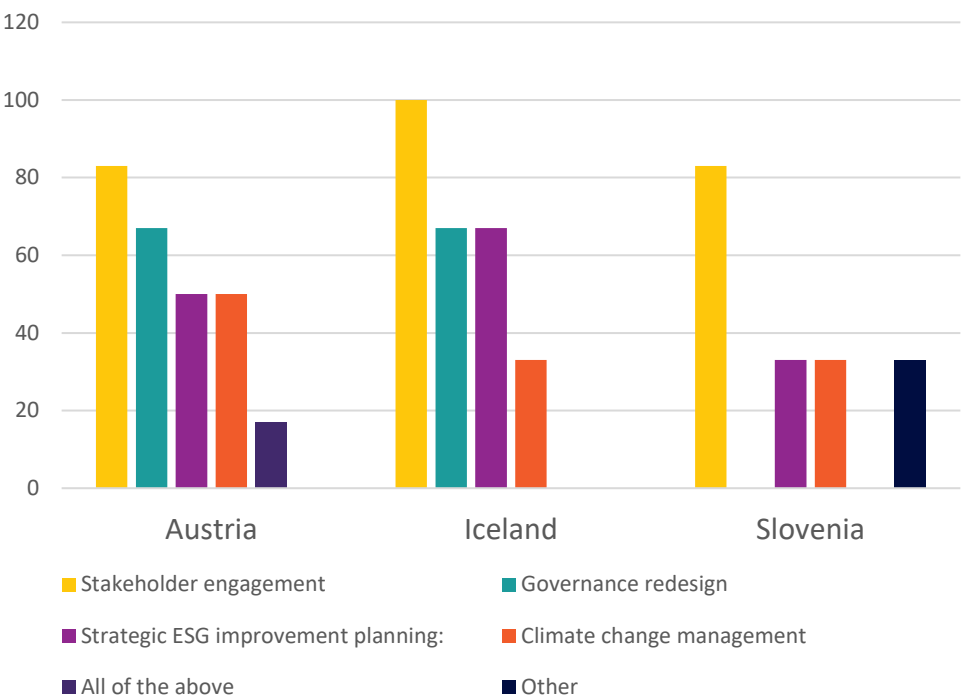
How to develop this knowledge & these skills?



Practice-based learning dominates competence development across countries: Austria emphasizes learning through real involvement in family businesses and practical examples. Iceland combines practice-based learning with mentoring and self-directed learning, while Slovenia shows a more balanced mix of practical experience and online learning approaches.

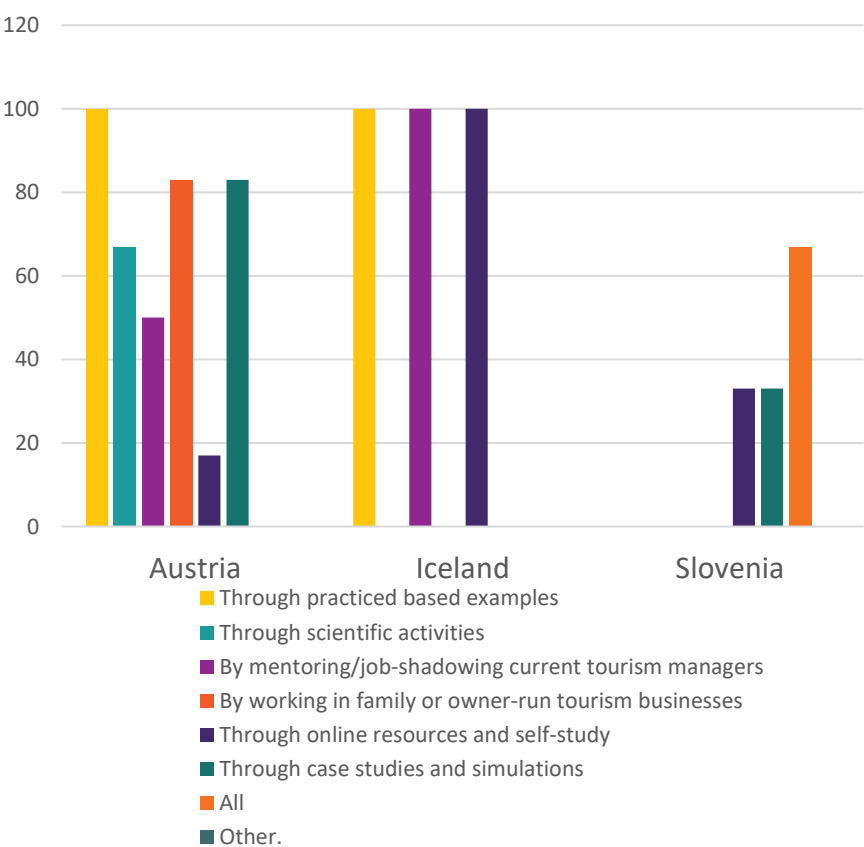
3.2.5 ESG in Tourism Transition

Which knowledge & skills are important for ESG in succession?



Stakeholder engagement emerges as the most important ESG-related competence across countries. Austria and Iceland combine stakeholder involvement with governance redesign and strategic ESG planning, reflecting a broader integration of sustainability into succession processes. In Slovenia, stakeholder engagement clearly dominates, while strategic ESG planning and climate-related management play a supporting role.

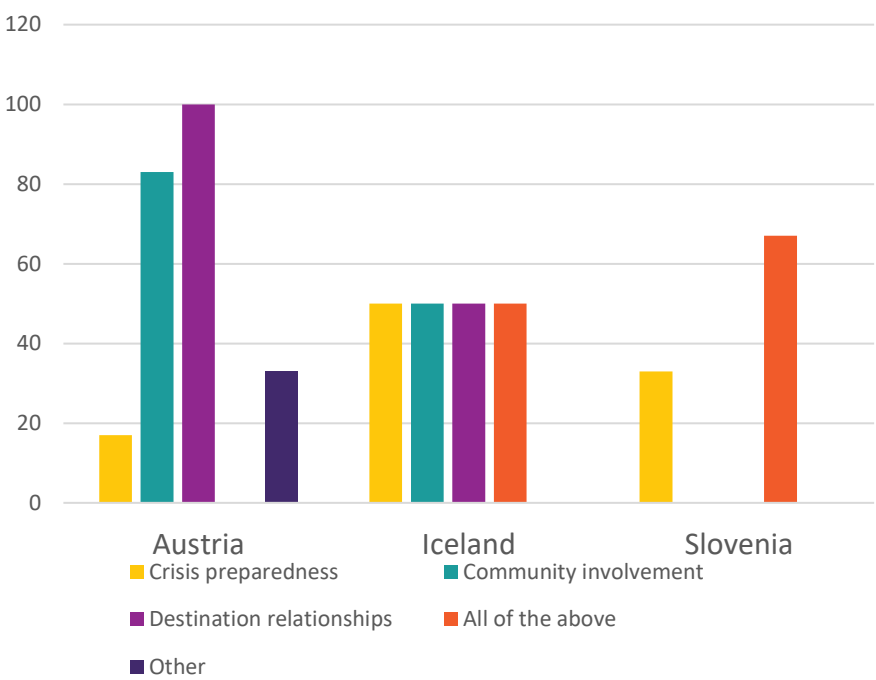
How to develop this knowledge & these skills?



Practice-oriented learning approaches remains also central for developing ESG-related competences. In Austria, competence development is strongly linked to real business involvement, practical examples and case-based learning formats. Iceland combines practice-based learning with mentoring and self-directed learning approaches. In Slovenia, hands-on experience within family businesses and combined learning formats play a more prominent role in strengthening ESG-related capabilities.

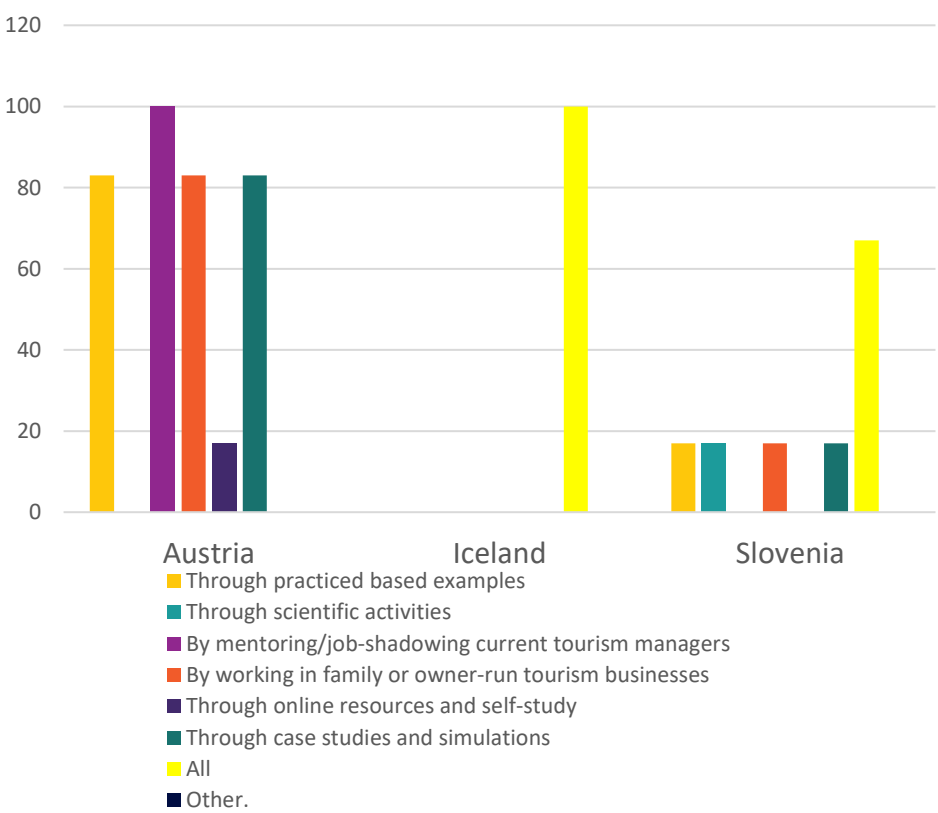
3.2.6 Tourism-specific Aspects

Which knowledge & skills are important for for Tourism-specific aspects?



Tourism-specific competences show different priorities across countries. In Austria, destination relationships and community involvement are considered particularly important, highlighting the strong regional embeddedness of tourism businesses. Iceland shows a balanced emphasis across competence areas, suggesting a broad skill set is required to manage tourism-specific challenges. In Slovenia, integrated competences combining multiple tourism-related aspects gain greater relevance, alongside crisis preparedness.

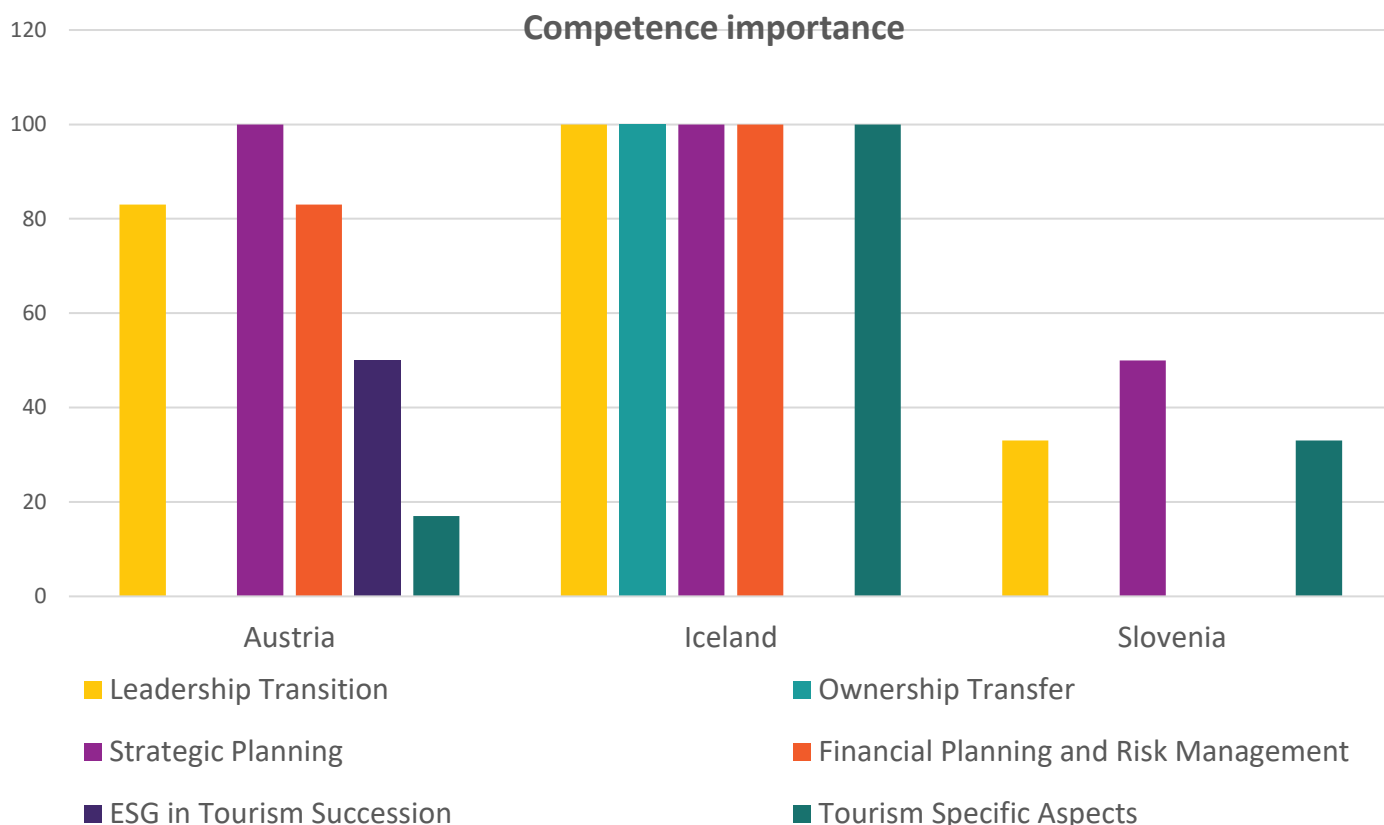
How to develop this knowledge & these skills?



Competence development in tourism-specific areas is largely shaped by learning in real business contexts: Austria shows a strong emphasis on mentoring and job shadowing, supported by practical examples, work-based learning and case-based approaches. In Iceland, competence development is primarily associated with a combination of multiple learning methods. Slovenia similarly highlights integrated learning approaches, complemented by smaller contributions from individual development formats.

3.2 Focus Group: Main Themes and Discoveries V

Which competences do you see as most relevant?



The **overall comparison** summarizes the key patterns emerging from the focus group discussions across countries. Participants consistently emphasized that succession in tourism SMEs requires a **combination of competences** rather than a single dominant skill area, particularly linking leadership transition, ownership transfer, strategic planning and financial management.

In Austria, participants placed greater emphasis on **strategic planning, leadership transition and financial risk management**, highlighting the importance of structured preparation and governance during ownership transfer. In Iceland,

discussions reflected a strongly holistic perspective, with **all competence areas considered equally relevant** for managing succession processes. In Slovenia, the discussions particularly stressed **strategic orientation** as a guiding competence, while other areas were perceived as complementary elements supporting long-term transition processes.

Overall, the focus groups underline that succession is understood as a **complex and multidimensional process**, requiring the integration of strategic, managerial and relational competences to ensure continuity and resilience in family-owned tourism SMEs.

3.2 Focus Group: Main Themes and Discoveries

Where do you see the role of VET providers in supporting succession readiness in tourism SMEs?

Across the focus groups, **VET providers** were identified as **key actors** in supporting succession-readiness in tourism SMEs. Participants emphasized their role in **connecting theory with practical business realities**, **facilitating intergenerational dialogue**, and **strengthening leadership** and **relational competencies**. While Austria highlighted **safe learning spaces** and moderated exchange, Iceland stressed **flexible, practice-oriented learning formats** and mentoring structures adapted to SME needs. Overall, VET providers are expected to move beyond traditional training roles and support **experiential learning** and long-term succession preparation.

Austria	Iceland	Slovenia
• Translators between theory and lived business reality • Providers of conflict, communication, and resilience training • Facilitators of mentoring, peer exchange, and moderated dialogue • Designers of safe learning spaces for both generations • Contributors to emotional preparedness, not only competence acquisition	• Short, modular, practice-oriented courses aligned with seasonal constraints • Focus on financial literacy, core business skills, and strategic market understanding • Translate theory into SME-relevant tools • Enable mentoring, peer learning, and trusted advisors • Support successors and incumbents (governance, trust, letting go) • Offer stable learning structures beyond policy cycles	• Translators between theory and practice • Facilitators of mentoring and ecosystem connections • Providers of legal, financial, and strategic literacy • Designers of modular, flexible learning paths • Educators not only of successors, but also of incumbents (letting go, trust, governance)

3.3 Implications for Next GEN Tourism Framework

Building on what emerged from the focus group discussions, the initial competence model was **further refined and expanded**. Participants repeatedly made clear that succession in tourism SMEs is shaped above all by the **relational and emotional dynamics between generations**. For that reason, **Intergenerational Transition & Relationships** was added as a distinct competence area, so that the framework properly reflects the importance of building trust, communicating well and managing the **Leadership Transition & Organizational Continuity** that a handover involves.

In the same spirit, **leadership and staff transition** was written in explicitly, to recognize

that a successful succession is about far more than transferring ownership: it also depends on **governance and control**, and on preparing and aligning employees and organisational structures. On top of this, **branding and marketing competences** were included, because participants stressed the need to keep pace with fast-changing market conditions and the wider **Tourism Ecosystems, Market Context & External Pressures** that long-term succession planning has to account for.

The revised **Next GEN Tourism Framework** shown below therefore brings together **seven interconnected competence areas**, a structure that reflects the many dimensions at play in succession within family-owned tourism SMEs.



4. Competence Framework Overview

NEXTGEN Tourism

Skills for Tourism Business Succession

4.1 Introduction to the Framework

4.2 Overview of Competence Areas

4.3 Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes per Competence Area

4.1 Introduction to the Framework

Seven core competences were identified through three dedicated focus groups with VET experts and tourism SMEs from Iceland, Austria, and Slovenia.

This participatory process ensured that the framework reflects real operational challenges and succession dynamics across diverse tourism contexts. The seven competences provide a structured lens for strengthening succession readiness and strategic renewal within tourism enterprises.

This structured approach ensures that training interventions:

- | | | |
|------------|---|---|
| 01. | Knowledge
What professionals need to know |  |
| 02. | Skills
How they should apply it |  |
| 03. | Attitudes
The mindset they should adopt |  |

Effectively embed succession planning and generational transition strategies into tourism business practices.

4.2 Overview of Competence Areas



In the following, each competence is outlined through its Knowledge (K), Skills (S), and Attitudes (A) dimensions, together with a dedicated NextGen Tourism perspective aligned with succession and generational transition in tourism SMEs. This structure clarifies what professionals need to know, apply, and embody to effectively manage succession challenges.

4.3.1 Leadership Transition & Organizational Continuity

Leadership Transition & Organizational Continuity is a critical organizational competence because succession constitutes a gradual, socially embedded process based on trust, legitimacy, and relational continuity rather than a discrete technical transfer of ownership.

Competence	Knowledge (K)	Skills (S)	Attitudes (A)	NextGen Context
Leadership-development	Understanding leadership theories, generational leadership dynamics, tourism business models.	Developing adaptive leadership capacity, guiding intergenerational knowledge transfer, managing team transitions, and fostering innovation.	Openness to learning, accountability, resilience, and willingness to balance tradition with renewal.	Prepares successors to gradually assume leadership roles, build credibility with staff and stakeholders, and ensure continuity while strategically renewing the tourism enterprise.
Governance design	Understanding governance structures, role clarity mechanisms, family-business dynamics.	Designing transparent decision-making structures, defining responsibilities between generations.	Commitment to fairness, transparency, collaboration, and long-term stewardship.	Supports structured and conflict-sensitive succession processes by reducing ambiguity, preventing power struggles, and strengthening institutional stability.
Overcome obstacles and/or bridge gaps between family members	Understanding intergenerational value differences, conflict dynamics, emotional aspects of succession.	Facilitating dialogue, mediating conflicts, aligning expectations, and building shared long-term visions.	Empathy, respect, patience, and commitment to transgenerational trust-building.	Enables smoother generational transitions by addressing emotional readiness.
Decision-making frameworks for selecting and evaluating successors	Understanding competency-based assessment methods, leadership potential indicators, performance evaluation tools,	Applying structured evaluation frameworks, conducting transparent selection processes, and assessing strategic fit	Objectivity, responsibility, integrity, and long-term orientation	Ensures that successor selection goes beyond informal expectations, strengthening legitimacy, continuity, and strategic sustainability
Staff transition management	Role structures, succession planning, talent development, knowledge transfer, and change management in tourism SMEs.	Planning structured handovers, coordinating mentoring and phased role transfers.	Commitment to continuity, fairness, accountability, and openness to feedback during change.	Supports systematic workforce renewal, preserves critical knowledge, maintains trust, and ensures service stability during generational transition.

4.3.2 Ownership Transfer, Governance & Control

Ownership Transfer, Governance & Control is a legally formalized and time-bound restructuring of equity, control rights, and governance arrangements, not merely a transactional exchange of shares. Its effectiveness depends on alignment of shareholder interests, clarity of control allocation, and intergenerational trust

Competence	Knowledge (K)	Skills (S)	Attitudes (A)	NextGen Context
Facilitation & communication skills to guide discussions and address reluctance	Understanding succession communication dynamics, psychological resistance to ownership transfer, stakeholder mapping.	Facilitating structured succession conversations, addressing reluctance constructively, aligning expectations between founders and successors.	Openness, patience, neutrality, and commitment to trust-based dialogue.	Enables a gradual and trust-based ownership transition by reducing uncertainty, strengthening credibility, and fostering shared commitment.
Conflict resolution skills	Understanding intergenerational value discrepancies, power dynamics in family-owned tourism businesses.	Identifying early conflict signals, mediating disagreements, negotiating role clarity, and deescalation.	Empathy, fairness, emotional restraint, and respect for transgenerational perspectives	Prevents conflicts from undermining succession processes, protects business continuity, and safeguards trust between founder, successor, staff.
Planning & project management skills for coordinating legal, financial, and operational tasks	Understanding legal frameworks for ownership transfer, financial structuring options, tax implications, valuation principles.	Developing structured succession roadmaps, coordinating advisors (legal, financial), managing timelines.	Responsibility, diligence, long-term orientation, and strategic foresight.	Ensures that ownership transition is professionally managed rather than informal, reducing risk exposure and reinforcing continuity, legitimacy, and investor confidence.
Emotional intelligence to navigate psychological barriers and family dynamics	Understanding identity-related challenges of letting go, successor role overload, emotional readiness gaps, and family-system dynamics	Managing personal emotions, supporting founders through detachment processes and strengthening successor	Self-awareness, empathy, resilience, and respect for legacy.	Addresses the emotional and identity-shaping dimension of ownership transfer, enabling smoother generational shifts and preserving transgenerational trust.
Ethical and sustainable thinking	Understanding stewardship principles, long-term value creation, responsible tourism practices.	Integrating ethical considerations into succession planning, balancing financial objectives with social and environmental responsibilities	Integrity, accountability, intergenerational responsibility, and community-oriented mindset	Positions ownership transition not merely as a transfer of assets, but as a continuity project that preserves credibility, strengthens community ties

4.3.3 Strategic Direction, Sustainability & Business Renewal

Strategic Direction, Sustainability & Business Renewal competence is a central integrative capability that links succession with market reality, customer expectations, and rapid digital and regulatory change, translating externally driven standards into actionable business strategy. It is not a one-time plan but a living, reflective process built through dialogue, shared vision-building, and early successor involvement

Competence	Knowledge (K)	Skills (S)	Attitudes (A)	NextGen Context
Strategic Succession Planning & Foresight	Understanding strategic direction principles, scenario development, market positioning, and long-term business visioning in tourism SMEs.	Setting clear succession goals, conducting scenario planning, aligning ownership transition with market trends, and defining strategic priorities.	Future orientation, strategic responsibility, openness to innovation, and long-term commitment.	Ensures that succession is not reactive but strategically embedded, linking generational transition to competitiveness and sector evolution.
Structured Handover & Governance Design	Understanding governance models, role clarity mechanisms, succession timelines, and institutional accountability structures.	Designing handover roadmaps, defining milestones and training phases, clarifying responsibilities, and restructuring governance where necessary.	Transparency, discipline, fairness, and continuity focus.	Reduces ambiguity and power struggles by formalizing transition processes and strengthening organisational stability during ownership change.
Change & Transition Management	Understanding organisational change dynamics, stakeholder interests, resistance patterns, and communication strategies.	Managing transition phases, engaging internal and external stakeholders, aligning visions, and addressing resistance constructively.	Adaptability, empathy, resilience, and collaborative mindset.	Supports smooth intergenerational shifts by safeguarding trust, maintaining operational continuity, and fostering shared commitment to renewal.
Performance Monitoring & Adaptive Evaluation	Understanding monitoring frameworks, performance indicators, milestone tracking, and feedback systems.	Tracking progress against succession plans, evaluating outcomes, adjusting strategies, and ensuring accountability.	Reflectiveness, accountability, evidence-based thinking, and willingness to adapt.	Ensures succession remains on track through structured evaluation, enabling corrective action and reinforcing long-term viability.
Sustainability & Climate-Oriented Strategic Development	Understanding sustainable tourism principles, climate-related risks, regulatory trends, and long-term environmental impacts.	Integrating sustainability goals into succession strategy, developing climate adaptation measures, and aligning governance with responsible business practices.	Stewardship, ethical responsibility, intergenerational thinking, and community awareness.	Positions succession as a continuity project that embeds sustainability and climate resilience into the future direction of tourism SMEs.

4.3.4 Financial Planning & Risk Management

Financial Planning and Risk Management is a key competence because it is closely linked to transparency, long-term thinking, and strategic decision making - not merely accounting technique. Financial risks are often hidden, emotional, and experienced as volatility and uncertainty.

Competence	Knowledge (K)	Skills (S)	Attitudes (A)	NextGen Context
Financial-analysis and modelling skills	Understanding financial statements, cash-flow dynamics, cost structures, investment appraisal, and scenario modelling in tourism SMEs.	Conducting financial analyses, building viability scenarios, assessing profitability under different market conditions, and modelling strategic trade-offs.	Transparency, analytical discipline, long-term orientation, and readiness to confront financial realities.	Enables successors to move beyond passive involvement toward active financial decision-making, strengthening resilience and informed strategic renewal.
Risk-assessment & mitigation: Identifying vulnerabilities	Understanding financial, operational, and market-related risks, volatility patterns, and structural vulnerabilities.	Identifying exposure points, conducting risk mapping, developing mitigation strategies, and balancing utilization.	Proactiveness, prudence, adaptability, and tolerance for uncertainty.	Strengthens change-readiness by ensuring that financial risk is actively understood and managed.
Negotiation skills	Understanding negotiation frameworks, stakeholder interests, financing conditions, and resource allocation mechanisms.	Negotiating with banks, investors, suppliers, and family stakeholders; managing trade-offs; and securing viable financial agreements.	Assertiveness, fairness, strategic thinking, and solution orientation.	Supports sustainable ownership and investment decisions, ensuring that financial arrangements align with long-term viability and succession objectives.
Legal & tax literacy	Understanding legal forms, ownership structures, tax implications, regulatory compliance, and succession-related fiscal frameworks.	Interpreting legal and tax advice, coordinating external experts, assessing implications of structural decisions, and ensuring compliance.	Responsibility, diligence, ethical awareness, and risk consciousness.	Ensures that technical and legal complexity does not undermine continuity, enabling successors to act as informed coordinators rather than passive recipients of expert advice.

4.3.5 Tourism Ecosystems, Market Context & External Pressures

Tourism Ecosystems, Market Context & External Pressures in succession are highly contextual, place-embedded and relationship-intensive, shaped by seasonality, destination ecosystems and community ties, and therefore require long-term exposure, situational learning and lived experience beyond generic business education.

Competence	Knowledge (K)	Skills (S)	Attitudes (A)	NextGen Context
Crisis preparedness	Understanding tourism volatility, seasonality, external shocks (pandemics, climate events, geopolitical shifts), and crisis response frameworks.	Developing contingency plans, scenario modelling under uncertainty, adaptive decision-making, and maintaining operational continuity during disruptions.	Resilience, vigilance, flexibility, and proactive risk awareness.	Strengthens succession readiness by preparing the next generation to lead under uncertainty, ensuring business continuity in highly dynamic tourism environments.
Community involvement	Understanding the socio-economic role of tourism SMEs, community interdependencies, and stakeholder expectations.	Building local partnerships, engaging community actors, aligning business strategy with regional development goals.	Responsibility, reciprocity, long-term commitment, and place-based thinking.	Positions succession as a socially embedded process that maintains legitimacy, local trust, and contribution to destination sustainability.
Destination relationships	Understanding destination governance structures, tourism networks, branding mechanisms, and collaborative value chains.	Coordinating with destination management organizations, participating in joint initiatives, and aligning succession strategy with destination positioning.	Cooperation, strategic alignment, openness to partnership, and network orientation.	Ensures that generational transition strengthens rather than weakens destination integration, maintaining competitiveness within broader tourism ecosystems.
Market Adaptation & Innovation in Tourism	Understanding changing customer expectations, digitalization, AI-driven trends, sustainability demands, and evolving tourism business models.	Translating market signals into service innovation, adjusting value propositions, and integrating new technologies into operations.	Curiosity, adaptability, innovation mindset, and customer orientation.	Enables successors to bridge tradition and renewal, aligning intergenerational transfer with evolving market dynamics and competitive pressures.
Intergenerational Value Alignment in Tourism Strategy	Understanding generational differences in risk perception, sustainability priorities, leadership styles, and growth ambitions.	Facilitating strategic dialogue, building shared vision, reconciling differing development paths, and integrating ESG-driven innovation into long-term tourism strategy.	Mutual respect, openness to dialogue, reflective thinking, and shared responsibility.	Addresses tourism-specific succession tensions by aligning legacy-driven stability with value-driven transformation, ensuring continuity while enabling strategic renewal.

4.3.6 Intergenerational Transition & Relationships

Succession in tourism is a deeply relational and identity-shaping process, strongly embedded in family ties, long-standing staff loyalty, and community relationships. In small, place-based tourism enterprises, ownership and leadership are closely intertwined with personal identity, local reputation, and the “personality” of the business.

Competence	Knowledge (K)	Skills (S)	Attitudes (A)	NextGen Context
Intergenerational Trust-Building	Family-system dynamics, generational value differences, trust development processes, and the relational dimension of letting go and stepping up.	Facilitating structured dialogue, aligning expectations, gradually transferring responsibility, and strengthening credibility across generations.	Respect, patience, empathy, long-term relational commitment.	Ensures a gradual, trust-based succession process where founders and successors co-create continuity, safeguarding relational capital within family, staff, and destination networks.
Identity Transition & Role Clarity	Identity shifts in succession (founder detachment, successor role overload), risks of role ambiguity, symbolic aspects of leadership change.	Clarifying responsibilities, negotiating evolving roles, supporting founder repositioning, building successor legitimacy.	Self-awareness, confidence, humility, openness to transformation.	Supports relationally sustainable transitions by reducing ambiguity and strengthening the successor’s recognized authority within the tourism ecosystem.
Emotional Regulation & Conflict Navigation	Conflict escalation dynamics, sibling ownership risks, relational triggers, and power asymmetries in family-owned tourism businesses.	Managing difficult conversations, mediating disputes, de-escalating tensions, maintaining constructive communication under pressure.	Relational maturity, fairness, composure, solution orientation.	Prevents relational breakdowns that can undermine succession, ensuring that relational tensions do not escalate into structural business risks.
Shared Vision & Meaning-Making	Narrative identity of tourism businesses, legacy considerations, generational aspirations, and value-driven strategic alignment (e.g. sustainability).	Co-creating long-term vision, integrating tradition with renewal, translating values into strategic priorities.	Openness, mutual recognition, willingness to reconcile differing visions.	Aligns generational perspectives, transforming potential tension into a shared continuity project that balances heritage with innovation.

4.3.7 Brand, Identity & Market Positioning

Succession in tourism SMEs significantly affects marketing and branding, as both are closely linked to the business's identity, reputation, and relational capital. In many place-based enterprises, the brand is strongly associated with the founder's personality, storytelling, and long-standing customer relationships.

Competence	Knowledge (K)	Skills (S)	Attitudes (A)	NextGen Context
Brand Continuity & Identity Stewardship	Understanding brand identity, storytelling, heritage positioning, and the role of founder personality in tourism branding.	Preserving core brand values, translating legacy into future-oriented narratives, and managing identity evolution without losing authenticity.	Respect for heritage, sense of stewardship, long-term brand responsibility.	Ensures that generational change strengthens rather than disrupts brand credibility, maintaining trust among returning guests and destination partners.
Strategic Market Positioning & Repositioning	Understanding target markets, customer segmentation, tourism trends, digital visibility, and competitive positioning.	Reassessing market positioning, adapting value propositions, integrating sustainability and innovation into brand communication.	Market awareness, openness to change, customer orientation.	Enables successors to align brand strategy with evolving customer expectations and emerging tourism dynamics while safeguarding continuity.
Digital & Data-Driven Marketing Competence	Understanding digital platforms, AI-driven marketing tools, online reputation systems, and performance metrics.	Managing digital presence, translating data into actionable marketing strategies, strengthening online visibility and engagement.	Curiosity, adaptability, innovation mindset.	Supports generational renewal by modernizing communication channels and ensuring competitiveness in rapidly changing digital environments.
Customer Relationship & Community Branding	Understanding relationship marketing, guest loyalty mechanisms, community-based branding, and destination co-creation.	Maintaining long-term customer relationships, communicating transition transparently, leveraging local networks for brand legitimacy.	Relational sensitivity, authenticity, commitment to local embeddedness.	Ensures that succession preserves relational capital and reinforces trust among guests, staff, and community stakeholders.

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