

NEXTGEN Tourism

Skills for Tourism Business Succession

NEXT GEN Tourism

Newsletter 02



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Competencies for Tourism Business Succession:

Next GEN Tourism Moves from Planning to Practical Tools



**Next GEN Tourism Partners
Develop Key Resources
Supporting Tourism
Business Succession**



What happens to a tourism business when its owner retires, steps back or prepares to hand over responsibility? For many small and family-run tourism businesses, succession planning is an important but often overlooked challenge. Next GEN Tourism is developing practical resources to help businesses prepare for that transition and protect the knowledge, relationships and reputation built over time.

Partners Meet to Advance Tourism Business Succession

On 21 July 2026, the Next GEN Tourism project held its second transnational meeting online, hosted by MMS Ireland, with partners from Iceland, Ireland, Austria, Slovenia and Germany. The meeting marked an important step forward

as the project moves from establishing its foundations towards developing practical learning resources, tools and digital solutions to help tourism businesses prepare for succession and continuity across Europe.



Building the Foundations for Successful Succession

A key achievement so far has been the completion of the Tourism Succession Competence Framework and Curriculum. The English versions are now finalised and will be published on the Next GEN Tourism website in September 2026, marking an important milestone for the project.

The Competence Framework identifies the knowledge, skills and competences needed to better understand and manage business succession in the tourism sector. Building on this, the Curriculum translates those competences into a structured learning programme for educators, trainers, tourism professionals and future successors.

Following the publication of the English versions, the materials will be translated and adapted for the different partner countries, making them more accessible and relevant to tourism professionals across different European contexts.

The Curriculum already provides useful resources and guidance for educators and trainers working in vocational education and training (VET). The next phase of the project will build on this foundation by developing more detailed learning materials, practical tools and real life case studies. These resources will gradually become available through the Next GEN Tourism website and future Knowledge Hub.

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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Skills for Tourism Business Succession

Course Curriculum



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Turning the Curriculum into Practical Learning

The learning programme will be structured around four phases of business transition and seven learning modules, creating a clear pathway through the succession process.

4 stages of business transfer:

1. **Phase 1: Understanding the Business & Preparing for Transition** – *focuses on the current state of the business and its initial readiness for succession.*
2. **Phase 2: Planning for the Future & Ownership Transition** – *helps define future direction, sustainable development, and options for transferring ownership.*
3. **Phase 3: People, Leadership & Relationships** – *addresses successor readiness, leadership handover, and communication with stakeholders.*
4. **Phase 4: Financial Security & Post-Transfer Growth** – *focuses on financial viability, business valuation, and long-term competitiveness.*

7 modules covering topics:

1. Assessing succession readiness.
2. Preparing the business for transfer.
3. Managing ownership and transition.
4. Ensuring leadership continuity.
5. Supporting families and teams.
6. Maintaining financial viability.
7. Protecting customer relationships and business positioning.

Each module will combine different types of learning content, including videos and reading resources, real-life case studies, practical activities, useful tools and ways to check progress.



Partners will contribute examples, guides, tools and resources from their own countries. Bringing these different perspectives together will help create materials that reflect the variety of tourism businesses across Europe and provide practical support that is relevant in different national and local contexts.

NEXTGEN Tourism

Skills for Tourism Business Succession

The 7 Competence Areas

A practical framework for successful tourism business succession.

1



LEADERSHIP TRANSITION & ORGANISATIONAL CONTINUITY

Preparing a successor, transferring responsibility and ensuring the business can continue to operate confidently as leadership changes.

2



OWNERSHIP TRANSFER, GOVERNANCE & CONTROL

Understanding ownership options, decision-making responsibilities, governance arrangements and the practical steps involved in transferring control.

3



STRATEGIC DIRECTION, SUSTAINABILITY & BUSINESS RENEWAL

Deciding what the future business should look like and identifying what should be protected, improved or changed before transition.

4



FINANCIAL PLANNING & RISK MANAGEMENT

Understanding financial readiness, valuation, funding needs, risks and the financial implications of different transition routes.

5



TOURISM ECOSYSTEMS, MARKET CONTEXT & EXTERNAL PRESSURES

Recognising how seasonality, staffing, destination relationships, customer behaviour, regulation and market change can affect succession.

6



INTERGENERATIONAL TRANSITION & RELATIONSHIPS

Managing family expectations, communication, trust, conflict and the transfer of experience and knowledge between generations.

7



MARKETING & BRANDING

Protecting customer confidence and brand identity while allowing the next owner or leader to develop the business for the future.



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Learning from Real Tourism Businesses

Real experiences from tourism businesses will be an important part of the learning programme. The project will bring together around 18 real life business succession case studies, providing practical examples that can be used across the different modules.

These stories will help learners understand the challenges that can arise when a tourism business is preparing for the future, as well as explore different approaches and possible solutions. Some case studies may be used across several modules, helping connect different aspects of succession planning, knowledge transfer and business continuity.



Helping Businesses Assess Their Succession Readiness

The project is also developing the Tourism Succession Readiness Assessment Application, a digital tool designed to help tourism businesses understand how prepared they are for business succession.

The assessment will give business owners and SMEs a clear picture of their current level of readiness and highlight areas where further action may be needed.

In the future, the tool will connect users with relevant learning materials, practical tools and resources based on their results. This will make it easier for businesses to identify the support most relevant to their individual situation.

The assessment and its recommendations will continue to be refined alongside the wider learning resources, creating a link between the Competence Framework, the learning programme and practical support for businesses.



What Comes Next for Next GEN Tourism?

Over the coming months, the project will bring these different elements together into an accessible support system for tourism businesses, educators and future successors.

The Competence Framework and Curriculum establish what needs to be understood and learned.

The four phases and seven modules provide the learning pathway.

The case studies and Succession Toolbox will bring that learning into practical situations, while the Tourism Succession Readiness Assessment will help businesses identify where they should focus their efforts.

All of these resources will ultimately come together in the Next GEN Tourism Knowledge Hub.

The Hub will provide an accessible online space where businesses and those supporting them can find guidance, learning materials, practical tools, case studies and other resources to help them prepare for the future.



Succession is not just about handing over a business. It is about protecting livelihoods, local knowledge and the visitor experiences that make tourism destinations distinctive. Through Next GEN Tourism, we want to give businesses practical support to plan ahead with greater confidence.

Written by:

Jasna Presečki (Project Partner)

Razvojni center Srca Slovenije, Slovenia

<https://srce-slovenije.si/>

Connect with Next GEN Tourism:

Website: *<https://nextgentourism.eu/>*

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61584797095044>

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STAY TUNED!

*#NextGENTourism #TourismSMEs #BusinessSuccession
#TourismContinuity #ErasmusPlus #VET
#TourismEducation #TourismResilience #RuralTourism*

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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[educate + innovate]

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Journey



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