



**SUSTAIN-T**

2017-1-ES01-KA202-038128

# Curriculum

Version 1.0 – July 2018



## Sustainable Tourism through Networking and Collaboration

# Forward

---

This publication has been developed by the consortium of the ERASMUS+ project “Sustainable tourism through networking and collaboration - Sustain-T” /2017-1-ES01-KA202-038128/, coordinated by Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain. It reflects the views only of the authors, and the European Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

**Author(s):**

AidLearn, Hr Consulting

**Coauthor(s):**

Autonomous University of Barcelona

**Contributor(s):**

ALBEA, CSMKIK, CTP, ECQ, LUISS, TIEL

**Contact:**

Website: [www.sustain-t.eu](http://www.sustain-t.eu)

Twitter: @SustainTProject

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SustainTproject/>



This publication is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License



## Erasmus + Disclaimer

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union



# Contents

	<b>Abstract</b>	<b>4</b>
	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>5</b>
	<b>Sustain-T Curriculum</b>	<b>6</b>
	<b>Training Overview</b>	<b>7</b>
	<b>Sustain-T Course</b>	<b>12</b>
	<b>Learning Objectives</b>	<b>14</b>
	<b>Course Methodology</b>	<b>15</b>
	<b>Structure</b>	<b>20</b>
	<b>Knowledge Transfer</b>	<b>27</b>

# Abstract



Sustain-T Curriculum is a methodological document guiding the development of the learning content and of the “activity” tools anticipated within the project. Its development was preceded by knowledge transfer, literature review and target group survey and confirmed afterwards by validation workshops held in the partner countries with key players of the tourism sector. The feedback and recommendations provided allowed a better attuning the Curriculum to the specific needs of micro- and small-sized enterprises in the tourism sector.

The relevance of the Sustain-T project has been proven and confirmed that the Curriculum, the learning content & interactive tools would be useful for tourism micro and small enterprises. The Sustain-T Curriculum and learning materials were seen as a valuable resource which may be used not only for training of MSE managers and employees, but also for professional development of VET trainers/ teachers and destination managers



# Introduction

---

There is a new sense of urgency about improving sustainability of the tourism sector. Europe is becoming more and more popular tourist destination, commanding a market share of the world tourism industry bigger than 40%. Along with this positive economic impact, however, tourism puts a significant strain on European natural environments and socio-cultural authenticity. Many initiatives have been undertaken in the EU to raise public awareness of sustainability and to ensure sustainable management of tourist destinations, businesses and products. Numerous Europe-wide reports, however, prove that the workforce employed in the sector still lacks the right green skill set for implementing principles of sustainable development. Tourism sector in Europe is dominated by micro<sup>1</sup> and small<sup>2</sup> enterprises (MSEs), which often have lack of resources to invest either in sustainable practices or in workforce skills development. At the same time, many sustainable tourism practices have already proven their economic viability to micro and small enterprises. Moreover, affordability and cost efficiency of such practices increase significantly, if MSEs create clusters and combine efforts to implement them. According to the European Classification of Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO), networking and collaboration represent important transversal (key) competencies. They are so essential, because in our knowledge-intense and inter-connected society, people face too complicated challenges to work through them alone.

Therefore, the Sustain-T (ST) project, targeted at owners and managers of EU MSEs and at Vocational, Educational and Training (VET) providers, trainers and learners interested in sustainable tourism issues, aims to enhance the sustainability performance of EU micro and small enterprises in the tourism sector by raising their managers' awareness of sustainable tourism practices and improving their networking and collaboration skills for establishing new green alliances and implementing joint sustainability initiatives.

---

<sup>1</sup> Micro - An enterprise that employs fewer than 10 persons and whose annual turnover and/or annual balance sheet total does not exceed EUR 2 million.

<sup>2</sup> Small - An enterprise that employs fewer than 50 persons and whose annual turnover and/or annual balance sheet total does not exceed EUR 10 million.





# Sustain-T Curriculum

Sustain-T Curriculum is a methodological document guiding the development of the learning content and of the “activity” tools. Its development was preceded by knowledge transfer, literature review and target group survey. Knowledge transfer and literature review by creating a joint base on sustainable tourism that is by sharing the QualiTour Project<sup>3</sup> results and the literature review references collected by all partners over the topics under revision.

Finally by the research (online survey) to comprehend the current situation, related to sustainability performance of tourism MSEs, in partner countries. This to confirm the learning content subjects and establish:

- 1) the level of awareness and compliance with the principles of sustainable tourism;
- 2) the challenges MSEs face in improving sustainability performance;
- 3) possible gaps in specific skills related to improving sustainability; and
- 4) to identify the adequacy of eLearning methodologies for the specific target group.

Afterwards, validation workshops were held in the partner countries to present the Sustain-T Curriculum to the project stakeholders and collect their recommendations, which were integrated in this version.



<sup>3</sup> QualiTour Project <https://www.qualitourlearning.eu/>



# Training Overview

## The concept of sustainable tourism

The travel and tourism industry is one of the largest industries in the world. But, the degrading effects of tourism have become a big concern and need to be addressed quickly. With this in mind, the concept of sustainable tourism has emerged with the aim of reducing the negative effects of tourism activities, which has become almost universally accepted as a desirable and politically appropriate approach to tourism development. According to a comprehensive literature review made by Zolfani, Sedaghat, Maknoon & Zavadskas, 2015<sup>4</sup>, Sustainability covers all elements that constitute a complete tourism experience. It is widely accepted in the literature, that 'sustainable tourism development' concerns an economic, social and environmental tourism development that aims at the continuous improvement of tourists experiences. The purpose of sustainable tourism is to make a balance between protecting the environment, maintaining cultural integrity, establishing social justice and promoting economic benefits, meeting the needs of the host population while emphasising inter and intra-generational equity, and in a way that can maintain its feasibility in time.

Tourist destinations are increasingly being called upon to tackle social, cultural, economic, and environmental challenges.

The European Commission has developed a 'European Tourism Indicators System' (ETIS)<sup>5</sup> to support the measurement of their performance in relation to sustainability. ETIS is a system of indicators suitable for all tourist destinations. It is: (1) a management tool, supporting destinations who want to take a sustainable approach to destination management; (2) a monitoring system, easy to use for collecting data and detailed information and to let destinations monitor their performance from one year to another and (3) an information tool, useful for policy makers, tourism enterprises and other stakeholders.

Likewise and as a result of a worldwide effort to develop a common language about sustainability in tourism, the Global Sustainable Tourism Council<sup>6</sup> (GSTC) released the *GSTC Industry Criteria*<sup>7</sup>, taking into account the numerous guidelines and standards for sustainable tourism from every continent, in both developed and developing countries, in several languages<sup>8</sup>. The GSTC criteria, considered as the global baseline standards for sustainability in travel and tourism, are used for education and awareness-raising, policy-making for

<sup>4</sup> Sarfaraz Hashemkhani Zolfani, Maedeh Sedaghat, Reza Maknoon & Edmundas Kazimieras Zavadskas (2015) Sustainable tourism: a comprehensive literature review on frameworks and applications, Economic Research-Ekonomika Istraživanja, 28:1, 1-30, DOI: 10.1080/1331677X.2014.995895. Link to this article at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1331677X.2014.995895>

<sup>5</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/tourism/offer/sustainable/indicators\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/tourism/offer/sustainable/indicators_en)

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gstcouncil.org/gstc-criteria/gstc-industry-criteria/>

<sup>7</sup> [Download Hotel Criteria and Performance Indicators](#)

<sup>8</sup> [Download in other languages here](#)



businesses and government agencies and other organization types, measurement and evaluation, and as a basis for certification.

The GSTC criteria are settled in four pillars: (1) Sustainable management; (2) Socioeconomic impacts; (3) Cultural impacts; and (4) Environmental impacts (including consumption of resources, reducing pollution, and conserving biodiversity and landscapes). The Criteria are the minimum, not the maximum, which businesses, governments, and destinations should achieve to approach social, environmental, cultural, and economic sustainability. Since tourism destinations each have their own culture, environment, customs, and laws, the Criteria are designed to be adapted to local conditions and supplemented by additional criteria for the specific location and activity.

### **Benefits of the implementation of tourism sustainable business practices**

Companies that want to stay competitive in the future must integrate sustainability practices into their business plans, seen as a strategic opportunity to creating value. But successful implementation of sustainable business practices can only be reached when the holistic principle of sustainability is understood and integrated into the strategic planning of the business.

The social responsibility and the desire to contribute to society might be the reason for adopting sustainable business practices for some businesses. But more often these societal concerns are combined with the commercial interest of business, as illustrated by four of the most stated benefits:

**Cost Reduction:** frequently the most mentioned benefit and the prime motive behind introducing environmental initiatives. In particular the rising costs for water, energy and waste disposal led many businesses to look for alternatives. Operational measures are for example recycling systems, using recycled materials, installing water-saving devices, using low energy light bulbs, energy-conservation measures such as insulation or solar-powered water heating systems. These initiatives focus exclusively on the environmental dimension of sustainable business practices. There is a lack of evidences about cost saving possibilities related to the socio-cultural and economic dimension of sustainability;

**Public Relations:** Sustainable business practices can also bring benefits to a company in terms of positive public relations and improved image with customers, shareholders and local community. These benefits can differentiate the business from its competitors and can be the source of competitive advantages and new market opportunities;

**Employee Satisfaction:** Through sustainable human resource management employees are more likely to feel adequately rewarded, valued, and proud of their work and have a more positive self-image. Service quality but also health and productivity are likely to improve through more sustainable developments and business practices. But the path towards sustainability requires often a change in corporate culture seen as the hidden driving force of people's behaviour both inside and outside organisations. Cultural beliefs, thinking and behaviour need to be consistent with the concept and values of sustainable business practices to make efforts





successful. Sustainable human resource management and a sustainable corporate culture can assist the company to attract and retain the best employees;

*Consumer Demand:* Consumer demand is the most controversial benefit of sustainable business practices. Environmental and social concerns increasingly influence customer behaviour but so far it is uncertain if this “green consumerism” has reached the tourism industry. Sustainable tourism products are often not clearly specified. The decisions are taken by consumers based on individual judgement and limited knowledge in respect to products’ sustainability. This meaning that more and better information about the impacts of the products is necessary. Many researchers argue that the increased awareness for general societal issues will ultimately lead to a rise in demand for sustainable travel and tourism products. However, although people might be aware of the negative impacts of tourism, others researchers state they are not willing to pay more for environmentally-friendly products. Business owners are unsure that consumers will be attracted by a business’s environmental performance and more evidence is required to determine the actual consumer demand for sustainable business practices in the accommodation industry. Also, there remains a lack of knowledge and awareness of the industry’s leaders of the environmental, economic, and social benefits gained through sustainability. Without proper education and motivation to understand the benefits and costs, sustainability is far from becoming the industry standard.

The findings of a study by Ramukumba & Ferreira, 2017<sup>9</sup>, infers that the benefits of ‘sustainable tourism practices’ as perceived by the guest house owners, managers and locums in the sample were related to non-economic benefits. This is confirmed by 56.3% of respondents who stated that they adopt and implement sustainable tourism practices for the benefit of environmental protection. The same trend is got at the Sustain-T survey, where the reasons for implementing sustainable business practices for 55% of respondents would be mainly due to three benefits: 1) Increase in customer satisfaction, awareness and demand; 2) Enhancing reputation and image of the business and 3) Reduction of negative Impacts on social, cultural and ecological environment. These results show a positive trend towards attaining sustainability in the tourism industry which augers well for the future of the industry.

### Benefits of networking and collaboration for the tourism MSEs

Sustain-T also focuses on the benefits of networking and collaboration, increasingly seen as critical to the MSEs growth and business development.

Small business is all about *networking*, building relationships and taking action. Building a successful business takes a lot of time and effort, so it’s good to have a network of connections to draw energy from and keep businesses going. In fact, MSEs networking: 1) facilitates sharing ideas and knowledge, helping to expand knowledge and seeing things from another perspective; 2) frequently results in opportunities. Opportunity to learn and avoid, from the experience of others, some of the common pitfalls companies practised, well as to

<sup>9</sup> Ramukumba, T & Ferreira, 2017, Perceived Benefits of Adopting Sustainable Tourism Business Practices: A View from Guest Houses in the Eden District Municipality, International Journal of Research in Tourism and Hospitality (IJRTH) Volume 3, Issue 2, 2017, PP 20-26 ISSN 2455-0043 <http://dx.doi.org/10.20431/2455-0043.0302003> www.arcjournals.org



seize opportunities promptly when they come along; 3) means building new contacts. MSEs can reinforce the reciprocal relationship by sharing contacts that belong to the different networks of their associates; 4) favours talking regularly to new people, what will help to increase confidence. Business progress is largely dependent on talking to people and making connections and 5) boosts the visibility and recognition of the MSE, namely by regularly attending business and social events, that can help to build company reputation and extend its recognition.

In addition, MSEs have to ensure the conditions for *collaboration* with others successfully, so that the benefits outweigh the potential risks. Ultimately collaborative working should enable MSEs better to meet their clients' needs. Collaboration often allows a wider geographical reach or access to new client groups, more integrated or co-ordinated approach to client needs, financial savings and better use of existing resources, Knowledge, good practice and information sharing, capacity to replicate success, sharing the risk in new and untested projects, stronger, united voice, better co-ordination of organisations' activities, competitive advantage and organisations' mutual support.

But there are also potential risks that need to be considered, such as: results do not justify the time and resources invested, loss of flexibility in working practices, complexity in decision-making and loss of autonomy, diverting energy and resources away from core mission, damage to or dilution of MSE brand and reputation, waste of resources if collaboration is unproductive or stakeholder confusion. And some obstacles to a successful collaboration may arise, in particular related to the personalities in play, competition between partners, lack of information, experience and resources, especially at decision-making stage, resistance to change, cultural mismatch between organisations and lack of consistency and clarity on roles and responsibilities.

To overcome the challenges previously suggested, it is important to establish good personal relationships, compatible corporate cultures, written agreements – clarifying the mutual benefits and collaborative advantage, strengthen the experience of change management, leadership and vision, and focus on the main goal to be achieved, careful planning and use of the adequate ICT tools.

#### Training content and the needs of tourism MSEs

The previous as well as other topics will be covered by the Sustain-T training materials. The findings of the Sustain-T survey, by online questionnaire, focusing target groups skill gaps and learning needs, well as the feedback recommendations got from the validation workshops, gave an excellent opportunity for the target audience and stakeholders to engage about sustainable development of tourism in their countries.

The relevance of the Sustain-T project has been proven and confirmed that the Curriculum, the learning content & interactive tools would be useful for tourism enterprises, well as adequate the eLearning delivery mode and joint sustainable tourism initiatives.



### *eLearning and Joint Sustainable Tourism initiatives*

Both important dimensions of the Sustain-T training programme: 1) *eLearning*, able to promote effective learning by addressing better the specific needs of the learners, within a faster delivery, lowers costs and lower environmental impact<sup>10</sup> and 2) *joint sustainable tourism initiatives* able to create synergies and deliver larger sustainability projects, than single MSEs could do on their own, were clearly validated both by the participants of the Sustain-T Survey and Validation Workshops.

There is a broad agreement on eLearning mode being a good solution to deepen knowledge and skills in sustainable tourism and on collaboration and networking could increase possibilities to engage in joint sustainable tourism initiatives, while reducing associated costs.

---

<sup>10</sup> By providing an alternative to the paper-based learning and testing of traditional classrooms, eLearning is an effective way for organisations to significantly reduce their carbon footprint.



# Sustain-T Course

---

Innovative learning opportunity aimed at responding to the needs and enhancing the sustainability performance of EU MSEs in the tourism sector by raising their managers' awareness of sustainable tourism practices and improving their networking and collaboration skills for establishing new green alliances and implementing joint sustainability initiatives.

The learning content, based on the main themes of GSTC Criteria, is composed by 6 modules with 3-5 units, as follows:

## Module 1 Sustainable Management in the Tourism Sector

- U1.1 Introduction to sustainable tourism
- U1.2 EU agenda for sustainable tourism: regulations, recommendations & initiatives
- U1.3 Sustainable tourism criteria & performance indicators: GSTC approach
- U1.4 Management systems for sustainable tourism

## Module 2 Socio-Economic Benefits of Sustainable Tourism to Local Communities

- U2.1 Supporting community: local employment, decent work, equal opportunities for all
- U2.2 Supporting entrepreneurs: local purchasing
- U2.3 Improving the quality of life in local communities through accessible tourism

## Module 3 Sustainable Tourism Benefits to Cultural Heritage

- U3.1 Presenting the culture and heritage: an image of a tourism enterprise
- U3.2 Managing and promoting visits to local communities and culturally/ historically sensitive sites
- U3.3 Protecting cultural heritage

## Module 4 Sustainable Tourism Benefits to the Environment

- U4.1 Conserving resources: water
- U4.2 Conserving resources: energy
- U4.3 Reducing pollution: greenhouse gas emission, wastewater, solid waste
- U4.4 Conserving biodiversity, ecosystems and landscapes

## Module 5 Networking and Collaboration Benefits to Tourism Business

- U5.1 Local, European and International tourism networks
- U5.2 Why network and collaborate in undertaking "sustainable tourism initiatives"
- U5.3 What it takes to be a successful networker and collaborator?

## Module 6 Innovation and competitiveness in Sustainable Tourism

- U6.1 Economic management for sustainable MSEs
- U6.2 Innovative marketing strategies in the sustainable tourism businesses
- U6.3 ICT, new technologies, artificial intelligence and sustainable tourism
- U6.4 The value of social networks for sustainable tourism promotion and development



In the learning material the partners will pay specific attention to accessible tourism, which enables people with different access requirements to function independently in the universally designed tourist environments. The World Tourism Organisation (*UNWTO*) defends that accessibility for all to tourist facilities, products and services should be a central part of any sustainable tourism policy. The issues of social sustainability, however, have been largely neglected in the mainstream sustainability debates. Priority has been given to economic and environmental sustainability, forgetting the needs of tourists and the community.





# Learning Objectives

As stated previously, the Sustain-T project aims to enhance the sustainability performance of EU MSEs in the tourism sector by raising their managers' awareness of sustainable tourism practices and improving their networking and collaboration skills for establishing new green alliances and implementing joint sustainability initiatives. The modules and units will contribute to the achievement of this goal by deepening of the knowledge and skills of learners on the following issues: 1) proper management of tourism businesses, which takes into account socio-economic development, use of resources and environmental protection; 2) proper use of environmental and cultural heritage as a driver for competitiveness of tourism destinations; 3) networking and collaboration in sustainability initiatives development; 4) effective marketing of sustainable tourist products for maximizing economic benefits to tourism businesses.

Having completed the Sustain-T Course, participant should be able to:

- ✓ identify the main characteristics and tools that can be related to sustainable tourism, and how they can be applied to MSEs;
- ✓ identify the social-economic benefits of implementing sustainable tourism practices in MSEs, with a special emphasis in the case of accessible tourism;
- ✓ identify the benefits for cultural heritage of implementing sustainable tourism practices in MSEs;
- ✓ identify the main environmental aspects and impacts related to tourism MSEs and, correspondingly, implement actions (best environmental practices) in order to minimize the negative impacts;
- ✓ Identify and implement at the MSE level the main networking and collaboration networks that can help sustainability development.
- ✓ identify and implement at the MSE level the main innovative marketing strategies, information and communication technology (ICT) tools, and social networks that can help sustainability development.



# Course Methodology

---

## Collaborative learning theory

The project will offer a comprehensive training to tourism MSEs, underpinned by the collaborative learning theory. Knowledge construction occurs within Vygotsky's (1962<sup>11</sup>) social context that involves student-student and expert-student collaboration on real world problems or tasks that build on each person's language, skills, and experience shaped by each individual's culture" (Vygotsky, 1978<sup>12</sup>). In essence, Vygotsky recognizes that learning always occurs and cannot be separated from a social context. Consequently, instructional strategies that promote the distribution of expert knowledge where learners collaboratively work together to conduct research, share their results, and perform or produce a final project, help to create a collaborative community of learners. Collaborative learning approach to instructional design should allow for mutual engagement of all participants, resulting in a coordinated effort to solve problems.

## Learning material

The learning material, providing less theory, and more practical guidelines & good practices, showing how to implement sustainable measures, will be divided into two parts. The 1st part will be content-based, aimed to raise awareness of sustainable tourism issues and to provide an opportunity to learn from **best practices** in the field. Best practices will present an innovative element of the Sustain-T learning content. They will be selected by identifying frontrunner MSEs and by studying and evaluating techniques they implement for improving their sustainability performance. The focus will be placed on the criteria of practices' applicability to MSEs, as well as affordability and feasibility of their implementation. Documented best practices will provide MSEs in the tourism sector with ready-made, practice-driven solutions which they could apply in their business environment. It should provide a clear step-by-step guidance in "what to do" and "how to do it" (efficient sustainable measures and the way of implementation of these measures), and whenever possible applicable to different types of tourism enterprises (e.g. hotels & restaurants, tour operators & agents). Also should explain and illustrate clearly how tourism MSEs could collaborate within their networks in developing joint sustainability initiatives ("collaboration & sharing of resources" vs "competition").

The 2nd part will be activity-based, comprising interactive tools and allowing the training participants to collaborate on developing joint sustainable tourism initiatives. This will help MSE managers learn to work together and coordinate their individual contributions (knowledge, strategies, resources, etc.) in order to reach the common goal of improved sustainability performance.

---

<sup>11</sup> Vygotsky, L.S. (1962). *Thought and Language*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. (Original work published in 1934).

<sup>12</sup> Vygotsky, L.S. (1978) *Mind in Society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.



### Platform

The Sustain-T eLearning platform, that should be easy to use without much guidance, will represent a networking and collaboration space for the registered MSEs. The platform will incorporate interactive self-audit, resource-mapping<sup>13</sup> and ideation tools, which will be programmed in a way facilitating collaborative work of a group of MSEs.

The platform should allow the creation of personal profiles for using the interactive tools, because both self-assessment results and resource maps will contain very likely confidential information. Engaging with these tools, MSE learners will gain experience of developing collaboratively sustainable actions, which they could transfer to their real-life business practice.

Therefore, the learners are expected to develop a (joint) sustainability initiative, using the Sustain-T tools:

- ✓ **Step.1** Implement self-assessment of their company's sustainability performance using the Self-Audit Tool
- ✓ **Step.2** Assess the resources the company has available to invest in the improvement of their sustainability performance / development of a sustainability initiative
- ✓ **Step.3** Engage in a collaborative work with other learners, related to the development of a (joint) sustainability initiative.

We give (joint) in brackets, because we may think of different options: when a group of learners develop one initiative which fits all of them, or they collaborate by helping each other develop individual initiatives. Such a three-step activity could be considered as a *project*, which builds upon all modules and lets learners to develop skills and competences and allows trainer to assess learners' achievements.

---

<sup>13</sup> Resource-mapping tool could include digital maps of local resources - natural, cultural and anthropological, which would help a lot in the development of sustainable tourism products



### Training delivery modes

Taking into account the modular structure of the course and that the contents and tools will be available in the online platform, it will be possible to deliver the course in a flexible way, taking into account the participants' needs, preferences and availability, and according to different modes: self-directed learning; face-to-face and blended learning.

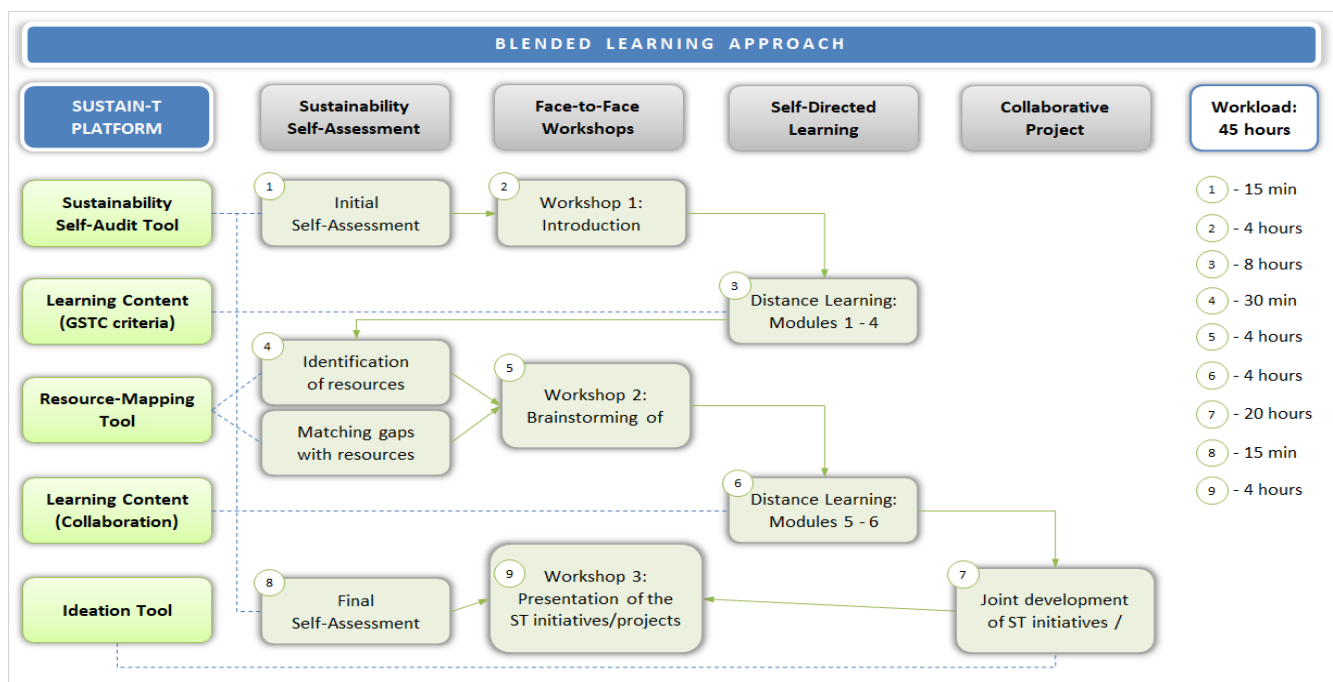
- 1) *Self-directed learning*: the learning material and the interactive tools fully provided online, allows learners' independent learning, which can choose their individual learning pathway and pace based on their personal needs, availability and objectives. But learning independently can be challenging, even for the most motivated learners. The risk of dropping out is high, so the VET provider must assure four fundamental aspects: a) assess readiness to self-directed learning, as: autonomy, organisation, self-discipline, communication skills, self-reflection and self-evaluation; b) set learning goals: establishing a learning contract between the learner and the tutor/trainer, including an individual learning pathway with goals, activities, timeline, meeting plan, evaluation; c) engage in the learning process, in which learners must understand ideas and be able to apply and transfer knowledge and practices to their SMEs and d) evaluate learning regularly and engaging in reflection on the achievements made and reviewing the way roles (learner & tutor/trainer) were played;
- 2) *Face-to-face delivery*: Face-to-face, Instructor-led or classroom training (the more traditional approach) can be also effective for delivering the training, provided that trainers create an interactive and motivating learning setting with activities that encourage collaboration and engagement and adapting them for the face-to-face situation. But the biggest obstacle to the Sustain-T target audience is the time it takes due to the need of the learners to attend scheduled training sessions for some time at a certain place;
- 3) *Blended learning*: this mode, we believe the best solution for delivering the Sustain-T training, uses both self-direct learning online and face to face sessions (workshops), meaning that learners might attend workshops in a traditional classroom setting, while also independently completing online components of the training.

Face-to-face instruction and technology working hand in hand offers learners a customized training experience with personalised feedback. Blended learning training removes time and location limitations. MSEs Learners no longer have to wait for a scheduled training to address their concerns and questions, as the online training resources are always there to help. The benefit that brings many organisations to a blended learning strategy is the cost savings. This is due to the fact that blended learning can make the training process effective and does not require as much time or money as traditional training.

In the next Figure 1 this approach is schematized, establishing the different interactions and the duration of the mode components, in a total estimated duration of 45 hours.



Figure 1: Sustain-T blended learning mode



### Legend:

#### 1. Initial self-assessment

Using the Sustain-T self-audit for main gaps sustainability diagnosis

#### 2. Workshop 1: Introduction

Introduction to the Course, tools and learning content. Encouraging the promotion of the sustainability at MSE level. Sharing experiences, motives and expectations

#### 3. Distance learning: Modules 1 - 4

Independent distance learning of the first 4 modules, studying the content and carrying out the proposed learning activities

#### 4. Identification of resources// Matching gaps with resources

Identification of available resources for improving MSE sustainability performance // matching gaps with resource map

#### 5. Workshop 2: Brainstorming of joint ST initiatives

Brainstorming for joint ST initiatives, based on the matches. Selecting the best idea for the ST project. Agreement on the general guidelines for its planning.



#### **6. Distance learning: Modules 5 – 6**

Independent distance learning of the last 2 modules, studying the content and carrying out the proposed learning activities

#### **7. Joint development of ST initiatives/projects**

Detailing the ST initiatives/projects – establishing a Plan with goals, steps, responsibilities and deadlines, in group

#### **8. Final self-assessment**

Using the Sustain-T self-audit for learners' reflection on the current sustainability performance of their MSEs and the main measures to be taken in the future

#### **9. Workshop 3: Presentation of the ST initiatives/projects**

Presentation of the ST initiatives/projects. Evaluation of the Course. Closing



# Structure

---

The Sustain-T Course consists of six modules, each one representing an autonomous learning component. The Course learning content will be set under the same arrangement for each of the modules, which includes: short description (module overview), duration, learning objectives, methods; content-based part (resources; best practices); activity-based part (Interactive tools and exercises - eLearning platform); Assessment; References, Further Resources and Glossary.



<b>Module 1: Sustainable Management in the Tourism Sector</b>	
<b>Description (overview)</b>	<p>The module, introductory to the course, is divided into four main units, each of them deals with a specific topic related to sustainable management in the tourism sector:</p> <p>Unit 1.1 Introduction to sustainable tourism</p> <p>Unit 1.2 EU agenda for sustainable tourism: regulations, recommendations &amp; initiatives</p> <p>Unit 1.3 Sustainable tourism criteria &amp; performance indicators: GSTC approach</p> <p>Unit 1.4 Management systems for sustainable tourism</p>
<b>Learning Objectives</b>	<p>As a result of engaging with the materials in this module, learners are intended to achieve the following learning outcomes:</p> <p><b>Knowledge:</b> learn what is sustainable tourism, what are the most important regulations, recommendations and initiatives at the European level, what are the most relevant sustainable tourism criteria and indicators, as well as management systems to be implemented at the business level.</p> <p><b>Skills:</b> improved ability to identify the main characteristics and tools that can be related to sustainable tourism, and how they can be applied to MSEs.</p> <p><b>Competencies:</b> encouraging the promotion and the boost of sustainable tourism at the MSE level.</p>
<b>Methods</b>	<p>Autonomous learning by reading and studying the course materials and the complementary sources and links provided in the materials.</p> <p>Collaborative MSEs group work by means of the space and resources in the platform.</p>
<b>Assessment</b>	Self-evaluation tool available in the course's virtual platform.
<b>Time Schedule</b>	<p>Time necessary for:</p> <p>Learning content (self-study): 1.5 hours</p> <p>Self-test questions: 5 minutes</p> <p>On-line exercises: 20 minutes</p>



<b>Module 2: Social-Economic Benefits of Sustainable Tourism to Local Communities</b>	
<b>Description (overview)</b>	<p>The module is divided into four main units, each of them dealing with a specific topic related to the social-economic dimension of sustainable tourism, especially at the community level:</p> <p>Unit 2.1 Supporting community: local employment, decent work, equal opportunities for all</p> <p>Unit 2.2 Supporting entrepreneurs: local purchasing</p> <p>Unit 2.3 Improving the quality of life in local communities through accessible tourism</p>
<b>Learning Objectives</b>	<p>As a result of engaging with the materials in this module, learners are intended to achieve the following learning outcomes:</p> <p><b>Knowledge:</b> learn how MSEs in the tourism sector can support local communities by creating local employment, decent work, without discrimination, promoting local purchasing and local services. Learn how MSEs in the tourism sector can help in the promotion of accessible tourism.</p> <p><b>Skills:</b> improved ability to identify the social-economic benefits of implementing sustainable tourism practices in MSEs, with a special emphasis in the case of accessible tourism.</p> <p><b>Competencies:</b> encouraging the promotion and the boost of social-economic and accessible sustainable tourism at the MSE level.</p>
<b>Methods</b>	<p>Autonomous learning by reading and studying the course materials and the complementary sources and links provided in the materials.</p> <p>Collaborative MSEs group work by means of the space and resources in the platform.</p>
<b>Assessment</b>	Self-evaluation tool available in the course's virtual platform.
<b>Time Schedule</b>	<p>Time necessary for:</p> <p>Learning content (self-study): 1.5 hours</p> <p>Self-test questions: 5 minutes</p> <p>On-line exercises: 20 minutes</p>



<b>Module 3: Sustainable Tourism Benefits to Cultural Heritage</b>	
<b>Description (overview)</b>	<p>The module is divided into three main units, each of them dealing with a specific topic related to the interaction between sustainable tourism and cultural heritage:</p> <p>Unit 3.1 Presenting the culture and heritage: an image of a tourism enterprise</p> <p>Unit 3.2 Managing and promoting visits to local communities and culturally/historically sensitive sites</p> <p>Unit 3.3 Protecting cultural heritage</p>
<b>Learning Objectives</b>	<p>As a result of engaging with the materials in this module, learners are intended to achieve the following learning outcomes:</p> <p><b>Knowledge:</b> learn how MSEs in the tourism sector can support local cultural heritage by promoting visits to indigenous communities and culturally / historically sensitive sites. Learn how MSEs in the tourism sector can help in the protection of cultural heritage.</p> <p><b>Skills:</b> improved ability to identify the benefits for cultural heritage of implementing sustainable tourism practices in MSEs.</p> <p><b>Competencies:</b> encouraging the protection of cultural heritage at the local level through sustainable tourism at the MSE level.</p>
<b>Methods</b>	<p>Autonomous learning by reading and studying the course materials and the complementary sources and links provided in the materials.</p> <p>Collaborative MSEs group work by means of the space and resources in the platform.</p>
<b>Assessment</b>	Self-evaluation tool available in the course's virtual platform.
<b>Time Schedule</b>	<p>Time necessary for:</p> <p>Learning content (self-study): 1.5 hours</p> <p>Self-test questions: 5 minutes</p> <p>On-line exercises: 20 minutes</p>





<b>Module 4: Sustainable Tourism Benefits to the Environment</b>	
<b>Description (overview)</b>	<p>The module is divided into three main units, each of them dealing with a specific topic related to the interaction between sustainable tourism and the environment:</p> <p>Unit 4.1 Conserving resources: water</p> <p>Unit 4.2 Conserving resources: energy</p> <p>Unit 4.3 Reducing pollution: greenhouse gas emission, wastewater, solid waste</p> <p>Unit 4.4 Conserving biodiversity, ecosystems and landscapes</p>
<b>Learning Objectives</b>	<p>As a result of engaging with the materials in this module, learners are intended to achieve the following learning outcomes:</p> <p><b>Knowledge:</b> learn how MSEs in the tourism sector can support environmental conservation at the local / global level. Learn how MSEs in the tourism sector can help minimizing their negative impact on the environment.</p> <p><b>Skills:</b> improved ability to identify the main environmental aspects and impacts related to tourism MSEs and, correspondingly, implement actions (best environmental practices) in order to minimize the negative impacts.</p> <p><b>Competencies:</b> encouraging the best environmental practices at the MSE level for a more environmentally sustainable tourism.</p>
<b>Methods</b>	<p>Autonomous learning by reading and studying the course materials and the complementary sources and links provided in the materials.</p> <p>Collaborative MSEs group work by means of the space and resources in the platform.</p>
<b>Assessment</b>	Self-evaluation tool available in the course's virtual platform.
<b>Time Schedule</b>	<p>Time necessary for:</p> <p>Learning content (self-study): 1.5 hours</p> <p>Self-test questions: 5 minutes</p> <p>On-line exercises: 20 minutes</p>



<b>Module 5: Networking and Collaboration Benefits to Tourism Business</b>	
<b>Description (overview)</b>	<p>The module is divided into three main units, each of them dealing with a specific topic related to the networking and collaboration benefits to tourism businesses:</p> <p>Unit 5.1 Local, European and International tourism networks</p> <p>Unit 5.2 Why network and collaborate in undertaking “sustainable tourism initiatives”</p> <p>Unit 5.3. What it takes to be a successful networker and collaborator</p>
<b>Learning Objectives</b>	<p>As a result of engaging with the materials in this module, learners are intended to achieve the following learning outcomes:</p> <p><b>Knowledge:</b> learn how MSEs in the tourism sector can improve their performance and success by boosting the networking and collaboration initiatives, especially under a sustainability approach.</p> <p><b>Skills:</b> improved ability to identify and implement at the MSE level the main networking and collaboration networks.</p> <p><b>Competencies:</b> encouraging networking and collaboration initiatives at the MSE level in order to promote a more sustainable tourism.</p>
<b>Methods</b>	<p>Autonomous learning by reading and studying the course materials and the complementary sources and links provided in the materials.</p> <p>Collaborative MSEs group work by means of the space and resources in the platform.</p>
<b>Assessment</b>	Self-evaluation tool available in the course’s virtual platform.
<b>Time Schedule</b>	<p>Time necessary for:</p> <p>Learning content (self-study): 1.5 hours</p> <p>Self-test questions: 5 minutes</p> <p>On-line exercises: 20 minutes</p>



## **Module 6: Innovation and competitiveness in Sustainable Tourism**

<b>Description (overview)</b>	<p>The module is divided into four main units, each of them dealing with a specific topic related to the innovation and innovative strategies for the promotion of more sustainable tourism businesses:</p> <p>Unit 6.1 Economic management for sustainable MSEs</p> <p>Unit 6.2. Innovative marketing strategies in the sustainable tourism businesses</p> <p>Unit 6.3 Information and communications technology (ICT) tools and sustainable tourism</p> <p>Unit 6.4 The value of social networks for sustainable tourism promotion and development</p>
<b>Learning Objectives</b>	<p>As a result of engaging with the materials in this module, learners are intended to achieve the following learning outcomes:</p> <p><b>Knowledge:</b> learn how MSEs in the tourism sector can improve their performance and success by implementing innovative marketing strategies, information and communications technology (ICT) tools, as well as social networks, all of them under a sustainability approach.</p> <p><b>Skills:</b> improved ability to identify and implement at the MSE level the main innovative marketing strategies, information and communications technology (ICT) tools, and social networks.</p> <p><b>Competencies:</b> encouraging the use of innovative marketing strategies, ICT tools, and the use of social networks in order to promote a more sustainable tourism.</p>
<b>Methods</b>	<p>Autonomous learning by reading and studying the course materials and the complementary sources and links provided in the materials.</p> <p>Collaborative MSEs group work by means of the space and resources in the platform.</p>
<b>Assessment</b>	Self-evaluation tool available in the course's virtual platform.
<b>Time Schedule</b>	<p>Time necessary for:</p> <p>Learning content (self-study): 1.5 hours</p> <p>Self-test questions: 5 minutes</p> <p>On-line exercises: 20 minutes</p>



# Knowledge transfer

---

This Curriculum is innovative, since it is based on a thorough analysis of training needs and on a research of challenges MSEs face in undertaking sustainability initiatives. The transnational nature of this research, as well as the description of the training objectives in terms of learning outcomes, aligned with the European Qualification Framework<sup>14</sup> (EQF) methodology, will make the Sustain-T training programme (content, learning activities, eLearning mode) easily transferred to and used in various educational and training contexts.

---

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/projects/european-qualifications-framework-eqf>





# SUSTAIN-T

2017-1-ES01-KA202-038128

[WWW.SUSTAIN-T.EU](http://WWW.SUSTAIN-T.EU)