

## TRAINING EXPERTS IN TOURISM

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### Abstract

*The tourism education and training system undergoes intense restructuring which starts with redefining qualifications and developing the possibilities training organisations have to provide relevant training programmes. Qualification redefining was triggered by the need to provide coherent and open training channels allowing for access to those willing to choose a job in tourism. The development of the skills of the future employees presupposes the existence of trainers, who use both relevant information and methods meant to improve the skills and abilities of the trainees.*

*Vocational training is no longer an exclusive concern of the education system and training institutions. Greater emphasis is laid on forming partnerships between the training institution, on the one hand, and employers, communities in general, on the other hand. The training network which involves all the participants in the process of creating relationships that lead to the development of a strategy and long-term decision-making is the form under which these partnerships are achieved.*

*Particularly important is a multidisciplinary approach, which is a prerequisite of vocational training in tourism. Tourism education presupposes the participation of all players and learning from others' experience (or mutual learning). There already are multiple examples of this type of learning namely schools and universities which develop partnerships in order to identify common solutions. Tourism sustainable development implies equal opportunities for all participants and a new approach to moral values. The author of this paper sets forth several solutions regarding the training of human resources in tourism, on short and medium term so that tourism could exert its beneficial effects in Romania.*

**Keywords:** *Tourism, Skills, Qualification, Workers, Vocational training*

**JEL Classification:** *A23, I23, L83, Z32*

### Introduction

Given the globalisation of tourism activities, there is the concern to render training programmes and levels compatible, so as to make training acknowledgment and workforce mobility possible; the development, at European level, of instruments meant to correlate the qualifications acquired under various training systems, to acknowledge work experience and learning using Europass (with its five relevant instruments), and the development of common training standards and programmes at international level follow this trend. Likewise, the obligatory practical training stages than can be organised both at home and in other European countries represent a modality of providing for qualification compatibility.

Tourism is an activity where the training to the end of developing a career is essential; a career can begin as cook and continue up to hotel manager, based on experience and on coherent programmes that acknowledge learning results obtained in both formal and non-formal as well as informal contexts.

Vocational training is an essential instrument of improving the quality and efficiency of a tourism organisation; tourism service quality cannot be achieved without a quality vocational training (Anderson, 2005). Human resources are the main source of tourism organisations on which the attainment of their goals and objectives depends. The future growth of the scope of tourism activities requires a substantial increase of the human resources employed in this domain as well as their restructuring in view of meeting customers' requirements. An important role is to be played by human resource managers whose activity has diversified due to the fact that human resources are the major sources that ensure the organisations' competitive advantage on the market (Bauer, 1998).

All management tasks will further increase, especially those regarding human resource planning, their recruitment, selection, training and assessment of their performance. It is difficult to

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achieve quality within the organisation when education and vocational training are not correlated with quality assurance principles and instruments. The competitiveness of the Romanian economy, and of tourism implicitly, cannot be ensured in the absence of the quality management practices that are the key of success worldwide. That is why essential in increasing Romania's importance on the international tourism market is to ensure service quality, with human resources playing a primordial role in this respect.

In the context of economic restructuring in Romania, tourism is one of the opportunities of recovering the economy given the national and anthropic potential of the country as well as the multiplier effect of this activity<sup>2</sup>. This opportunity has not been used appropriately in recent years and as consequence tourist activities have not been developed; moreover, the result was a continuous degradation of the natural and anthropic resources in Romania and the country's ranking on ever lower places with regard to key tourism indicators such as "tourist arrivals" and "tourism earnings".

Passenger traffic is slightly making progress. Since recession triggered a reinvigoration of the economic life, some European destinations registered a growth of the number of visitors. Hotels in Europe had a higher occupancy rate and receipts in the first quarter of the year despite the lower prices.

In the short range, the results of the surveys made in the traveller and accommodation-related industries are going to be better in the following months as compared to the bottom level of this recession. The European tourism industry will cope with a growing competition from both inside and outside the region. A multitude of factors will contribute to this situation:

- ✓ economic and financial competition;
- ✓ political factors;
- ✓ social and demographic changes;
- ✓ technological innovations etc.

Likewise, a number of goods and services will compete with tourism in entertaining the potential tourists, which will create another form of competitive pressure. The increase of the offers of spending leisure time in residential areas (theme or amusement parks, spas, cultural and sport events) will lead to shorter holidays spent in destinations closer to home. In time, this trend is expected to generate a more moderate economic growth.

There also are other factors that will mark tourism in Europe in the following decades. The introduction of the euro as common currency for several European countries will lead to a growing number of travels on the continent. Air transport deregulation has already brought about the emergence of a substantial number of new airlines, many of them low-cost, resulting in lower fares on pan-European routes and growing number of leisure travels, more particularly of "city breaks".

## **I. Need for vocational training in tourism**

We have been a European Union member for eight years now and we are entitled to a summing up. Romanian travel agencies had to cope with a lot of challenges, and so did the ANAT (National Travel Agencies Association) management. EU membership brought about bigger bustle, circulation, and this is good for us. It is noticeable that ever more Romanians can afford at least one holiday a year, although the rate of those who can afford a holiday abroad versus those spending their holiday at home is still low. There are good premises for travel agencies. But there also are risks. Great international tour operators and retailers have understood that Romania is a community country and that it has a noteworthy tourism growth rate. Therefore, they are watching us. For some this is a great opportunity, for others a danger. Who keeps believing that a small agency in a block of flats can do real tourism will certainly be disappointed. Nowhere have small super-specialised organisations boasting professionals ever failed.

In order to facilitate comparisons at international level and to reflect the restructuring processes triggered by the transit to a market economy, decision-makers chose to harmonise the classification of occupations in Romania with that of the countries of the European Union.

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<sup>2</sup> *Idem*

To this end, a team was set up at the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, which also included representatives of the National Statistics Authority, to prepare the Classification of Occupations in Romania (COR). Throughout the preparation of the first version of this classification, the team was advised by a group of British experts, under a technical assistance contract financed by the World Bank. The present edition of the Classification of Occupations in Romania (COR) is based on internationally recognised classification principles and on the recommendations of the British expert corps of the European Union and of the United Nations. In comparison with international classifications, the Romanian variant has the following groups:

ISCO 88	ISCO 88 (COM)	COR
10 major groups;	10 major groups;	10 major groups;
28 sub-major groups;	27 sub-major groups;	27 sub-major groups;
116 minor groups;	111 minor groups;	125 minor groups;
390 unit groups.	372 unit groups.	414 unit groups.

The level of training (skill level) is used in designing the ten major groups. Eight of them are described in relation to the four major skill levels that differ from ISCO, as shown in the table below:

### Ten major groups included in COR

Table 1

Major group	Skill level
1. Legislators, senior officials and managers	-
2. Professionals	4
3. Technicians	3
4. Clerks	2
5. Workers and shop and market sales workers	2
6. Agricultural and fishery workers	2
7. Craft and related trade workers	2
8. Plant and machine operators and assemblers	2
9. Elementary occupations	1
10. Armed forces	0

Source: <http://coduri-cor.com/>, as in ISCO 88

Five of the eight major groups (4, 5, 6, 7 and 8) are considered to be at the same skill level and they differ by the reference to large trade specialisation groups.

The definitions of the two major groups called “*Legislators, senior officials and managers*” (major group 1) and “*Armed forces*” (major group 0) make no reference to skill level, since there are other work pertaining elements considered as more important similarity criteria, such as political decision and leadership abilities, and military obligations respectively.

However, the sub-major and minor groups of major group 1 were so designed as to include occupations with similar skill levels. While observing the aforementioned classification criteria and the four aggregation hierarchical levels, the Romanian classification variant includes new minor and unit groups considered necessary, being specific to local occupational activities, *not to be found in the ISCO 88 COM variant*.

Particularly important in the vocational training for tourism is multi-skill qualification due to its advantages for both the organisation and the individual; for the organisation, multi-skill qualification allows for high service quality and an efficient employment of the workforce; for the individual, it makes possible a lower risk of diminishing the value of the skills and abilities acquired at a certain moment and allows for mobility within the organisation. What is essential for all the jobs in tourism is the fact that they allow the employees to have a global perception of the whole organisation as well as of the relations an individual has with the other employees. It is possible to obtain such a profile of the future employee provided training is approached based on skills and abilities that meet direct, professional requirements, as well as the requirements of lifelong training.

## II. Need for a new classification of occupations in Romania

WTTC forecasts for Travel and Tourism in Romania are generally positive. We present below the growth forecasts for the following years expressed as the average growth rate over 2007-2016:

- 7.4% of GDP in the Travel and Tourism Industry, higher than EU average of 2.4% and than world average of 3.2%;
- 6.7% of the GDP in the Travel and Tourism Economy, higher than EU average of 3.1% and than world average of 3.7%;
- 1.7% of jobs in the Travel and Tourism Industry, higher than EU average of 1.0% and than world average of 1.6%;
- 1.6% of jobs in the Travel and Tourism Economy, higher than EU average of 1.5%, but lower than world average of 1.8%;
- 7.9% of the demand for Travel and Tourism, higher than EU average of 3.5% and than world average of 4.2%;
- 8.5% of visitor exports, higher than EU average of 4.3% and than world average of 4.9%;
- 6.2% of capital investment, higher than EU average of 4.2 and than world average of 4.6%

In Romania, the direct contribution of Travel and Tourism to GDP in 2014 was RON10.7bn (1.6% of GDP). This forecast is to rise by 2.6% to RON10.9bn in 2015. This primarily reflects the economic activity generated by industries such as hotels, travel agents, airlines and other passenger transportation services (excluding commuter services). But it also includes, for example, the activities of the restaurant and leisure industries directly supported.

The direct contribution of Travel and Tourism to GDP is expected to grow by 3.8% per annum to RON15.9bn (1.6% of GDP) by 2025. The total contribution of Travel and Tourism to GDP (including wider effects from investment, the supply chain and induced income impacts, see page 2) was RON33.1bn in 2014 (4.8% of GDP) and is expected to grow by 4.5% to RON34.6bn (4.9% of GDP) in 2015. This forecast is to rise by 3.8% per annum to RON50.0bn by 2025 (5.1% of GDP) (www.wttc.org/, n.d.).

**Evolution of Travel and Tourism contribution to GDP over 2006-2016**

**Table 2**

	2006 estimates	2016 forecasts	Annual growth rate 2006-2016 (%)
Travel and Tourism Industry	1.92	2.47	7.6
Travel and Tourism Economy	4.81	5.78	6.7

Source: <http://www.wttc.org/>

[/media/files/reports/economic%20impact%20research/countries%202015/romania2015.pdf](http://www.wttc.org/media/files/reports/economic%20impact%20research/countries%202015/romania2015.pdf):

Employment in travel and tourism industry will increase in 2016 to about 315,000 jobs as to 265,000 in 2006. They will represent 3.83% of the total 2016 jobs as against 3.15% in 2006.

Employment in travel and tourism economy will reach nearly 570,000 jobs in 2016 from the 485,000 forecast for 2011, resulting in a 85,000 job surplus. They will account for 6.92% of the total jobs in the economy as to 5.75% in 2009.

**Evolution of employment in Travel and Tourism over 2006-2016**

**Table 3**

	2006 estimates		2016 forecasts		Annual growth rate 2006-2016 (%)
	Thou. jobs	% of total employment	Thou. jobs	% of total employment	
Travel and Tourism Industry	265,17	3,15	314,67	3,83	1,7
Travel and Tourism Economy	485,00	5,75	569,53	6,92	1,6

Source: <http://www.wttc.org/media/files/reports/economic%20impact%20research/countries%202015/romania2015.pdf>

The opportunity for a new classification of occupations, valid for all countries and especially for Romania, is determined mainly by:

- occurrence of new jobs as a result of the spectacular results in research-development activity, of introduction of new technologies and raw materials and of service diversification (croupier, IT worker-designer, detective, astronaut etc.);
- changes in economic-social structures, especially in the countries passing to the market economy, which impose new occupation groups (corporate managers, professionals with intellectual and scientific occupations, managers etc.);
- alignment of the whole classification and nomenclature system to international standard systems, more particular to those in the European Union, which becomes necessary at least for the following reasons: wider possibilities to know, assess, compare and communicate development indicators and to approach them in a unitary manner, provision of accurate information comparable by the same criteria and principles.

Continuous vocational training is an activity acquiring great importance in tourism due to the progress made in the domain and to the need to maintain workforce competitiveness on the market; continuous training ensures career development from basic qualification to managerial qualification, as well as employees' continually improving performance. The setting up of training departments in big tourism organisations, which provide both training of existing staff and on-the-job training, as part of initial vocational training process, is a trend justified by the need to bring training closer to the workplace and proves the growing involvement of employers in the workforce training process.

## Conclusions

International tourism evolution trends up to 2020 have been identified since essential mutations will certainly occur, with implications on the human resources employed in this field of activity.

It is important that these aspects are known by the Romanian authorities operating at various decision-making levels and by human resource managers in tourism when they prepare tourism development strategies, plans and programmes. Moreover, the fact should be taken into account that the tourism industry must consider a new concept of tourism, focused on quality, which takes into consideration the exigencies of ever more sophisticated consumers.

In Romania, a country with an important tourism potential, tourism can become a mainstay of economic and social development. Romania can evolve to turn into an attractive tourist destination in Europe and worldwide. Under these circumstances, a number of arrangements and facilities will allow Romania to have access to quality infrastructure and human resources trained to provide quality tourist services. Human resource quality presupposes, first of all, an education and vocational training system adapted to present requirements regarding technology level as well as the individual needs of the trainees and the needs of the society as a whole.

Romania must take into account a holistic approach to human resource development which should favour lifelong learning and skill and ability development, correlated with economic development, employment promotion, work quality, social inclusion and equal opportunities, in a nutshell sustainable development.

Given the multiplier effect of tourism and the fact that it is influenced by a multitude of factors, strategies should be designed able to integrate social, economic, educational, cultural policies and policies meant to render the citizens more aware of their role in society. The objectives set at European level for the implementation of the "Lisbon strategy" are a good example of integrated approach. The development of lifelong learning and the approach based on skills and abilities is the core of the international model of adapting education and vocational training to the conditions and requirements of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This imperative is recommended both at the level of the OECD, EU, G8 states and at the level of ILO and UNESCO. Of great interest is the involvement of all social partners in both the formulation of human resource development strategies and their implementation at an international as well as national, regional and local level.

All the more so tourism cannot develop outside the communities where it is organised. Despite its international relevance, tourism is significantly influenced by regional and more particularly local

factors, and in this context human resources fundamentally define tourist services. Approaching tourism as a complex system, whose development is determined by the interaction of its internal elements, with human resources at its core, represents the way communities manage to make the most of the competitive advantage, in the service of economic and social development.

Presently, Romania is in a favourable conjuncture determined by the adherence to the European Union eight years ago and the development of political, economic and social reforms allowing for higher competitiveness internationally. The modernisation of education and vocational training, which also have in view the training in tourism, is a process which aims both at the restructuring of the education system and the awareness and involvement of social partners and at their correlation with workforce employment policies. The relationship between the content and process of learning with the skills and abilities required by the present and future jobs, as well as the modification of the role the teaching staff, trainers in general play in vocational training are of great interest within the education and training system. The alternative training forms that take into consideration distance education so as to take training out of the formal system and make it meet ever more flexibly the needs of the learner are equally important.

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