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# **DIVETOUR**

## **Training Path of the connectivist MOOC of DIVETOUR project**

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# Summary

The present document represents the Training Path of the connectivist Massive Open Online Course (cMOOC) on “New Challenges for Tourism sector after COVID-19” of DIVETOUR project.

Besides the description of the main features of the Course, in terms of organisation, calendar, target audience and requirements, it defines the structure and contents of its training modules:

- a first one that analyses the tourism sector and its vulnerability to global crises and external shocks, such as the COVID-19 pandemic that heavily affected it, and defines interventions and possible strategies to mitigate their impacts and accelerate recovery, placing inclusivity at the centre of recovery plans;
- a second one focused on accessible tourism development as one of the main levers for the recovery, a business opportunity for tourism destinations and businesses and a driver of better quality of life for both visitors and local population.

This course aims at making learners aware of the need for the tourism sector to be prepared to respond to threats that may undermine it, by applying short-and long-term strategies that exploit emerging demand trends within the framework of equitable and sustainable development. They will also learn why accessibility and relevant training are crucial for the tourism landscape of tomorrow in order to provide better services to all tourists by improving the accessibility of tourism establishments and destinations following a Universal Design approach.

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# cMOOC Main Features

## Organisation

The cMOOC lasts four weeks and consists of 2 Training Modules with 4 Topics (2 for each module), self-evaluation tests, discussion forums and webinars.

Upon entering the cMOOC platform, participants are provided with a Training Kit, made up of:

- a Guide on the use of the cMOOC portal with a list of FAQs,
- guidelines for webinars broadcasting,
- four immersive “360° videos” on accessibility in tourism,
- an Accessibility terminology guide.

Moreover, every week, at the beginning of each Module Topic, specific training material (itself part of the cMOOC Training Kit) is released to the learners and consists of:

- a Handbook, providing a comprehensive overview of the Module Topic;
- a Glossary;
- a list of references (relevant documents to further reading and multimedia contents) available on the web to deepen the analysis;
- self-evaluation tests.

Training materials can be accessed at any time, from anywhere and on any device. Some of them will be released at a specific date and time but this doesn't mean the learners need to log on at that time. MOOC works independently of where in the world the learners are located.

**Modules:** each Module lasts 2 weeks and addresses two main Topics (one per week).

**Topics:** throughout the weeks, learners can access the material at any time that suits them, and they can download the material for offline viewing.

**Self-evaluation tests:** for each module topic, learners will have the opportunity to test their knowledge. The results of the self-evaluation test are not recorded and the learners can attempt the questions as often as they wish.

**Discussion Forums:** learners will be asked to participate in the “online debate” through the use of discussion forums which will be active in the learning portal. A central forum will be open since the MOOC starts where participants can ask their own questions to be answered by the peer participants or the course experts or answer to questions asked by the course experts. Another forum will be available, specifically focussed on workers with disability in the tourism sector. The participants will also have the possibility to start their own threads. Selected material from the forum together with selected topics from the social media feedbacks will constitute the subject of the online bi-weekly webinars.

**Social Media:** learners will be asked to participate in the “online debate” either posting on a personal blog, or through Facebook, Twitter and other social media, using the #hashtags and feeds provided by the MOOC administrators. Selected material from social media feedbacks will constitute the subject of the online bi-weekly webinars.

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**Webinars:** every two weeks, at the end of each module, the learners have the opportunity to join an open “webinar”, a synchronic event in which they will meet the partnership’s experts and can ask them questions or discuss with them important issues related to the module.

**Final evaluation of the MOOC efficacy:** in order to get feedback about the MOOC to fine tuning it, learners will be asked to express their opinion on the course they’ve attended.

**Best practices and examples:** maximise opportunities to illustrate with examples throughout the MOOC. What are best practices? Where can this can be observed? Similarly, ‘bad practices’ can be used as useful learning material to avoid replicating mistakes.

## Calendar

Starting from: January 16, 2023

Duration: 4 weeks (4 - 6 hours per week)

Final evaluation of the efficacy and efficiency of the MOOC:  
February 28, 2023

## Language

English

## Target Audiences

Tourism VET (Vocational Education and Training) Trainers and Representatives of the Vocational Training sector

Tourism VET Students

Managers and staff of SMEs in the HORECA sector

Managers and staff of SMEs in other sectors of the Tourism

## Supply Chain

Representatives of organisations of people with disabilities, seniors, others

Representatives of Public Bodies responsible for the quality of the tourism offer of a destination

The general public

## **Requirements for participation**

Basic understanding of tourism value chain

Basic understanding of information technology (IT)

Knowledge of English

## **Accessibility**

Learning tools will, as far as possible, take into account the needs of VET learners with different types of impairments.

# Course Training Path: content of the Modules

MOOCs main characteristics are flexibility and autonomy, that is the freedom for participants and instructors to expand, deepen, remix and repurpose the content during the course, following the inputs coming from the online interactions. Therefore, the developed training path only provides the basic suggested "route" of the learning process that could be customised and extended by each participant according to her/his needs, interests and skills.

## General Introduction

A short video will introduce the participants to the topics addressed in the course, will explain how the MOOC will be organised and will give basic instructions for its attendance.

## **Module 1 - The response of the Tourism sector to the pandemic, with specific focus on the inclusion of seniors and persons with disabilities and/or other specific access requirements for the re-opening of the sector**

This module focuses on the overall challenges faced by the tourism sector, setting the scene for the renewal of the offer of tourism in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. A good understanding of the current context tourism service providers are operating in and factors shaping the renewal of demand are important building blocks to ensure a common understanding among MOOC participants and identify opportunities to support a more inclusive tourism ecosystem, in line with the latest trends.

### **Topic 1.1 Economic and socio-cultural impact of external shocks on tourism**

#### **Contents**

- By means of introduction, a brief discussion on ‘why do we travel? Why does it make us happy? Why must we strive to make tourism and travel something everyone can do?’
- Provide some key facts and figures on travel and tourism, its contribution to the economy and well-being. Who are the people who travel, what are their needs? How seniors and people with access requirements contribute to the tourism economy?
- By means of introduction, a brief explanation on the vulnerability of the tourism sector to crises / exogenous

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- shocks: geopolitical (war, terrorism, etc.), financial and economic, natural and extreme weather events, epidemic and pandemic, etc. The seriousness of the COVID-19 global tourism crisis.
- Economic impact of COVID-19 across the tourism system with specific focus on HORECA sector.
    - \* Shortage of staff in HORECA and tourism: the COVID crisis has created a 'career exodus' for the sector. Vocational training is essential to help sectoral workers embrace a long-lasting career in the sector.
    - \* After two years of work 'on hold' or 'on and off', there is a need for persons working in the sector to refresh their skillset and an opportunity to develop skills regarding accessibility and customer service for all visitors.
    - \* The tourism and hospitality sector is confronted with the need to 'do more with less': investments to embrace sustainability, digitalisation and accessibility are needed, but liquidity and capital are short. Inflation and the rising cost of energy and foodstuffs in 2022 represent an additional challenge.
    - \* Preparedness and resilience: anticipating new shocks and devising corresponding emergency procedures.
    - \* Recent European policies and regulations targeting inclusion of all citizens emphasise the need for tourism providers to address accessibility across the whole tourism value chain.
  - Socio-cultural impact of COVID-19 on travellers, individuals and communities, with a focus on vulnerable groups hard hit by the pandemic.

- \* Who are the most reluctant to travel and go out in a 'post-COVID' world and why? Understanding the key obstacles to provide forensic solutions.
- \* Persons with disabilities and persons with other specific access requirements, including seniors who may encounter barriers or have various impairments due to ageing: barriers which prevent them from fully enjoying tourism experiences. Additional barriers and restrictions because of the pandemic. But this is also an opportunity to relaunch tourism with renewed focus on seniors and persons with disabilities and/or other specific access requirements.

## **Topic 1.2 Crises as an opportunity to rethink tourism for the future: designing an inclusive tourism recovery within the framework of equitable and sustainable development**

### **Contents**

#### **Short-term strategies - Restoring all travellers' confidence and stimulating demand**

- Building confidence by developing new skills and know-how in tourism.
  - \* Implementing practical adjustments for persons with disabilities and/or other specific access requirements: lessons learned from implementing health and safety protocols during the pandemic.
  - \* Adopting new global and harmonised travel, health, safety and hygiene protocols considering the needs of travellers with specific access requirements.
  - \* Digital innovation in tourism: better understanding the 'low-touch' economy.
  - \* Reinforcing 'traditional' hospitality skills (e.g. cooking; cleaning, interpersonal, languages, intercultural, human resources, PMS and CMS systems, accounting, management).
- Review of marketing and promotion strategies, identifying and targeting markets that can help accelerate recovery, addressing product diversification.
  - \* An introduction to developing data strategies and corresponding skillsets to leverage data insights.
  - \* Reassuring strategies towards the customers with a wide

range of access requirements.

- \* Advertising through media and social media.
- \* Innovation and digital transition: new technologies as a lever in making travel and tourism experiences easier for all.

## **Long-term strategies - Inclusive tourism recovery by exploiting emerging trends / challenges in tourism**

- Demographic changes and new motivational emerging targets: adapting marketing strategies and positioning the offer of tourism services to different generations' aspirations.
  - \* Who are the travellers of the future? Who is a typical Gen Z/Millennial tourist?
  - \* Seniors. Ageing population and its impact on tourism in general and accessible tourism in particular.
  - \* New tourism trends: cyclo-tourism, gastronomic tourism, bucket list tourism, eco-tourism.
- Sustainability: environmental, economic and socio-cultural sustainability paying more attention to the environment and people.
  - \* Evaluating environmental performance and improving it.
  - \* Communicating about sustainable behaviour to customers.
  - \* Why embracing sustainability and accessibility go hand in hand.
  - \* Developing accessible and sustainable offers of services to cater for emerging consumer trends.
  - \* Best practices: city examples - how can destinations

holistically address these aspects - environment, sustainability, accessibility, mobility.

## **Module 2 - Accessible tourism and its potential as one of the main levers for the recovery of the tourism sector**

This module will dive more specifically into the development of an inclusive tourism ecosystem by inviting MOOC participants to share views and experiences on basic requirements to support tourism accessibility.

Focus is placed on the gradual development of soft skills and ensuring a common understanding of key concepts such as Universal Design in order to give accessible tourism a central role in the renewal of the offer of tourism services.

### **Topic 2.1 Accessibility as a business opportunity for tourism destinations and businesses**

#### **Contents**

- Lifelong Learning: the key to addressing the tourism and hospitality sectors' challenges.
  - \* VET: a key to overcome the tourism and hospitality's staff shortage problem.
  - \* Creating time to train the workforce: adapting training modules to time deprived professionals and embracing digital learning tools.
  - \* Developing soft skills: the key to a more accessible and sustainable tourism ecosystem. Developing soft skills requires a mindset which is always ready to learn and improve.
  - \* What are soft skills? E.g. listening carefully, speaking clearly, patience, understanding, empathy, problem

solving, handling unforeseen situations, emotional intelligence, ability to communicate, developing equitable and inclusive services to cater for persons with specific access requirements.

- \* Acquiring knowledge and skills in tourism accessibility is an opportunity that offers long-term career perspectives.
- Accessible Tourism for All
  - \* Background & history of Accessible Tourism for All.
  - \* The Universal Design Approach: promoting access for individuals with specific access requirements benefits for all users. It also supports sustainability by minimising the need for subsequent adaptations and re-design.
  - \* Accessibility is not a 'separate' workstream: it must be integrated across all the activities, organisation and services of the whole tourism value chain.
  - \* Introduction to ISO Standard 21902 'Tourism and related services - Accessible tourism for all'
  - \* Introduction to Web accessibility and the WCAG 2.0 guidelines.
  - \* Accessibility skills training pathways.
- Accessibility for all as a major business opportunity and a competitive advantage.
  - \* Breaking the myth that accessibility is necessarily costly. Small changes in attitude, behaviour and services offered, can have a significant impact.
  - \* Accessibility as a driver for innovation.
  - \* Accessibility as a driver for sustainable practices and an

inclusive environment in more liveable and welcoming destinations.

- \* Accessibility as a driver of higher quality hospitality services: why and how accessible services benefit all customers.
- \* Accessibility as a benefit for both visitors and local population as it improves the overall quality of life
- \* Accessibility and return on investment.
- Staff training and inclusion
  - \* Employing persons with disabilities: why overcoming initial challenges creates business opportunities.
  - \* 'Experiencing' disability: how to make aware and inform co-workers and staff.

## **Topic 2.2 Rules and Recommendations on how to enhance accessibility within tourism businesses**

### **Contents**

On-site accessibility: from 'first -steps' to an inclusive tourism establishment.

- Learning how to make minor arrangements and how to improve the welcoming system of the facility.
  - \* Embracing accessibility is a gradual, step-by-step process. How accessibility 'first steps' can become leaps.
  - \* Accessible venue pathways: success stories to illustrate the previous point.
  - \* Assessing the accessibility of your venue/establishment.
  - \* Providing accurate, reliable and timely information and communication about on-site accessibility.

## **Integrating chatbots for improving information about the accessibility of services offered ‘on the spot’**

- Learning about the need for refurbishments of facilities in relation to the access requirements of the users.
  - \* Integrating accessibility to an overall strategic vision.
  - \* Adopting and implementing a Universal Design approach (toward guests and employees).
  - \* Improving customer service / catering for all tourists with different abilities and access requirements.
  - \* Working with accessibility experts.
  - \* Success stories: building/refurbishing venues following a Universal Design approach.

## **Boosting accessibility across the destination: the importance of a holistic approach**

- Destination key indicators
  - \* Destination SWOT analysis/strengths and weaknesses: creating the groundwork for developing more liveable and welcoming destinations for all.
- Planning accessibility improvements in destinations, drawing up a holistic action plan.
  - \* Identifying common training requirements at destination level.
  - \* Creating a virtuous accessibility circle: accessible establishments are conducive to accessible destinations; accessible destinations are conducive to accessible establishments.

- \* Adoption by tourism destinations of health and safety measures that can increase people's confidence to visit them.
- \* Developing a destination Access Guide.
- \* Developing recommendations for public services and infrastructure, accessible for all.





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