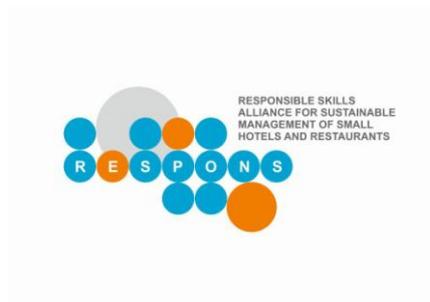




Executive Agency, Education, Audiovisual and Culture



**RESPONSible Skills Alliance for Sustainable Management of Small Hotels and Restaurants/RESPONS**

Progress Report

Public Part

## **Project information**

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## **Executive Summary**

The sector of Tourism is among the first industries at EU level which play a key role for EU competitiveness in the context of globalisation. The EU tourism industry generates more than 5% of the EU GNP, with about 1,8 million enterprises (EU COM (2010) employing around 5.2% of the total labour force (appr. 9,7 million jobs). When related sectors are taken into account, tourism indirectly generates more than 10% of the EU's GDP and provides about 12% of the labour force.

In all countries of the RESPONS partnership **tourism plays a significant role with a high potential to contribute to higher employment, as well as to development and socio-economic integration**. Human Resources are among the key pillars of the future sustainability of the tourism sector and it is necessary that they step into their expected responsibilities.

To this end, RESPONSible Skills Alliance for Sustainable Management of Small Hotels and Restaurants develops the new professional profile of the manager/owner of small hotel and restaurant combining traditional and innovative knowledge and sharing ideas to manage a profitable, sustainable and socially responsible business, while keeping its local identity. The two-year action is aimed at improving and upgrading the specific skills of the manager of small hotels and restaurants based on learning outcomes taking into account the employers' demand for qualifications and the future needs of the HORECA sector.

To reach **RESPONS'** objectives a strong consortium has been build. The transnational Partnership is composed of 9 Partners from Bulgaria, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Romania and Spain. The project focuses on the teaching and learning needs in vocational education and training at sectoral level and addresses the various parties involved in Tourism, such as HORECA SMEs, institutions and educational bodies, social partners and bodies relating to both – the lifelong learning and the labour market. **RESPONS** consortium blends direct experience in the hospitality sector with experienced networks having impact at regional and national level, as well as proven experience in successful implementation of EU funded projects.

RESPONSible Skills Alliance for Sustainable Management of Small Hotels and Restaurants implements a “demand and supply” approach and is driven by the needs of the respective target groups and direct end users but also is taking into account the institutional perspective. This ensures pertinence of the conclusions and later on, relevance and adequacy of RESPONS products. The transnational basis of the HORECA Skills survey provides for different point of views to respect and enables elaboration of new professional profiles. The development of EQF for managers of small hotels/ restaurants supports the introduction of common reference tools to compare qualifications across EU. RESPONS project makes the following steps to improve the qualification of Managers of small and medium-sized - mainly family owned HORECA businesses - it introduces a joint curriculum for HORECA managers and produces an e-Handbook and Virtual Map on Innovative Managerial Skills promoting cooperation between education and world of work. The RESPONS National specialized seminars and the European conference for Responsible skills are the events to present the products to their beneficiaries and to obtain the maximum of the effects of RESPONS project. The action and its realization are to be followed at <http://responsalliance.eu>.

**RESPONSible Skills Alliance for Sustainable Management of Small Hotels and Restaurants** is a response to the needs of persons and professionals, giving a value to the tourism career and spreading lifelong learning opportunities in the tourism sector inside the society.

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# 1. Project Objectives

**RESPONSible Skills Alliance for Sustainable Management of Small Hotels and Restaurants** develops the new professional profile of the manager/owner of small hotel and restaurant in **response** to the challenge to face the main trends in the sector:

- The increased demand of the tourists with regard to quality, attractiveness and variety of the touristic services;
- The important role of ICT in hotels in view of search, planning and realization of the travels;
- Finding the right balance between the autonomous development of the destinations, the protection of their environment and the development of a competitive economic activity;
- Delivery of safe and high-quality service.

RESPONS project' objectives are:

- To develop the new professional profile of managers/owners of small hotels and restaurants for obtaining innovative management skills and be able to manage its business in a sustainable way, keeping its local identity and social responsibility;
- To identify the skills needs and qualification requirements and upgrade the specific competences via developing a set of criteria and a newly developed joint curriculum for quality lifelong learning;
- To support sector skills in tourism and facilitate personal development and participation in the labour market;
- To facilitate the provision of work-based non-formal learning by developing alternative modes of access to qualifications beyond full-time VET provisions and new flexible e-tools for non-formal and informal learning;
- To provide easily accessible and high-quality lifelong information available for the managers/owners of small hotels and restaurants thus enabling them manage their learning careers.

The **European Qualification Frameworks** of the managers of small hotels and restaurants are elaborated on the basis of learning outcomes. They are intended to serve as reference tools for comparing the qualification levels of the national qualifications systems and for promoting the validation of non-formal and informal learning in the knowledge-based society and the further integration of the European labour market, while respecting the rich diversity of national education systems.

The **RESPONS Toolkit for Green, Socially Responsible and Safe Management of HORECA SMEs** can be considered as a non-formal learning tool that managers and entrepreneurs can use in their working realities and also in support to their company strategies. The e-Handbook and Virtual Interactive Map of Innovative Managerial Skills offer training to improve knowledge, skills and competences just in time, in the moment when it is needed.

The main impact of RESPONS products is to promote cooperation between education and world of work, as well as providing for an integration of a sector-specific competence description for the tourism sector. The newly developed products will support transparency and comparability of qualifications and the mobility of learners and workers on the global tourism market.

This is in response to the increased demand of the tourist regarding quality, attractiveness and variety of the tourist services and supports the right balance between the autonomous development of the destinations, the protection of their environment and the development of a competitive economic activity while delivering safe and high-quality service.

The RESPONS project relies on the value of the delivered products for the potential impact and benefits to the target group representatives. From the national surveys and HORECA skills report, through EQFs of managers of small hotels and restaurants and joint curriculum to e-Handbook and Virtual Interactive Map for Innovative Managerial Skills, the project is delivering products which are challenged by the needs of the tourist sector.

Improving their professional skills, the managers of small hotels and restaurants will be enabled to provide better and more competitive services, to manage their businesses in a more responsible manner, and to be mobile and flexible on the European labour market. Thus, by achieving the aforementioned aims, the **RESPONS** action will contribute to a better cooperation and involvement of employers and social partners within the HORECA sector as well.

## **2. Project Approach**

The RESPONS project applies in its activities the “demand and supply” approach. It starts with the identification of relevant institutions and establishing contacts with them, followed by a survey among representatives of the target groups in the partners’ countries and HORECA Skills Analysis Report. Guided by a common methodology, the partners of the RESPONS project implemented a research to define, which Key Knowledge, Skills and Competencies are demanded in hotel, restaurant and catering industry in order to perform daily tasks in terms of Corporate Social Responsibility and Safe and Sustainable practices. The survey looks for and reports back which possible incentives could be supplied that would motivate companies to invest in training.

Then, the demand of the EU labour market and the lack of unified tools for comparing qualifications of managers of small hotels and restaurants, the need for a new tool to “translate” their knowledge, skills and competencies in an understandable way results into job specific EQFs, which have been elaborated within the project.

And last, but not least, the demand for improved skills and qualifications which describes the typical RESPONS target group representative is to be matched with “supply” of innovative informal and non-formal learning according to the requirements of the potential end users.

The RESPONS project comprises various processes and activities which will be completed within the two-years period. The consortium builds on competence and shared responsibilities - each work package has a leading partner and a core team but all parties are involved within the activities of every work package. RESPONSible Skills Alliance for Sustainable Management of Small Hotels and Restaurants implements a coherent, comprehensive and variable set of interconnected activities, which cover three main spheres of action: 1) activities focused on project management, 2) activities focused on products’ development, and 3) activities focused on sustainability of results.

### **RESPONS activities focused on project management:**

- 1) **MANAGEMENT AND COORDINATION OF THE PROJECT:** The efficient management and continuous monitoring of the project progress are ensured by the logical framework and effective communication and co-operation within the partnership, based on mutual trust and intercultural understanding. The distribution of work and responsibilities within the consortium is balanced and each work package is led by a competent Partner. General management is performed by the Project Coordinator.
- 2) **EVALUATION AND QUALITY MANAGEMENT:** Considering quality within the **RESPONS** project we identify three processes for quality management: quality planning, quality assurance and quality control, incl. internal & external evaluation.

Within the RESPONS project evaluation is done on internal and external level. The external evaluation is done independently to provide project partners with an objective assessment. While monitoring provides real-time information required by management, evaluation provides more in-depth assessment of project processes and products. The monitoring process can generate questions to be answered by evaluation. Also, evaluation draws heavily on data generated through monitoring during the project cycle, including, for example, baseline data, information on the project implementation process, and measurements of results.

However, the aims of both monitoring and evaluation are very similar: to provide information that can help form decisions, improve performance and achieve planned results with the proper **quality**.

**“Quality Assurance”** refers to the process used to create the deliverables, and is performed by the partner responsible for the specific deliverable, by other partner/s or even a third-party reviewer, i.e. an associated partner or stakeholder or representative of the target group. Examples of quality assurance include checklists, questionnaires, etc.

**“Quality Control”** refers to quality related activities associated with the creation of project deliverables. Quality control is used to verify that deliverables are of acceptable quality and that they are complete and correct. Examples of quality control activities include inspection by the Lead partner, deliverable peer reviews, etc.

Quality assurance activities are determined before “production work” begins and these activities are performed while the product is being developed while Quality control activities are performed "after" the product is developed.

### **RESPONS methodology and activities focused on products’ development:**

- 1) **NEEDS AND CHALLENGES OF THE SECTOR:** This WP created a common methodology for the research and analysis of the initial situation, factors and trends in hotel, restaurant and catering industry. This included guidelines for research and reporting and a common questionnaire for defining the needed skills in the sector. The common questionnaire was translated into all Partners’ languages. After national state-of-the-art surveys, 7 national field research reports were prepared and summarized. To present the conclusions and to gather stakeholders’ opinions, 6 round tables with associated Partners and tourism SMEs in the Partners’ countries have been organised. The elaborated HORECA Skills Analyses report points out the following findings:

***The representative of the target group of RESPONS project’s didactic materials is:***

- *Manager of a small hotel/restaurant; he/she is usually responsible for up to 9 employees, working with high probability (almost 50% - every second) in a family-run business, which is located in a small/ midsize city;*
- *She/he has knowledge, skills and competences to perform the daily and routine management of the business, but he/she is willing and looking to enrich them by the means of innovative solutions and methods;*
- *Her/his daily schedule is filled-in, she/he does not have free time, and she/he is managing a small team;*
- *She/he is able to adapt to the changes, can work and cooperate with the team;*
- *She/he posses some knowledge on ICT, foreign languages, but recognizes the need to improve her/his skills;*
- *She/he appreciates the importance of the new realities in the business world, realizing that the information and communication technologies are a tool for communication, advertising, marketing, etc.;*
- *She/he recognizes that learning and improving skills and competencies are processes that depend to a great extent on her/his will and capability;*

- *She/he is responsible to innovations in the area;*
- *She/he wants to develop her/his business and to be competitive.*

**According to the information collected, HORECA managers need:**

- *Modular training courses, made of short and self-consistent modules;*
- *Training courses really based on the problems the sector faces daily, thus built upon the training needs expressed by the HORECA managers;*
- *Available for free/at a low cost;*
- *Preferably, an online training course providing practical information about how to solve the most frequent problems met while managing daily workload.*

- 2) **Definition of EQFs OF MANAGER OF SMALL HOTEL AND RESTAURANT:** On the basis of the HORECA Analysis Report, a skills and competences matrix was designed. Learning outcomes were identified on the basis of Partners' national requirements for 2 professions containing both the traditional aspects of the provision of hotel, restaurant and catering services, as well as an innovative approach to meet the diverse and rapidly changing needs of tourists and travelers. New professional profiles for managers of small hotels/restaurants were developed following the learning outcomes and main competences described. Part of the activity is the development of joint curriculum. It relies on the HORECA analysis of the skilled work performance and outlines work-based open promotion routes and takes into account alternative types of access to qualifications beyond full-time VET provisions with conventional curricula.
- 3) **TOOLKIT FOR GREEN, SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE AND SAFE MANAGEMENT OF HORECA SMEs:** aiming at creating flexible e-tools for non-formal and informal learning helping managers of small hotels and restaurants to acquire new knowledge in a job-oriented way and to meet the needs of adults learners within the sector. The Info-formative toolkit is divided into 2 parts - **e-Handbook and Virtual Interactive Map of Innovative Management Skills.** They both are intended as complementary training to the general qualification of hotel and restaurant managers. The approach of the training is to support just-in-time training that is hands-on and helps the direct implementation of the learning outcomes achieved at the work place. Accordingly, two versions of the training will be made available.  
Both products can be used by owners/managers of small hotels and restaurants, by managing directors and/ or employees working in the field of human resources development, by owners/ directors of companies in the supply chain of small hotels and restaurants. (work in progress)

**RESPONS activities focused on sustainability of results:**

- 1) **DISSEMINATION OF RESPONS PRODUCTS:** aims to optimize the value of the project, strengthening its impact, and integrating it into the broader EU context. This integration will be done in a sustainable manner and has to achieve maximum impact. The package started with the elaboration of a dissemination strategy.

The dissemination strategy defines aims, channels, messages, and tools to reach a large number of potential beneficiaries. Partners prepared dissemination plans describing the concrete dissemination activity, means and level of dissemination, target groups and impact. The dissemination plans will be continuously updated.

The dissemination started with the project launch and will increase its intensity whenever results are ready. Main milestones of RESPONS dissemination are the project' website <http://responsalliance.eu>, the leaflets and brochure, and the promotional video-clips. The various events which will be organised by the partners, represent another channel for dissemination. RESPONS project will be strongly promoted in regional, national and international networks in the spheres of tourism and ECVET. The approval, implementation, testing and acknowledgment of the products by various stakeholders will contribute to the sustainability of the project. (work in progress)

- 2) **EXPLOITATION AND SUSTAINABILITY OF RESPONS ALLIANCE:** the objective of this WP is to guarantee that the project results will sustain and bring benefit to different parties. It will be active towards the end of the project, as its actions are important as the project comes to its close. The consortium plans to have stakeholder consultations, series of targeted meetings with officials, to exploit the project results to the maximum and radiate them as widely as possible. RESPONS partners are open to the various stakeholders to present and share not only the products but also the valuable lessons and experience to benefit others. Beyond promotional materials, regular media coverage and entrances in specialised media, the partners are planning National specialized seminars for HORECA SMEs in the partner countries and European conference in Spain. Important issue will be a cooperation with regional and national stakeholders and future cooperation under Mobility for VET providers. The dissemination and exploitation activities targeted to wide audiences aim to attract policy makers, institutions and VET providers at national and EU level to implement RESPONS products, to enhance the project' impact and to maximise its effects.

### 3. Project Outcomes & Results

RESPONS outcomes and results reached during the first year of the action meet the initial plans and are building the basis for the next activities. In terms of their completion, **main** results are divided into two groups: finalized products and results and outcomes under development.

#### **Finalized products:**

- 1. Logical framework of RESPONS Alliance** is the core instrument to obtain the main goals of WP1: efficient financial and administrative management of the project, effective coordination and communication with the Partners and the Commission and quality of project process. It presents key components of the project in a clear, concise, systematic and goal oriented way and allows the continuous monitoring of the project activities and results (confidential product).
- 2. Guidelines for research and reporting** – the main objective was to create common methodology for research and analysis of the initial situation, factors and trends in HORECA industry with the purpose of defining the needed skills, competences and qualification requirements and upgrading the specific skills and competences for the occupation of the point of view of new challenges that green jobs and responsible and sustainable management impose. It contains a questionnaire, instructions for conducting the survey and guideline for reporting. Questionnaires are translated in all Partners' languages. Guidelines for research are developed in English (confidential product).
- 3. National field research reports** identify the actual state for vocational preparation and key knowledge, skills and competencies needed in hotel, restaurant (and catering) industry in order to perform daily tasks in terms of high quality service provision; health and safety Management; Sustainability/Corporate Social Responsibility. National reports are in EN and in Partners' national languages. They are available on <http://responsalliance.eu/products/horeca-skills-analysis/>.
- 4. HORECA Skills Analyses** points out the new professional profile of managers of small hotels and restaurants and provides the basis for elaboration of skills and competencies matrix and is a reference point for the content of e-Handbook, outlining the skills "On focus" and possible incentives that could motivate companies to invest in training. It is translated into EN, BG, DE, ES, FR, IT, PL, RO languages are available on <http://responsalliance.eu/products/horeca-skills-analysis/>.
- 5. Definition of EQFs of manager of small hotel and restaurant** are based on the traditional education in the partnering countries and relate different countries' national qualifications systems and frameworks together around a common European reference, specifically based at Level 5. There have been included interdisciplinary issues of promotion of tourist products, modern methods of sales promotion with the use of computer technology and the Internet, as well as in law, finance, management and interpersonal communication. EQFs of manager of small hotel/restaurant in EN, BG, DE, ES, FR, IT, PL, RO languages are available on <http://responsalliance.eu/>.
- 6. Quality Assurance Manual** - aims at creating and implementing effective mechanisms for evaluation and quality assurance of the project and its compliance with the initial goals and plans. Midterm internal evaluation and 1<sup>st</sup> External evaluation reports are elaborated (confidential products).

7. **RESPONS Dissemination Strategy** aims at ensuring that RESPONS products reach final beneficiaries, stakeholders and other interested parties; the optimisation of the value of the project, strengthening its impact, and integrating it in a sustainable manner into the broader EU context; the achievement of maximum impact. Dissemination strategy identifies the target audiences, it describes main dissemination methods, tools and messages of RESPONS (confidential product).
8. **RESPONS website:** <http://responsalliance.eu/>.

RESPONS results and outcomes under development:

1. **E-Handbook for socially responsible management of HORECA SMEs** aims at creating flexible and useful e-tools for non-formal learning helping HORECA managers to acquire new knowledge in a job-oriented way. Methodological guideline for the formulation of the e-Handbook for Socially Responsible management of HORECA SMEs is developed. It gives indications on the objectives, the format and layout, the structure and learning content planned, in order to ensure a standardised approach of all partners involved into the realisation of the e-Handbook (work in progress).
2. The concept for **Virtual Map of Innovative Management Skills** is already elaborated. It is designed to show specific skills, competences and knowledge of the responsible HORECA managers and will demonstrate these with examples. The tool is developed as a tour of competences, where the user can find out more on how to run a hotel and restaurant in an innovative and responsible manner. It will combine video situations and a virtual animated map of competences, following the EQFs of hotel and restaurant managers in connection with the HORECA skills analysis - with an accent on the skills "In focus" (work in progress).
3. **RESPONS Exploitation strategy** – 1<sup>st</sup> draft version is produced, identifying target groups/impact, methods and means of exploitation; exploitation plan (confidential product, work in progress).

## **4. Partnerships**

In all countries of the partnership tourism plays a significant role with a high potential to contribute to higher employment, as well as to economic development and socio-economic integration.

RESPONS project provides European Qualification Frameworks of the managers of small hotels and restaurants in terms of knowledge, skills and competences, based on learning outcomes, which supports transparency and comparability in the qualifications and the mobility of learners and workers. In the same time the RESPONS project integrates possibilities of acquiring and improving knowledge and skills on an almost continuous basis.

To reach RESPONS objectives a strong consortium has been build. The transnational Partnership is composed of 9 Partners from 7 EU countries belonging to various institutions representing and linking the world of business, formal education, and ECVET. Some of the Partners have extensive knowledge of the national education systems and National Qualification Frameworks, of advising and studying of skills reference guides and evaluation of skills, engineering and advice in training and pedagogy (GIP-FCIP-FR, Euproma-DE, PFHR-NUB-BG, CIAPE-IT). The consortium embraces also Chambers of Commerce and business organizations with extensive experience in assessment of key skills of students in VET schools, SME managers, organization of training courses for entrepreneurs, development of tools for non-formal work-based learning, strong involvement in the social dialogue (CCI-BG, La Cambra-ES, CCINA – RO, FPE-PL).



The communication and co-operation within the partnership is based on mutual trust and intercultural understanding, which is one of the pre-conditions for a successful project work. Key decisions related to the project progress and main outputs are taken with consensus of opinions. The Lead partner performs general management. The distribution of work and responsibilities within the consortium is balanced and each work package is led by a competent Partner. The WP Leader is responsible for planning, distributing and leading the work within the appropriate WP. Partners are involved in decision-making process by defining real deadlines to receive the partners' feedback on a discussed topic.

**RESPONS** goals are to be achieved also with the support of local, regional and national associated partners such as public authorities, Agencies for regional development, branch associations, trade unions, VET providers, which give an added value to the Alliance. The round tables organised during research period confirmed the support of various stakeholders. The number of interested partners is expected to increase in the forthcoming months when RESPONS dissemination and exploitation strategies enter their next stage and the developed RESPONS products are to be widely presented.

**RESPONS** consortium blends direct experience in the hospitality sector with experienced networks having impact at regional and national level. As far as national qualifications agencies and tourism sector bodies are not represented in the partnership, attracting such partners is among the most important goals within the rest of the action. The first steps in this direction have already been made during the first year of implementation of RESPON. The partners were able to put the foundation for collaboration to reach the maximum of RESPON impact with national and regional policy makers such as NAVET and RC of BHRA in Bulgaria; Council of Vocational Training, Hospitality Services Guild, Council of Tourism from Terrassa's region and Foment de Terrassa in Spain; Romanian Riviera – Danube Delta Tourism Promotion and Development Board and Romanian Tourism Employers' Federation in Romania; FAFH and UMIH in France, Regional Tourism Organisation of Łódź Voivodship, Regional Centre of Teachers' Training and Vocational Education in Lodz and Complex of Economic-Hotel and Tourism Schools in Lodz in Poland

## **5. Plans for the Future**

The second year of the action is dedicated to production and completion of the main products of the RESPONS project, their dissemination and promotion to the target groups and the exploitation of the results towards sustainability. As initially planned the partners will work on the **Info-formative Toolkit for green, socially responsible and safe management of small hotels and restaurants**. The purpose of these activities is to create flexible and useful tools for HORECA managers, which will support them in executing their everyday tasks in a more socially responsible and sustainable way.

The **Info-formative toolkit for green, socially responsible and safe management of small hotels and restaurants is combining two attractive tools - an e-Handbook for HORECA Managers with hands-on information on CSR and a Virtual Interactive Map showing and visualising innovative skills**. These learning tools will be based on the skills and competences' matrix already developed and will be accessible in 9 Partners' languages.

The development of **E-Handbook for socially responsible management of HORECA SMEs** will follow the methodological guidelines which have been already delivered and will consist of 4 thematic modules on which the implementation of CSR is based: Module 1: Responsible Management, Module 2: Market place, Module 3: Environment and Module 4: Local community. It will be realized as online version, facilitating web-based training, as well as an offline-version of it in pdf-format, which will be made available for download, both on the project's website.

The e-Handbook will be written in a questions & answers style covering relevant issues in the daily HORECA business in these 4 main areas. The answers will be substantiated with good practice examples and case studies to support the knowledge transfer to and implementation at the work place of the HORECA Managers. At the end of every module there will be furthermore a self-assessment test, which will enable the HORECA managers to check the knowledge, skills and competencies acquired within the respective module.

The **Virtual Interactive map of innovative management skills** is a tool, which will be developed as a tour of competences, where the user can find out more on how to manage a hotel or restaurant in an innovative and responsible manner. It is based on movies clips shot in existing hotels and restaurants and will present issue specific situations, such as: new ways of communication, use of Web 2 in branding and marketing, human resources development, mentoring and schemes for apprenticeships, green marketing and communication, safe working conditions, cooperative ability, adaptation to change and critical and creative thinking to solve problems. The situations are linked to learning outcomes in the EQFs for hotel and restaurant managers and to skills "in focus" outlined in HORECA Skills Analysis.

The Partners will continue paying particular attention to the **evaluation and quality assurance**. The quality assurance and evaluation strategy of RESPONS is based on procedures which aim is to contribute to achieve the success of the project both in qualitative and quantitative terms. The quality management is done on two levels – internal and external evaluation. Internal evaluation is a constant evaluation of the project's processes, products and impact.

External evaluation will be focused on review, observation and evaluation of the process of products elaboration towards their correspondence to the objectives set, expected results and impact to the target groups representatives. It will reflect the coherence, sequences

and interrelations between different outcomes. Recommendations for valorisation and sustainability of results will be made.

**Activities to disseminate information and exploit results and innovative products** form an important and integral part of RESPONSible Skills Alliance, since the very beginning of the project and will even go beyond the project's official end. All Partners are involved in the dissemination and exploitation activities to ensure that the project results are transferred to the identified target groups at local, national and international levels.

The quality of dissemination and exploitation activities is assured by development of dissemination and exploitation strategies. They are clearly defining the aims, target groups (short-term and long-term), main methods and tools for dissemination, as well as the role of the Partners. The main accent will be focused on the following guiding principles which will allow reaching optimum impact: 1) use of proper dissemination media at local, regional and national levels, 2) balanced use of social media, 3) continuous direct contacts with the target groups (HORECA SMEs, VET providers, social partners), 4) use of project logo and clearly identified messages supporting the creation of project identity to attract and retain attention of project' stakeholders through RESPONS lifespan and beyond.

The second year of RESPONS project will put main value on dissemination and exploitation of products to promote and integrate them to a broader EU context. The strategies implemented by the partners to reach the various groups are focused on maximum audience and optimum impact. To accomplish this goal, Partners will continue using their different communication channels, such as organizations' web pages, newsletters, publications and targeted suitable events. RESPONS products will be tested by the representatives of various target groups and fine tuned if necessary. RESPONS website will be constantly updated with latest information about the project and its products. Project Newsletter will be issued and widely broadcasted. Short videos will be produced, focused on the most effective parts of RESPONS results with attractive visual content components which will be perceived by a broad audience. RESPONS brochure will be elaborated in all Partners' languages, promoting European qualifications frameworks for managers of small hotels and restaurants, ECVET and CSR. Brochures and promotional materials will be distributed during different events. In order to reach the main stakeholders and to introduce the main products to them, national specialized seminars in six Partners' countries will be organized. These seminars will be organized as training courses and will deliver practical experience on the subjects of the e-Handbook for socially responsible management of HORECA SMEs and on the subjects covered by the Virtual interactive map for innovative management skills. Main international event is the European conference for responsible skills, planned to take place in Terrassa, Spain in October 2015. The conference will gather in one place main project target groups at European level – HORECA managers, VET providers, social partners and policy makers and will settle the basis for mainstreaming and multiplication of RESPONS results.

## **6. Contribution to EU policies**

*'The hospitality industry is constantly in need of new skills and talents to match the constant evolution in its clients' needs and demands (e.g. for spas, sports activities, environmentally friendly services, etc.). In this regard focus should be put on adequate training and life long learning. There is a need to adapt to this trend rapidly, which may pose problems especially for SMEs as they might not have the necessary capacities or resources.'*<sup>1</sup>

It has been widely recognized that education and training are essential to the development and success of today's knowledge society and economy. A number of European instruments such as the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), Europass, European credit transfer systems (ECTS and ECVET), the multilingual classification of European Skills/Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO) and quality assurance frameworks have been developed and implemented to support the mobility of learners and workers. They are improving transparency, making qualifications comparable across countries and credit points transferable. These instruments were not developed in isolation from each other, they are in a close coherence where the different tools and services - including transparency and recognition of qualifications, validation of non-formal and informal learning and lifelong guidance - are offered in a coordinated way.

RESPONS project delivers European Qualification Frameworks for Manager of small hotel and Manager of small restaurant together with the new Professional profile for the both professions. The project makes available and public for various target groups and stakeholders e-Handbook for socially responsible management of HORECA SMEs and Virtual Interactive map of innovative management skills.

RESPONS contributes to the realization of the **European area for lifelong learning**, by

- use of easily understandable and widely recognized learning outcomes as a basis for RESPONS products;
- offering EQFs as reference tools for comparison and interpretation of qualifications in different EU countries;
- providing EQFs as means to improve transparency and making qualifications transferable;
- promoting innovative learning tools as the e-Handbook for socially responsible management of HORECA SMEs and the Virtual Interactive map of innovative management skills to HORECA sector and other interested parties;
- motivating direct beneficiaries to use extensively ICT in training RESPONS contributes to the **transversal policy**: ICT in training.

RESPONS enhances the attractiveness of vocational education and training and mobility for individuals and facilitates the personal career development by making the learning itineraries more flexible, matching the programs with the market, recognising the importance of not formal and informal learning to combine the working experience with the qualifications and employment expectation. The project meets these criteria through the definition and aggregation of learning outcomes, by putting the qualifications into context, anticipating needs and promoting mobility.

RESPONS contributes to real European mobility where a person's knowledge, skills and competences can be clearly understood and quickly recognized using **ECVET** guidelines.

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<sup>1</sup> HOTREC Response to Communication on a new framework for tourism in Europe COM (2010) 352 final.

By piloting and promoting of **innovative and sustainable work-based learning tools**, RESPONS results can be seen as instruments for empowering people, developing their professional identity, making easier the recognition of skills and competences, as set in **Bruges communiqué** on enhanced European Cooperation in VET. The use of ICT, the outcomes and results of RESPONS are in line also with the Short-term deliverables for 2011 – 2014 set out in the document.

RESPONS contributes to the policy **Education and Training 2020 Work Programme**, as it encourages quality and suitability of training, by matching the qualifications with the sector needs, the prevision of new employments and provokes greater cooperation between training suppliers, companies and interlocutors. On the other hand, it makes lifelong learning and mobility become a reality, through the use of innovative learning tools to favor, among other things, the **competitiveness of SMEs in tourism sector**. RESPONS delivers an answer to the views of social partners which point out the **need to improve the skills of the workforce**.

Europe's targets to **reduce poverty** require investment in education and training to empower individuals through skills. EU calls for flexible access to training and qualifications and proposes attracting more people into VET by improving its quality and efficiency and foresees by 2020 flexible learning pathways, greater mobility and the wider use and acceptance of recognition of non-formal and informal learning, including work-based learning RESPONS project is a step into this direction. It offers opportunities for adequate training adapted to the needs of the managers in small hotels and restaurants as reported by HORECA Skills Analysis.

RESPONS alliance shares the values of EU policies aiming to promote **tourism** so as to maintain Europe's standing as a leading destination, and maximize the industry's contribution to growth and employment. Acknowledging the importance of the sector and providing valuable products to bring benefits to HORECA managers makes RESPONS project part of the mainstream to **sustainable growth**.

The high quality of tourism services in Europe makes tourism here attractive and constitutes a competitive advantage. On 20 February 2014 the European Commission proposed a set of voluntary European Tourism Quality Principles to help tourism service providers promote the quality of their services and strengthen consumer confidence. The principles focus on 4 main areas of tourism service quality such as employee training, consumer satisfaction policy, cleaning and maintenance, information provided to tourists. By the end of its realization, RESPONS will offer tangible results and deliverables to support these principles.

RESPONSible Skills Alliance for Sustainable Management of Small Hotels and Restaurants shares the values of **corporate social responsibility**. Improving the awareness about CSR and including its principles within the training tools, RESPONS project is corresponding with Europe's **Enterprise 2020** initiative to address the European and global challenges which are increasingly bringing into question our current patterns of living, working, learning, communicating, consuming and sharing resources. RESPONS shares the opinion that today's companies must develop their business strategies based on an understanding of how the world will look in the future.

Finally, RESPONS contributes to the **Europe 2020**' "challenge 2020 to achieve an employment rate of 75% for women and men between 20 and 64 years old". Lifelong learning is a key to benefit from the increase of highly qualified work places and the countries have to work together and learn from each other.

