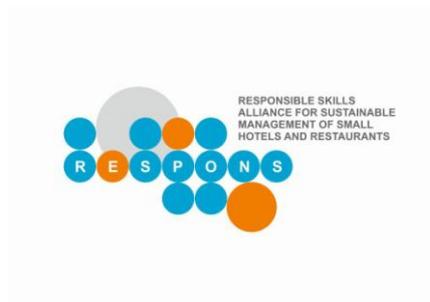




Executive Agency, Education, Audiovisual and Culture



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

Final Report

Public Part

Project information

Project acronym: **RESPONS**

Project title: **RESPONSible Skills Alliance for Sustainable Management of Small Hotels and Restaurants**

Project number: **539920-LLP-1-2013-1-BG-LEONARDO-LMP**

Sub-programme or KA: Leonardo Da Vinci – Multilateral Projects for Development of Innovation

Project website: <http://responsalliance.eu/>

Reporting period: From 01.11.2013
To 31.10.2015

Report version: 1

Date of preparation: 28.12.2015

Beneficiary organisation: Chamber of Commerce and Industry – Dobrich, Bulgaria

Project coordinator: Veselina Stoyanova

Project coordinator organisation: Chamber of Commerce and Industry – Dobrich, Bulgaria

Project coordinator telephone number: +359 58 601 435

Project coordinator email address: vstoyanova@cci.dobrich.net

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission.

This publication [communication] 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.

© 2008 Copyright Education, Audiovisual & Culture Executive Agency.

The document may be freely copied and distributed provided that no modifications are made, that the source is acknowledged and that this copyright notice is included.

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 hotel 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 built. 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 a Learning Space for CSR and Managers' Guide for Sustainable Business 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 may 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.

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 1. PROJECT OBJECTIVES..... | 5 |
| 2. PROJECT APPROACH..... | 7 |
| 3. PROJECT OUTCOMES & RESULTS..... | 12 |
| 4. PARTNERSHIPS | 18 |
| 5. PLANS FOR THE FUTURE | 20 |
| 6. CONTRIBUTION TO EU POLICIES | 22 |

1. Project Objectives

RESPONS is a response to the challenges in HORECA sector referring to the increased demand of the tourists to quality, attractiveness and variety of the touristic services; the important role of information and communication technologies in hotels in regards 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; the delivery of safe and high-quality services, provided in accordance with the Corporate Social Responsibility and sustainable development.

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 benefits for the RESPONS end users cover a number of areas:

- Introducing the **qualification framework** for two widely spread professions – “**manager of small hotel**” and “**manager of small restaurant**” in 9 languages: EN, BG, CAT, DE, ES, FR, IT, PL and RO, which contain both the traditional aspects of the provision of hotel and catering services, as well as an innovative approach to meet the diverse and rapidly changing needs of tourists and travelers. They 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 new professional profiles for “manager of small hotel” and “manager of small restaurant” are ready to be used by employers as a well structured description of the occupation;
- Motivating hotel' and restaurant' managers, as well as students in vocational schools and colleges to acquire new knowledge on how to achieve business success in ways that honour ethical values and respect people, communities and the natural environment;
- Improving the specific skills of HORECA managers based on learning outcomes: the multilingual Managers' guide for sustainable business is conceived as a tour of competences and presents real life situations in the manager's daily work with an

emphasis given to the innovative skills mainly in direction Green, Socially Responsible and Safe Management;

- Improving the transversal skills and abilities of hotel' and restaurant' managers like adaptation to change, problem solving, language skills (Managers' Guide);
- Supporting lifelong learning that can be easily integrated into the daily routine of hotel' and restaurant' managers, i.e. the e-Handbook for Socially Responsible Management of Small Hotels and Restaurants (pdf and online version) developed as **modular** training course, made of **short and self-consistent** modules facilitates non-formal and work based learning just in time, whenever it is needed.

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 analysis, through EQFs of managers of small hotels and restaurants to e-Handbook for Socially Responsible Management of small hotels and restaurants and Manager's Guide for Sustainable Business, the project is delivering products which are challenged by the needs of the tourist sector: HORECA SMEs, VET providers and social partners in the different countries closely followed each implementation stage by giving their opinion during round tables, meetings, pilot testing and national specialized seminars, providing the users' point of view. Their constructive comments and proposals have been taken into consideration in the process of developing and fine-tuning of RESPONS products.

Improving their professional skills, the managers of small hotels and restaurants are 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 is contributing to a better cooperation and involvement of employers and social partners within the HORECA sector as well.

2. Project Approach

The RESPON 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 RESPON 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 RESPON 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 RESPON project comprises various processes and activities which have been completed within the two-year 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.

RESPON 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, the risk management plan 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 **RESPON** project we identify three processes for quality management: quality planning, quality assurance and quality control, incl. internal & external evaluation.

The external evaluation is independent and provides project partners with an objective assessment. While monitoring ensures real-time information required by management, evaluation is a 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:** The 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 and the comparative presentation of the educational systems in HORECA sector of the partnering countries and National qualifications, a skills and competences matrix was designed. Learning areas, units and 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 e-Toolkit is divided into 2 parts - **e-Handbook for Socially Responsible Management of small hotels and restaurants and Managers' Guide for Sustainable Business.**

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. 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.

RESPONS activities focused on sustainability of results:

1) **DISSEMINATION OF RESPONS PRODUCTS** aims at optimizing the value of the project, strengthening its impact, and integrating it into the broader EU context. This integration is 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, methods, messages, and strategies to reach a large number of potential beneficiaries. Partners prepared and updated dissemination plans describing the dissemination activities, means and level of dissemination, target groups and impact. According to the Partners' dissemination plans, a dissemination action plan has been elaborated.

Key methods of RESPONS dissemination:

- Project' website <http://responsalliance.eu>;
- Meetings and collaboration with associated partners and target groups representatives – hotel' and restaurant managers, HR managers, VET and educational institutions, social partners, local/ regional authorities;
- Round tables in the countries of Partnership and workshops and events for involvement of the target group;
- Publication of RESPONS video-clips promoting the EQFs and e-Toolkit in European Networks such as Enterprise Europe Network contact points in Bulgaria, Poland and Romania; in Euroreso Network, in Bulgarian and Romanian HORECA Branch Associations;
- Publications and press releases in regional/national media (newspapers, newsletters);
- Distribution of RESPONS leaflets and brochures during specialized touristic events, fairs, conferences;
- Expanded dissemination through Facebook.

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.

RESPONS exploitation strategy was developed outlining the exploitation mechanisms and activities for involvement of the target groups, tools for qualitative and quantitative measurement of impact, RESPONS commercialization potential and IPR agreements between the partners.

Key exploitation activities within RESPONS:

- RESPONS website will be continuously updated as it provides a powerful exploitation and sustainability of the results, because it is free of charge and its impact is continuously widen not only in Europe but also in Canada, China, Russia, USA;
- Pilot testing of e-Toolkit with the target group: the peer review, piloting and testing guaranteed that the requirements were followed, that the needs of the target beneficiaries have been addressed and that the quality of the RESPONS products meets the criteria for LLP;
- 6 national specialized seminars “Instruments for Skills’ Development and Recognition and Corporate Social Responsibility for Small Hotels and Restaurants” were carried out in Bulgaria, France, Italy, Poland, Romania and Spain;
- Methodology for Sustainability of RESPONS results was developed;
- European Conference for Responsible Skills in hospitality and dining industry was carried out in Sant Cugat del Vallès, Spain;
- Involvement of European Networks: discussions with potential partnership to further enhance and widen the scope of the project in terms of skills development practices and CSR in tourism initiated by the Partners from Tourism and Cultural Heritage Sector Group; CSR for SMEs group in LinkedIn;
- RESPONS has been presented as a best practice example on “Connecting European Chambers: Sharing Lessons Learnt and new challenges from EU Programmes” organized by EuroChambers annual training “Connecting Chambers” held in Brussels.

Lessons learned within RESPONS project:

- The EQF for Hotel manager and EQF for Restaurant manager is proving to be applicable in all partnering countries although the differences within the countries' systems;
- The unique aspects and applicability of the EQF need to be communicated to various audiences to guarantee wider impact;
- The hotel and restaurant managers who run their own businesses value their time and appreciate innovative tools which support their business growth and their competitiveness;
- The value of RESPONS products is significant for the development of the HORECA SMEs and a closer communication with VET providers is crucial for wider exploitation of the results;
- Citizens should combine learning outcomes acquired in different settings, on different levels and in different countries within their transnational mobility just when such mobility is needed to create more economic growth;
- The legislative authorities should be always one step ahead the business to provide conditions for sustainable development in the hospitality industry. Changes should start from education as a precondition for growth and economic development;
- The accumulation of knowledge, skills and competences through credits must be oriented to the opportunity for the transfer of these credits. The aim is to facilitate the planning, realization, assessment, recognition and validation of qualifications and units, as well as the mobility of students. The credit transfer system must be widely and valuably used in the formal vocational education and training and in other activities connected with the Lifelong Learning;
- The validation of non-formal and informal learning is a challenge for the educational institutions, but it encourages the wider access and the participation in the Lifelong Learning which helps the development of an appropriate set of knowledge, skills and competences and ensures the competitiveness of individuals on the labour market;
- The level of awareness in the spheres of CSR varied compared from country to country but the need to obtain new knowledge, skills and competences in the issues is key feature of many small businesses in HORECA sector at European level;
- The responsible business is looking for synergies between the three fields of activity of the company: economic, social and environment. An enterprise which is not able to adapt to surrounding changes, is most likely not to succeed in business;
- Companies investing in the continuous improvement of the qualification of the staff by formal and non-formal training and in the creation of good corporate micro-climate will receive in return: improvement of economic results; higher loyalty of the staff; improvement of the reputation; increase of the competitiveness; better relationships with social partners, local community and public institutions.

3. Project Outcomes & Results

- **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).
- **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).
- **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 English and in Partners' national languages. They are available on <http://responsalliance.eu/products/horeca-skills-analysis/>.
- **HORECA Skills Analyses** points out the new professional profile of managers/owners of small hotels and restaurants and provides the basis for elaboration of skills and competencies matrix. It 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 and is available on <http://responsalliance.eu/products/horeca-skills-analysis/>.
- **6 round tables** in Bulgaria, France, Italy, Poland, Romania and Spain were held. They were the first opportunity for involvement of Partners' Associated Partners, such as VET schools and centres, educational institutions and inspectorates, social partners (CCIs, Trade Unions), local authorities and HORECA SMEs. During these meetings the results of national research, the skills and competence' matrix and professional profiles of manager of small hotel and restaurant have been presented and enriched with their contributions. **85 participants** in totally attended the events. Information about round tables is published on RESPONS website' Meetings and events rubric: <http://responsalliance.eu/meetings-events/?paging=3>.
- **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. The common framework facilitates transparency and comparability of qualifications, improves mutual trust among qualifications stakeholders and serves as a reference point for sector organizations issuing qualifications. The developed European Qualification Frameworks of the Managers of small hotels and restaurants in terms of knowledge, skills and competences are based on learning outcomes as statements of what the learner knows, understands and is able to do after completion of the learning

process. EQFs are the starting point for the creation of new Professional profile of the manager of a small hotel / restaurant. They are translated into in EN, BG, CAT, DE, ES, FR, IT, PL, RO languages and are available on: <http://responsalliance.eu/products/european-qualifications-frameworks/>.

- **E-Handbook for Socially Responsible Management of Small Hotels and restaurants** is a part of RESPON e-Toolkit. It supports lifelong learning that can be easily integrated into the daily routine, i.e. it facilitates non-formal and work based learning just in time, whenever it is needed. It is relating to CSR, which is increasingly becoming a decisive success factor in the HORECA sector. The whole handbook is structured into four modules, which are subdivided further into units (= questions). These units contain theoretical information as well as practical examples for responsible economic activities with regard to own products and services (market), ecologically relevant aspects (environment), relations to own staff (workplace) and external stakeholders (local communities). Each module ends with a self-evaluation test and a table with the learning outcomes acquired during the training.

The e-Handbook provides useful information about:

- Sustainable management and development of human resources;
- How to integrate social standards into the business strategy of the organization;
- How to plan, organize and manage strategically the ecologically friendly use of resources;
- How to systematically reduce the environmental impact/ ecological footprint of the business;
- How to preserve and promote the local cultural heritage;
- How to increase the competitiveness of your own business within the HORECA sector.

It is developed in PDF and online (ICT tool) versions which are available in EN, BG, CAT, DE, ES, FR, IT, PL, RO languages in “Learning Space for CSR” on RESPON website: <http://responsalliance.eu/products/learning-space-csr/>.

- **Managers’ Guide for Sustainable Business** is a virtual interactive map of innovative management skills, developed as a tour of competences. It combines video situations and an animated map of competences, following the European Qualification Frameworks for small hotel’ and restaurant’ managers. The tool gives the opportunity to observe real life situations in which the manager of a small hotel and restaurant faces and solves problems, focuses on the skill sets required in each situation and enables users to easily browse through the full content of all the corresponding skills and competences in the frameworks. The tool allows managers to gain long-lasting cognition on how to run a hotel and restaurant in an innovative and responsible manner. It is available in EN, BG, CAT, DE, ES, FR, IT, PL, RO languages: <http://responsalliance.eu/products/virtual-interactive-map/>.
- **Project evaluation and Quality Assurance** - aims at creating and implementing effective mechanisms for evaluation and quality assurance of the project and its compliance with the initial goals and plans. **Quality Assurance Manual** was developed in order to provide a detailed description of all activities to be carried out within the WP5 “Evaluation and Quality Management”. Midterm and final internal evaluation reports are elaborated. The internal evaluation within RESPON project is complemented by the assignment of an external independent expert with the aim to provide external assessment and recommendations on the project developments.

External evaluation reports and report for sustainable exploitation of results are provided (confidential products).

– **DISSEMINATION AND EXPLOITATION OF RESPONS RESULTS**

- **RESPONS website** www.responsalliance.eu is designed as the most sustainable dissemination tool of the project, but also as a tool for non-formal learning. It is translated into 9 language (BG, CAT, EN, DE, ES, FR, IT, PL, RO).

The website contains:

- Section “About the project” giving information about the project, its aims and products;
 - Section “Alliance” is presenting the Partnership and the Associated partners;
 - Section “Meetings and events” provides information about the organized events;
 - Section “Products” – all project products are published here.
 - Section “Useful links” provides information about main European and Partners’ national useful links in terms of tourism, education (EQF, ECVET, EQUAVET), CSR and sustainable development;
 - Learning space for CSR is a direct link from RESPONS homepage to the training;
 - Section PartnersNet is a tool for internal communication and storage of working documents for Partners (confidential).
- **RESPONS leaflet and brochure:** provide information about the project, the Partnership, main products developed, but also key messages to business and educational institutions and appeal to policy makers. They are available in all Partners languages (BG, CAT, DE, EN, ES, FR, IT, PL, RO): <http://responsalliance.eu/products/brochure/>;
- **Video-clip for EQFs** for manager of small hotel and manager of small restaurant promoting the two qualifications and benefits of them: <http://responsalliance.eu/products/european-qualifications-frameworks/>.
- **Video-clip for e-Handbook for Socially Responsible Management of Small hotels and restaurant and Managers’ Guide for Sustainable Business** is a short story showing how to use the e-Toolkit: <http://responsalliance.eu/products/learning-space-csr/>.

Both videos are published in different networks, such as Bulgarian, Polish and Romanian National Enterprise Europe Network sites, EEN Forums, Euroreso, csr.bg, Romanian Riviera – Danube Delta Tourism Promotion and Development, Tourism Employers Federation, CSR for SMEs group in LinkedIn, E.N.T.E.R. and C-E.N.T.E.R. FB, etc..

- **National specialized seminars** – Six national seminars were organized in Bulgaria, France, Italy, Poland, Romania and Spain in order to inform managers of small hotels and restaurants, students, VET providers in the field of tourism, branch associations how to manage their companies in a safe, socially responsible and sustainable way; to increase the impact of RESPONS outcomes; to successfully transfer the results to appropriate stakeholders, incl. decision-makers in order to achieve their sustainable promotion and support. All seminars were organized in two parts: presentation of RESPONS methodology and results and exploration (testing) of tools created and possibilities of use for vocational training and as a tool for non-

formal work-based learning by companies. In the end participants received **promotional materials** and **certificate**. **253 stakeholders** in total attended the events. Information about seminars is available on “Meeting and events” section of RESPONS website: <http://responsalliance.eu/meetings-events/>;

- **European conference for responsible skills** was the final event for promotion of project results organized during the day of Entrepreneurship in Sant-Cugat del Vallès (Spain). The conference was divided into 3 panels and was opened by the president of CCI – Terrassa asking “Which are the ingredients for a good entrepreneurship?”. Then RESPONS and sustainable business practices in food and hospitality industry were presented. The demonstration session of RESPONS included presentation of different phases of the project implementation and responsible Partners showed directly how to use the products. Four best practices from Bulgaria, France, Italy and Spain were presented. The shared leitmotif of Bulgarian hotel and restaurant owner was: *“You can’t put in order your business unless you first organize your own thoughts, ideas, goals and actions. The first step is to develop a set of profound personal values which will be the manager’s standards and guides throughout the decision making and work process. These sets of values you can use as a filter to objectively evaluate any personal or professional thoughts, ideas and actions. Only by applying virtues like Honesty, Creativity and Intuition you can elevate the business to the universal levels of Truth, Peace and Justice and contribute to a more humane and social environment.”* The conference was attended by 462 participants, such as HORECA SMEs, food producers, retailers, VET providers, students, social partners, local authorities, entrepreneurs, CCIs, NGOs, Partners and their Associated Partners. Information about RESPONS European conference is available on “Meeting and events” section of RESPONS website: <http://responsalliance.eu/meetings-events/>

TOOLS FOR DISSEMINATION AND EXPLOITATION:

The Partners used a number of tools to capture, analyse and report the impact of the project:

- **Dissemination and exploitation strategies** are documents that describe the aims, methods, channels, target groups and Partners’ activities. The **dissemination action plan** contains the planned dissemination and exploitation activities with timescales and responsibilities for each Partner and common dissemination steps. Dissemination grid was used for reporting the impact.
- **Methodology for sustainable exploitation of RESPONS results** was developed to set the criteria and the vehicles for sustainability and exploitation of project outcomes.

PROJECT OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

RESPONS directly involved in the project over 6700 target groups’ representatives in 7 European countries. The indirect impact of the project (i.e. via multipliers, press and media, business and social networks) is overwhelming: over 326 000 in over 15 countries were reached through mass dissemination activities (newsletters, publications, printed and online dissemination, events, etc.).

41 direct meetings including the round tables with 965 hotels, restaurants, VET providers, social partners were realized for analyzing and discussing the methodology and testing the products.

6 National specialized seminars and European conference for responsible skills with 715 stakeholders were organized to exploit the project products.

Through 13 dissemination events and the Tourism and Cultural Heritage Sector Group meeting, 648 stakeholders discussed with partners the products and concept, participated in promotional activities and were informed about.

201 Chambers of Commerce, 600 Enterprise Europe Network contact points in more 60 countries, 622 CSR advisors could use RESPONS products in their consultancy services or for awareness raising campaigns.

RESPONS website has 5779 visitors, 38 153 page views – directly (Dec. 2015) and continues to receive interest.

FEEDBACK FROM TARGET GROUPS

The feedback we have received has been positive, with several encouraging messages and requests for further work. Most targeted audiences found all materials particularly innovative and original.

The **hotel' and restaurant' managers/owners** in the countries of the partnership followed each implementation stage of the project. They were satisfied and very positive to receive products designed for improvement of their daily work, easily accessible and leading to sustainable development of their business:

"The e-Handbook makes you see some elements that maybe you would never had in mind"
Hotel manager from Spain

"e-Handbook for CSR and Managers' Guide are instruments easy to use and fast. The organization of the contents is clear, the structure in three parts (contents, case studies and test) was a good choice. It would be great to have such tools also for other HORECA professions." CCI, Italy

"The e-Handbook and the Virtual Map is a good attempt to sensitise small hotels and restaurants for the subject of Corporate Responsibility. Academic content is presented in an appealing and digestible way." Germany

Educational institutions, VET providers: Bulgarian, French, Italian, Polish, Romanian and Spanish VET Schools in tourism will use the EQFs and new professional profile to make the qualification of "manager of small hotel" and "manager of restaurant" more transparent and easy to validate; they will use the eHandbook for CSR and Managers' Guide as instruments helping the teaching process. In case of interest from any organization, the RESPONS materials can be adapted also to other sectors and languages and produced on demand:

"These tools will be very useful for me as a teacher in the sector. Maybe I will add a portal with didactic activities, to restoration schools among Europe, so that the students become accustomed to use the portal and the idea of RESPONS spread among the students that will entry in the labour market and they could implement what the project promotes".
Teacher from Catalonia

“The clearness of information described in different units of the module allows the trainer to understand which are the most important elements to be developed in a training course, depending on the target group and their needs. The case studies provide some examples of good practices to implement. Also bad practices could be provided in order to highlight the effects of a bad corporate management. The units provide clear and concise inputs on how to manage the own marketing strategies and actions. Italian VET provider

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 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, such as experts in Tourism and Cultural Heritage Sector Group, Enterprise Europe Network, CSR advisors increased with the deployment of dissemination and exploitation activities and the developed RESPONS products were 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 was among the most important goals within the rest of the action. The partners were able to put the foundation for collaboration to reach the maximum of **RESPONS** impact with national and regional policy makers such as NAVET and RC of BHRA, Working group 13 “Social policy and Employment” of the Ministry of labour and social policy, Ministry of education and sciences, HRDC 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, DEHOGA and NGG Bayern in Germany.

5. Plans for the Future

The Plans for the future involve continuous promotion, practical application of RESPONS products by teaching and inclusion in educational curriculum, liaison with HORECA branch associations, and the transferability opportunities of project results.

Continuous promotion

The project website continues to be updated and will be maintained by P1 at least 3 years after the end of the project. It provides a powerful exploitation and sustainability of the results as it is free of charge and its impact is continuously widening not only in Europe but also in Canada, China, Russia, USA.

Continuous feedback

A year after the end of the project the institutions and hotel' and restaurant' managers, whose representatives have been participated in the stakeholder consultations, will be contacted in order to gain feedback on the RESPONS outcomes feasibility.

Transferability opportunities

The project concept has high potential for multiplication and transfer of methods, products and activities in different context. The pilot testing of RESPONS e-Toolkit showed the great interest of stakeholders (small hotels, restaurants, VET providers and social partners) to the results. Some of the opportunities are listed below and have been identified during the project lifetime through expressed interest for continuous actions by variety of stakeholders' representatives:

- The partners in Italy are considering **widening the scope of the project** to another target group they are familiar with: "travel agency manager, a tour operator, a SPA manager and a transport carrier could all take benefit from the toolkit". Italian national seminar was also shown suggestions regarding new project proposals:
 - o "Starting from this project, a new project can be developed with a strongest focus on the validation of competences";
 - o "Starting from this project, a new project can be developed in the field of education in the HORECA sector for disabled people";
 - o "Starting from this project, a new project can be developed on entrepreneurship in the HORECA sector; how to create a social enterprise dealing with accommodation and/or catering services".
- Partners from Tourism and Cultural Heritage Sector Group have already started discussions with potential partnership to further enhance and widen the scope of the project in terms of skills development practices and CSR in tourism;
- RESPONS has been selected (end of November 2015) as a good practice in Enterprise Europe Network and will be disseminated among HORECA companies as a part of their consultancy services. Enterprise Europe Network will widen participation of the sector and promote the CSR in tourism;

Inclusion in educational curriculum

During the project, some stable partnerships have been established which have the potential for sustainable cooperation also after the project end. The project products which were piloted with associated educational and VET providers will continue to have impact and attract new potential beneficiaries. The fact that New Bulgarian University started a new training course “Corporate Social Responsibility in hospitality industry” since the new academic year 2015/2016 and will teach 40 students per year speaks of the attractiveness and effectiveness of developed products.

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.'*¹

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.

¹ 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.

