

Tourist guides' concerns - four European examples

Results from focus groups on tourist guides work in
Barcelona, Budapest, Malta and Norway

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Introduction

Purpose of the project

The present working paper relates to the project “*Innoguide: Innovation in LLL Tourist Guide Training Tourist guides as partners for a sustainable, diverse and exciting Europe!*” The project is financed by the European Commission’s Lifelong Learning Programme which strives to enable people at all stages of their lives to participate in stimulating learning experiences and strives to develop the education and training sector across Europe¹. The Leonardo da Vinci is a LLL programme that aims to make vocational education more attractive to young people and to help people gain new skills, knowledge and qualifications. Both these undertakings boost the overall competitiveness of the European labour market².

The project application framed the purpose of the entire project as follows:

- *Tourist guides work in a local, regional, national and European context. They can play a very important role in the European integration process in increasing the understanding of the different cultural backgrounds and by promoting the European identity. They can also increase the awareness of the tourists regarding a sustainable tourism for the future of Europe. In addition, tourist guides can facilitate the acquisition of some key competences for LLL for tourists. However, currently these elements are not structurally part of the training of guides.*
- *The key innovative element is to generate the foundations of the needed European framework and promote this as an integral part of the future vocational training. The integrated European approach will assure a major impact on the European level by shared understanding on the contents and the development of pedagogical tools.*
- *The objectives of the 3 year project are:*
 - *To make a comparative study of the training programmes for tourist guides in the partner countries. They will be compared on level (EQF norm), duration and content. The outcome will support the development of the new training modules.*
 - *To develop 3 training modules (and 3 trainers’ manuals) in English for teachers of tourist guides and for tourist guides (in training) studying at level 4 or 5 of the EQF. The modules will focus on sustainability, intercultural skills and creation of (LLL-) experience. The materials will integrate the Eur. dimension by developing a common practice and by enhancing mobility between trainers. Competences aimed at in the three modules will be developed in relation to descriptors at level 4 and 5. The*

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/doc78_en.htm

² http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/doc82_en.htm

modules will be tested, peer reviewed and finalized.

- *To establish a platform for sharing of the experiences to ensure active continuation. In the implementation an interactive knowledge transfer model is developed to facilitate efficient dissemination, valorization and future sharing of the innovations.*

Within this larger project, the Work Package 2 was designed as the Knowledge Creation, and contained a research phase of the larger developmental INNOGUIDE project. According to the project application the goal was two-pronged:

- 1) *To gain insight into the organization and content of current partners' tourist guide training programmes; and*
- 2) *To increase the insight into how the three central competencies of this project – responsible, intercultural competence and experiential tourist guiding – can be achieved in the three proposed modules. Therefore two approaches will be used.*

First, partners' tourist guide training programmes would be compared on level (EQF norm), duration and content (approach, knowledge, and skills) in relation to the standard of the CEN. The outcome will support the training module development.

Second, four active partner countries' tourist guides and trainers would be interviewed in focus groups to gain insight into how the three topics relevant to module development are conceptualized, implemented and practiced within the existing training programmes. Gaps related to these topics on concepts, methods and tools would be identified based on the comparison of the needs and expectations of both the trainers and the guides on the one hand and the analysis of the training programmes on the other. This was meant to lead to actions, methods, and didactical material to be used in the module development phase.

The knowledge generation phase should thus answer the questions:

- 1) *How are current training programmes and tourist guiding practices addressing the three central competencies of this project and what are the gaps in each country; and*
- 2) *How can this fit within the different didactical frameworks of all training programmes of each partner country?*

The output were meant to contribute to the basic building blocks – including goals, concepts, methods, didactical tools, pitfalls, examples, actions, and check lists – for the module development work-package, complemented by research-based suggestions of where and how to build in the three training programmes modules and the relevant target groups.

This working paper contributes to the clarification of tourist guides' work by reporting on the main findings from focus group research on tourist guides' work in Barcelona / Catalonia, Budapest (Hungary), Malta and Norway. The main purpose of this research was to gain more insights into the

work of the guides with respect to challenges, organization of work, conditions for guides' work, and training. A main focus was set on the importance for the guides on the core issues of the INNOGUIDE project: the presence of the European dimension; sustainability issues and sustainable development; interculturalism; and experience creation through guiding.

Moreover, this working paper presents an overview over the core definitions applied in the Work Package 2, and research method used for the focus group study. The findings are presented in some detail, and conclusions are drawn with relevance to the main purpose of the INNOGUIDE project.

Definitions

For the purpose of this project, *a tourist guide* is defined as someone with "a broad-based knowledge of a particular area whose primary duty is to inform"^{3 4}. An interpretive tourist guide communicates and illustrates the significance and interconnections of a place's natural and cultural environments, thus embodying the educational component of guiding.

"Sustainable development" means development that meets the needs of present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, as stated in 1987 in the "Brundtland Report" named "Our Common Future". European Sustainability is defined here as "progress that ensures the long-term improvement of quality of life through innovation in social, environmental, and economic areas in Europe"⁵. As declared at the EU's Lisbon Treaty in 2009, "Sustainable development will not be brought about by policies only: it must be taken up by society at large as a principle guiding the many choices each citizen makes every day...."⁶.

For the purpose of this research, the *European Dimension* is defined here as "... a complex, timely, and simultaneously horizontal and vertical approach that includes EU's unique heritage, history, culture, politics, environment, society, economy, arts and sciences within Europe and in relation to the world at large"⁷.

By *tourist experience* we mean here an event that was memorable to the point of entering an individual's long-term memory. Experiences may be so strong and important for the individual that they provoke attitudinal changes, in which case they may be conceived of as *transformations*⁸ which are *meaningful* to the individual⁹. This is in line with a traditional understanding of the concept, for instance, The Oxford English Dictionary defines the term experience as an event or occurrence which leaves an impression on one.

³ (Pond, 1993, pp. 17)

⁴ (Pond, 1993, pp. 17)

⁵ Pereira, E. 2011. Innoguide WP 2 report.

⁶ <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eussd/>

⁷ Pereira, E. 2011. Innoguide WP 2 report.

⁸ Pine, B.J. og J.H. Gilmore (1999). *The Experience Economy*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

⁹ Boswijk, A., Thijssen, T., Peelen, E., & Johnston, T. S. B. (2007). *The experience economy: a new perspective*. Amsterdam: Pearson Education.

Interculturality as a term presupposes two or more social groups who identify themselves as distinct from one another in cultural terms¹⁰. The definition does not imply the need for differences in nationality or ethnicity to be present, although this may be the case. Furthermore, the definition emphasizes the individuals' own interpretations and not those of external or experts' classifications.

Focus group method

The *focus group method* is a research method employing group interviews, and where the subjects involved are invited to bring up their knowledge and opinions in relation to a given topic. Moreover, they are invited to question the statements from the other group members to increase the flow of viewpoints and question arguments and opinions. The process is facilitated by a discussant whose role is to initiate the discussion and also assist with more relevant questions if and when the discussion moves too far away from the main topic. When prompted with adequate problem statements, the group processes will surface the most important aspects of the topic under discussion. The information created through such a process may be video- or audio-recorded, depending on the purpose of the research, and then transcribed like other interview data. A next step would be to analyze and interpret the information for the purpose of a report¹¹.

In line with this general description of focus groups as a research tool, four focus groups were established in Barcelona, Malta, Budapest and Stavanger. The groups should contain participants that were supposed to possess expert knowledge about tourist guiding and training in their region, hence representatives from the following social and organizational structures were invited: active tourist guides, tourist guides organizations, tourist guides agencies, entrepreneurs in the tourism sector, tour operators in need for guiding services, guide training organizations and possibly also public sector officers relating to tourist guiding. The size of the groups should ideally not exceed nine persons.

The participants were recruited by the INNOGUIDE project representatives in each of the cities involved. They were informed about the purpose of the meeting on invitation, and a list of possible topics was presented. The participants were informed that the focus group session would be run in English and that the conversation would be recorded. Each focus group lasted for 2 – 3 hours, interrupted by a coffee break with cakes. The group members should be prepared to share their experiences and opinion about tourist guiding, especially with regards to

- 1) selection, training and quality assurance of training programs;
- 2) what types of experiences they facilitate for the tourists;
- 3) how possibly controversial issues are handled;
- 4) the role of new technologies in relation to guiding;
- 5) needs for innovation in guiding; and

¹⁰ Collier & Thomas 1988, in Meged, 2010 p. 128)

¹¹ Neuman, W. L. (2003). *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

6) challenges in the guiding business and profession.

If sustainability, interculturality, the European Dimension, and experience creation did not surface, the facilitator prompted these issues with questions to the group. The facilitator in all focus groups was the first author of this report, however, in the case of the Budapest group; the facilitation was supported by Dr. Ester Pereira towards the end of the discussion.

The discussions were audio-recorded and later transcribed by a researcher. The transcriptions were then checked against the recordings by the first author of this paper and texts supplied and corrected when appropriate. The text was examined for content and topics, and 12 partly inter-related dimensions appeared. They were: 1) Conditions for guiding; 2) License for guides; 3) Guides' national organizations; 4) Guide training; 5) Further education and quality assurance; 6) Technology; 7) Innovations; 8) Dealing with sensitive topics; 9) Sustainability; 10) Experience creation through guiding; 11) Interculturality and the European Dimension; and 12) Challenges. The central issues within these dimensions are presented below.

Results

Conditions for Guiding

Barcelona

- There is no support from the government for guides, except for the public exams that grant them license to interpret monuments and historical buildings.
- Tourist guiding is an all-year-around activity, but the long summer season is the busiest time
- Salary is low, and the work is made difficult in several ways.
 - First, there is competition among guides about jobs.
 - Second, there are too many guided tour groups competing about the same attractions, and if guides employ loud-speakers the noise and disturbance from one group to the next is a big annoyance.
 - Third, the tourist busses are not allowed special parking lots, and as the city is overcrowded, it becomes difficult to keep schedules and get the most out of a tour.
 - Crime affects tourists view on Barcelona.
- Tourist guides are concerned about the art and skills of communication in their job. Language skills are the base, and a specially condensed language is needed to carry exact and complete information during a short time span. Moreover, guiding is also to communicate emotions and attitudes, which requires different communication skills.

Hungary

- Generally, guiding as a business and occupation is rather unorganized in Hungary, and guides work often free-lance. This is dramatically different from the days of the communist regime, when guides worked in ordinary positions with scheduled working hours and fixed salary.
- More than 12.000 qualified tour guides may be found in Hungary, but there are no records to identify the actual numbers of active guides.
- Age does not matter, but a minimum of 18 is required, and there is no higher age limit.
- Guiding can be an all-year-around job. You need connections and practice to get into the industry. It is a very hard to get into the guide business. Young guides are willing to work for free or as a cooperative guides to get the experience. At the time being, the agencies do not need them and the vast amount of trained guides result in low salary for those who get a job. Salaries have not risen during the last 6 years. The market for guide services is tight at the moment meaning competition for jobs among guides and lower prices for guide services.
- Word of mouth plays a central role when selecting a guide for a job. The tour operators select:
 - Guides that have good language skills and good knowledge of groups' culture.
 - Try to match the appropriate guide in terms of age and sex of the group.
 - The selection of guide depends highly upon the program chosen and the specific skills needed (eg. city sightseeing, museum visits or tours for professionals.)
 - Attention is paid to the way a guide obtained his/her license: what kind of training preceded the license? (eg. secondary school or short course).
- The guide job constantly changes, and is now influenced by the technological development.
- Guides' work is made difficult by requiring them to pay full price to visit museums – it should be free in order that guides can go and check it out to improve their own presentations of the attraction.
- There is no ministry of tourism in Hungary, so the whole industry is perceived by the guides to be a bit neglected as an object of public policy making. However, the guide is supposed to be a very important stakeholder in tourism.

Malta

- Tourist guides in Malt claim that their occupation has a low status, which is discomforting and they look for ways to improve their social standing? The impression in Malta is that tourist guiding does not have a good reputation either, and a qualification as a tourist guide does not have dignity. Hence recruitment to this occupation is difficult.
- Due to strict regulations and dense network, licensed guides do not face much competition from non-licensed guides.

Norway

- Norway is special by having a clearly defined tourist (summer) season, and guiding is therefore in most instances a part time job. The demand for tourist guides has increased rapidly as a function of the recent raise in number of big cruise vessels visiting the long coastline. It is argued that it is important to satisfy the cruise passengers by having good guides the cruise sector plays a significant role in the Norwegian Tourism industry. There is

almost no tourist demand for guiding in the winter time; however, a recent growth in the MICE-market (conferences, meetings, exhibitions and other events) has created a limited all-year around market for specialized guiding and unique experiences of local attractions.

- Local Tourist Guides, trained under the auspices of the Norwegian Guide Association (NGF), and most often registered members of this association, has so far constituted the main backbone of tourist guiding in Norway. Structural changes are now seen. Smaller event companies offer specialized guiding, for instance, for kayaking, white water rafting, and glacier walks etc. The multinational company European Cruise Service is currently buying local guide companies in Norway and becomes a more and more dominant player in the guide sector. Their training program is shorter than the one controlled by the Norwegian Guide Association, and is less focused on local destination qualities.
- Guides work mainly free-lance with contracts with one or more agencies. They are either young (most often students), but more often older persons (often retired). Retired teachers are preferred due to their training in interpretation and skills in organizing groups. Back in time, the guides were more often “housewives” with academic training but without any other occupation, however, few of these are left in the occupation now as most women participate in ordinary all-year-around jobs. The young guides have fast turnover in their jobs.
- There is no ministry of tourism in Norway, so the whole industry is a bit neglected as an object of public policy making. This creates several problems for the training of guides.

National Organizations

Barcelona

- Associations for guides did not surface as a topic in the group discussion.

Hungary

- Eurotravel is the association of guides in Hungary. They hold a database that disseminates jobs and information about different topics.
- The Hungarian Tour Guide Association represents a higher governmental level, and their members pay a yearly fee.

Malta

- All licensed guides should be listed with their specializations in the Malta Tourist Authority Official List (MTA).

Norway

- Norwegian Guide Association (NGF) has a training program that members have to follow to become a NGF authorized guide. The program contains both general knowledge about Norway, but is also adapted to the specific local context where the guide wants to work. However, because of the current shortages of guides, the guide companies cooperate and exchange knowledgeable guides across regions, implying that all NGF guides have had, to some extent, the same basic training.
- NGF is working on quality assurance for the guide profession in Norway
 - They have worked with Innovation Norway (a State funding organization for entrepreneurship including tourism) to identify requirements for a national authorization of guides. At the time being, the issue of who is going to issue certificates for the authorized guides is not solved.
 - NGF strives to increase the number of qualified local guides through their training program.
 - NGF wants to ensure that guides are not merely guiding from a written manuscript without additional knowledge about local attractions and issues within a wider context.
 - Customers know a lot about the country before coming here and it is therefore important that guides can answer additional question that are (out of the ordinary guide training curriculum.

License for guides

Barcelona

- Anybody can be a guide in Barcelona and Catalonia, but to interpret museums and monuments you need a license based on having passed a special exam. This certification is publicly funded.
- In everyday guiding practice, it is decisive to select the right guide for the group to keep the group satisfied by offering good interpretation and service. This matching depends on the needs and wants of the guests and qualifications of each particular guide. Whether the guide is licensed or not does not matter – a guide is hired based on his/her skills and attitudes. Visitors are not unhappy with the guides because of the information and interpretation they gives, but because of their attitudes and social skills.

Hungary

- Officially you need permission and license to guide in Hungary, but this requirement is never followed up by any type of authority control.

- There is no requirement to renew the license. Once you have it, you are a certified guide for life.

Some places in Budapest only special guides are allowed to interpret at the attractions (palaces, cathedrals etc.).

Malta

- A guide license is required to conduct guiding in Malta. The license can only be issued by the Malta Tourism Authority.
- As soon as the students finish their course at Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS), a letter is sent to the Malta Tourism Authority informing them that these particular students have passed the course, and they can be licensed to guide in Malta in the relevant languages for which they would have studied while at ITS.
- Guides have to renew their license every year, but no recertification test is required.
 - Every two years the guide are obliged to attend a one-day seminar, listening to four lectures on varied subjects, but without any exam. This way the person is entitled to renew his / her license for two years more. This is the only requirement for retaining the license, once acquired.

Norway

- License is not required by the authorities for ordinary tourist guides; however, training to the standards of NGF is required to carry the name tag signifying your status as a local NGF guide.

Guide Training

Bacelona

- Guides may be trained in alternative ways.
- One private company trains by preparing the candidate over three years of practice and studies. New guides can follow experienced guides on their tours and after 3 years they are eligible to be guides all over Catalonia. All year long formation activities are organized and each guide has to participate in a given number of activities.
- Public training in universities is not focused only on guiding, but on the broader issues of tourism.
- Communication is an important guide issue, and training programs have utilized actors from theatres to teach the art of body language, the optimal use of the voice in relation to the

topics to be interpreted, the art of communicating emotions, and the construction of emotional tension and its relief.

- Anybody can be a guide, but to explain museums/ monuments you need to pass a special exam, which is publicly funded.

Hungary

- Guide qualifications may be attained in several ways.
- Training is given as part of the Secondary School programs, lasting 1-2 years. The training to become a guide might take 2 years in school but it takes more (5 years) to really learn how to become a good guide. Guiding is seen as a never ending learning process: with experience one becomes very knowledgeable in ones guiding areas.
- As an adult, one can attain a guide qualification by attending a 6 month course (130 hours). The 6 month training only touches upon the basics of guiding. Not enough time to go into detail with sustainability issues etc.
- Length, structure and content of the courses differ across schools.
- Programs touch upon most topics of culture and society, however social issues do not come that forward. Guiding techniques are also part of the training. Problem solving techniques is part of guide training. Following senior guides or just observing other guides gives a good learning experience.
- Part of the exam is to write a feedback for travel agencies about a tour; however this is not required from employers when working as guide
- A lot of guides are being trained without considering if there is in fact a need / jobs for them.

Malta

- At the Institute of Tourism Studies there is a two year Diploma course which ultimately leads to the successful students being eligible for a license to guide in Malta. It is the only Institute that organizes tourist guide courses in Malta. However, you do not necessarily need a degree to become a good guide, but training is needed. A guide must be more than 17 years old.
- As an addition to these Diploma courses, occasionally the Malta Tourism Authority organizes its own short courses, usually over six months, and the students end up with the same qualification – namely the license.
- The training includes guide techniques, history, language, practice on site etc. Everybody learns guiding in English and after they decide if they want to learn to guide in another language (German, Italian, Spanish or French) which consequently will be practiced, too.
- There is a strong presence of e-learning in the guide training programs: E.g. instead of giving 100 hours of lectures, 50 hours of lecture are given and the rest is reading material on the e-learning site. This approach gives more time to focus on other things, such as practical training. While studying guides have to plan a 3 days tour and organize a 1 day tour by themselves, setting up exhibitions, dealing with school children etc.

- Most guides in museums etc. have never undergone any formal guide training courses. Hence they have very different approaches to guiding. Ideally they should undergo training similar to licensed tour guides, with a focus on museums and sites.
- Guides have to learn about “everything” and then be able to select the information that is adequate in each situation. There is a special need for training of guides that can guide niche tours (e.g. nature and cultural issues like traditions, food, crafts etc.).
- Challenges for the training include preparing guides to deal with changes in the guide sector, to ensure professionalization of guides, and to focus more on the delivery of information as well as cooperation to help each other out if one is not capable of delivering the message.

Norway

- It is just as important that the guide knows how to disseminate in an interesting manner as it is for him/her to be knowledgeable.
- Guide language is an art in itself and needs to be mastered in order to give a large amount of information in a short time. Even if you guide in your mother tongue you need to learn the “guide language” within that language.
- At present it is the responsibility of every guide agency, and also in their interest, to train their guides. This is most often done in collaboration with the local training contact person from the Norwegian Guide Association. The main training program is owned and run by the Norwegian Guide Association with minimal public funding. There is no official national exam test, but such an exam would be welcomed by the Norwegian Guide Association as it would constitute a major forward step for the guiding profession. There are no standard requirements to qualifications for a person to enter the training.
- The Guide Association would welcome a national training program organized and run by the public school system. A national approved training for guides (e.g. like an ordinary apprenticeship training and exam (“fagprøve”)) could take into account a context-related training to be added on the top of a national curriculum since the culture, nature and business are diverse across areas and regions.
- New types of guides are emerging, for instance nature guides and special experience guides (rafting, climbing etc.) There is no national training programs for these types of guides, so every area has to make sure these guides are well enough trained. Some university colleges have run courses of for these new nature and experience guides integrated in their bachelor programs, and an outdoor life guide program on bachelor level is currently being planned in Hemsedal.
- Nationally approved guide training would require political involvement and approval to be established and funded. One possibility to overcome problems of funding and responsibility would be to develop guide training as an integrated part of an educational program (e.g. university, college, high school or vocational training).
- Pre- qualifications for entering a guide course must be cleared out, regardless of level the course should have in relation to the public school system.

- NGF has developed a booklet about guide techniques which are obligatory for all NGF authorized guides to know. The booklet includes what NGF find important for guides to know in order to be a good guide.

Further education/Quality Assurance

Barcelona

- The group agreed on that importance of having the city represented in the very best ways through the guiding. Quality is what separates the different guides.
 - To ensure that all guides are updated seminars are held every year (refreshing knowledge).
 - If the government could put a label on qualified guides it would give the tourists more of a guarantee of good service.
 - Some guides tell the tourists what they think they want to hear (joking and inventing stories), instead of giving them the real information.
 - See how other guides work helps you become a better guide, but guides do not like to take fellow guides along on their tours, and there are few instances of guide-to-guide learning processes.

Hungary

- No real after tours feedback to guides on factual and technical aspects of their work.
 - Mostly feedback only concerns the general impression of tour guides.
 - Guides are not asked to give feedback after tours.
 - The way the tours are organized at present (tour guides get a request for X hour tour and they plan it), the guides feedback does not seem to concern tour operators.
 - Tour operators know about the quality of the guides from reputation – mouth to mouth feedback.
 - Sometimes tourists are asked about tours by the tour operators, but this feedback is not shared with the guides.

Malta

- Guides have to attend the mandatory courses every second year and keep up to date after initial their training, otherwise they won't keep their license. Knowledge and skills are assessed only at their exam at the end of the school training; after that one is not asked to demonstrate one's skills.

- More courses could be organized at times where there is not a lot of work to do.
- The market is changing so the guides have to follow.

Norway

- There are no official requirements regarding updating of guides' competence, however, it is acknowledged that guides must be updated on current topics and issues also after their preliminary guide training.
 - One agency developed a CD without sound of one of their main bus tours so guides can use it and train for the tour at home. It is a good way to train the timing; however it might not be sufficient practical training.
 - Norwegian Guide Association encourages all their guides to participate in further education at least every five year, but since everyone can call themselves guides in Norway (also without training), they cannot require that anyone participates in a course or take a new exam.
 - When courses are run to train new guides, senior guides are encouraged to take part in the courses again (for free).
 - A few evening topical sessions are conducted in some areas throughout the low season to refresh guides memories about different topics.
 - Guides may stay updated on current issues by following the debates in the society, and watch the news and study newspapers. As active members of the society one learn much that may be applied during the guiding.

Technology

Barcelona

- Especially in crowded and noisy areas, guides will profit most from using radio communication systems where the guide can broadcast his / her messages to the receivers that each of the guests carries and listen to by means of head-sets.
- These tools are very expensive at the moment, which reduces their applicability. But as these tools can improve the quality – the tourists could be asked to pay extra for these improvements of the communication processes in crowded and noisy areas.
- Walkie-talkie and loudspeakers or megaphones are cheaper solutions, however, when several groups are guided by guides using megaphones in a crowded area, they disturb each other so the outcome is poor for the tourists. On the other side, it has become more and more necessary to use loudspeakers because there is so much noise (street musicians, cars, sirens, people talking, other guides etc.)
- The phone/ Audio guide can to a certain extent give the same information as a guide.
 - Tourists who use phones and the ones who book guides are however different segments, so the phone /audio guide cannot replace the guides.

- More young people prefer audio guides while the older segment prefers a human guide.
- Audio guides create a whole new kind of experiences

Hungary

- Audio guides give the right information, but the personal contact is missing, and no technologies can substitute a good guide.
 - There is no opportunity to ask questions when on a tour when audio guide.
 - Audio guiding – expensive, not easy to maintain.
 - Maybe in the future “everyone” will use their mobile-phone as a guide.

Malta

- Guiding with a laptop? The laptop makes it easy to find answers to lots of questions within very short time, and facilitates quick adaption to new tours.
- Audio guides at most of the new attractions.
 - Overcomes problems with not being able to guide in all languages.

Norway

- Technological development will change the conditions and market for the guides.
 - A guide cannot be replaced by an audiotape since tourists cannot ask question nor does the tape calculate unforeseen circumstances.
 - On the other hand audio tapes could be an alternative to no guide at all, e.g. on days where there are not enough tourists to carry out guided city sightseeing, or when tourists are not willing to pay the price that is charged for a guided tour.
 - Mobile phone or other mobile technology may be more flexible in the sense that the tourist does not need to follow in the footsteps of a guide but may enjoy the place in accordance with own preferences.

Innovation

Barcelona

- No topic surfaced here

Hungary

- There is a lack of experiential guided tours (tours where you experience and become more knowledgeable about Hungarians and their culture).
 - No enterprises are offering such experiences all year round. Only a few guides are guiding such tours.
- Theme tours – focused on one topic (one political era, one area, one sight etc.) are being developed
- Very specialized tours are being developed.

Malta

- There is an increasing demand for more differentiated tours and to develop niche tours.
 - Move away from mass tourism.
 - The way you sell tours can change.
 - Creating new kinds of experiences for special needs tourists.
 - “Hands on” guiding is a good idea.
- Guides and agencies need to become more creative and innovate the sector to survive

Norway

- New trends: today people want to learn something when going on holidays.
 - What experience do the tourists need to get in order to “paint” a positive picture of the region.
- Customers demand other types of tours (environment, culture, tours where tourists can get involved etc.)
 - Agencies need to adapt to this trend and create a bigger portfolio of different tours.

Sensitive topics

Barcelona

- No topics surfaced

Hungary

- The tour guide should not avoid controversial questions, but should be unbiased/impartial when answering them or touching upon such (political, social, ethnic) topics.
 - It is important for the guide to be well informed in such areas.
- The tour guide is the representative of the country and tourists see the guide as the general Hungarian, hence their statements should be very impartial and they have to be careful what they say.
- The guide must take groups nationality into consideration when choosing how to tell certain parts of history. (Guide might have to use other words for different groups).

Malta

- Simply state the facts.
- As an ambassador of Malta, one should not point out the controversies if not necessary.
- There are differences between one day tours and multiple day tours. The longer the tour the more information is given, and the guide is more likely to be provoked to take up more controversial issues.
- Guides need to choose their words right and tell the controversial stories in a “good” way.
- Never discuss religion and politics, only tell how it is. But guides should stick to the facts, even if they it is not a nice story to present.

Norway

- It is not the guide’s job to talk about politics, religion, socio-economical differences and class issues or race, as it is difficult to avoid that some guests might be offended.
- It is the guide’s job to inform tourists about various topics, not to discuss with them.
- The guide has to be knowledgeable about the guided groups’ culture and know what is appropriate and what not.
- Tourists from different cultures are interested in different topics.

Sustainable practices

Barcelona

- No explicit topics surfaced, however, implicitly the group talked intensively about sustainability problems related to the overcrowding and the intense car traffic in the city.

Hungary

- In the training programs, environmental issues are also included, with focus on how to protect the environment and how to behave in a national park etc.

Malta

- Guides have to “educate” the tourist on sustainability (Do not pollute or throw trash on the ground, do not speak too loud in small villages, respect the locale culture, watch your steps, don’t touch the old heritage items, etc.).
 - The guides are the “babysitters” of the tourists
 - On the other hand, a lot of tourists travel without a guide and they need to be educated, too, which should be the responsibility of state or local authorities.
 - Guide students receive 45 hours of lectures on national environment of the Maltese island, including also discussion of sustainable tourism issues. One of the professors at the training program has got specialized competence within biology and natural heritage issues.

Norway

- Sustainability and environmental issues are not focused in the guide training programs. Sustainable practice is left to the companies and the municipalities to look after.

Experiences

Barcelona

- Guides contribute to the visitors’ experiences through staging events and presentations, taking the visitors to places and events and through skilled communication where also emotions may be created.
 - No special training on how to be a good communicator and develop communication skills.

Hungary

- Depends on the group what kind of experiences you give tourists. Guides need to tailor information to fit the needs of the group

Malta

- A main issue was discussed related to tourists being allowed to touch historic items on display. Especially, this is an interesting issue for blind and weak-sighted, who are more dependent upon other senses than the vision.

Norway

- There are currently no attempts to change the training program to match the trend towards the co-production of experiences. The current cruise tourism is conservative and asks primarily for the classical type of guiding where you take the visitors to the sites and interpret for them using oral and body languages, and now and then also technological aids. There are smaller niche markets looking for more experience-oriented guided with more activities and hands-on the attractions, however, there are some specialized guide training aiming at that market.

Intercultural aspects and the European dimension

Barcelona

- European culture and history is integrated in the training to the extent that it is relevant for the guiding practice. The European dimension is not focused.

Hungary

- European culture and history is integrated in the training to the extent that it is relevant for the guiding practice. The Hungarian history and culture contain intercultural issues which are discussed. The European dimension is not focused.

Malta

- Intercultural aspects are part of the study program as Malta is a small state with an intercultural history. As part of Europe the European issues are included in the curriculum, although not with a particular focus on the European dimensions.

Norway

- The guide training programs are not especially focused on European issues. Europe culture and history is studied where relevant to understand influences and relationship between Norway and the continent.

Challenges

Barcelona

- The challenge for guides in Barcelona is mainly not related to lack of skills and knowledge.
 - Clients are not unhappy with a tour because of the information they get from a guide, but it's the attitude of the guides.
- Barcelona is an immensely crowded city during the summer season. This makes guiding extremely difficult. There are ultimately too many tourists in Barcelona,, and crowding "destroys" an otherwise good tourist product.
 - It is hard to keep control of a tourist group because of many people on the crowded streets.
 - There are too many cars in the city centre and no parking available.
 - In Barcelona the tourists that are travelling with a guide on a bus tour do not have any priorities in the city, e.g. on parking. In for instance Vienna, travelling by bus with a licensed guide gives you advantages in comparison to individual tourists.
- It's a challenge to organize all the tourists coming to the city. Politicians should think about restrictions on traffic and entrance, and also use licensing to overcome these problems.
 - Know not only foreign language but also foreign culture / know how to adapt to different cultures / know the guest culture.
 - A guide is not an actor but need to know how to adapt and express.
 - Guides cannot be afraid to speak in public or through a microphone → needs to teach this to new guides.
- You need to select the right guide for the right group, all depending on the needs and wants of the guests and qualifications of a particular guide.
 - It's not depending on a "license" whether or not a guide is hired but on his/her skills.
- The Barcelona guide experts were deeply concerned about providing the service that is requested or expected from the visitors. The priority is the satisfaction of the guest, while also installing in the guests a knowledge of the country and "get a feeling" of it.
- The experts disagreed about the relevance of first aid skills, as the learning of first aid was felt to be too time-consuming. Does a guide really need to know how to perform first aid? Or is it enough to know who to call the emergency people? How much time should be spent on learning first aid?
- It is necessary to develop new ways to hold the attention when guiding younger tourists (teenagers).
 - Involve teenagers in the tour; create opportunities for the tourists to be active.

Hungary

- You always have to be up to date in your knowledge and guiding practices.
 - Getting new and updated information is easy with today's technology, the challenge is to sort it and decide what is correct and important.
- There are too many guides and the big challenge is to get access to enough groups in need for the guiding services.

- Guiding across borders should not be allowed. If you take your exam in one country, the license should only count for that country. This issue reflects two serious concerns:
 - There are not enough demands for guiding services for the locally trained guides. Hence competition from guides that travel across national or regional borders with their tourist groups are further ruining the economical base of the guides' occupation, and hence not welcomed.
 - As a phenomenon, guiding is, when at its best, related to hospitality: You receive visitors to your own home-place and share with them through interpretation and direct experiences some of the nicest treasure of what is your personal space. This giving out of the treasures is done with a passion that requires the guide to be strongly emotionally tied to the space and place. A guide must have lived in the area and feel a sense of belonging to the space and place to be able to present authentic emotional messages along with the more informational aspects of the interpretation. Just knowing the language of the visitors and the local history, nature and culture guide is not sufficient as a guide competence. While this viewpoint may be generally valid across cultures, the fact that it was upheld strongly by the Hungarian group may be understood in the light of the history of the nation.
 - A guide needs to have a love for the country and be able to communicate a positive message about Hungary. The guide needs to show enthusiasm about tour and sights, even if they show it to tourists for the 100 time. You really need to love your job and "feel it" in order to be a fantastic guide.
 - As a guide you need qualities such as empathy, problem solving, motivation, flexibility, helpfulness etc.
- To develop one's personal free-lance business, one needs to find one's own niche and build up a good reputation. Moreover, one needs to be flexible and able to improvise when they meet a group.
 - Guides give tourists advices when they ask about certain topics; therefore they need to know a little bit about everything. Guiding requires constant update on new issues. To a large extend it depends upon the group how you guide. It is important to know the groups you're guiding and become a leader of the group by relating to the culture of the guided group. Ideally one needs information about the group before meeting them, however, one must be prepared for all kinds of situations and groups.
- For older guides: Younger tourists are more challenging to guide. Catch and hold their attention, they speak a different language (slang)

Malta

- A guide must be Jack of all trades, master of all. However, is it possible to "know everything"? A guide can never stop studying, and he / she must be prepared not only for the general tours but also for particular tours, and be prepared for all kinds of situations.
- A guide has to be good at disseminating "Infotainment" (Information and Entertainment). The best asset a tourist guide has is the personal touch and ability to connect emotionally to tourist; this is what makes the tour a real experience. Delivering information is the "extra". It

is of importance to match the right guide with the right tour. The personality means a lot. Guides have to be outgoing and love people, and unfortunately you cannot teach this.

- Guides are ambassadors of the country. The guides need to be involved in the change of the Malta image, and help with promotion of the island as a tourist destination. Guides have to be market oriented.
- Younger guides are easier to convince to change their tours and specialization, however, older guides with an open mind are also favorable, and it takes some age to have authority vis-à-vis the tourists.

Norway

- A serious upcoming issue is how much the customers want to pay for quality guiding. There is no reason for focusing quality assurance if the tourists are satisfied with guides that “just” know how to present a standardized lecture on the language of the visitors, and without being well-trained and knowing “everything”.
 - The cruise operators deal with guide agencies when ordering guide services. Especially for cruise customers the price is the important factor when choosing a guide (agency), and guide quality comes second to price.
 - For the agencies it is a challenge to retain guides once they are trained. Both for the sake of efficiency and quality of the guiding services it is an advantage for the guide agencies to have experienced guides and not work with lots of new guides every season. A lot of the guides who know languages are international students and are only available for one or two seasons and are then returning to their home country.
- It is very important that there is a well established relationship and smooth interaction between guides and intermediates.
 - Often (especially with cruise customers) a guide is only booked/confirmed the day before a tour and since most guides may have other obligations (family, work or spare-time activities) it is a challenge for them to be available on such short notice.
 - The guide season starts in early May and ends in October, hence it is longer than the “school holidays”. Students go back to the universities and therefore the amount of available guides is reduced in the beginning and the end of a season.
 - Some customers demand a guaranty for a certain amount of guides on specific days. This poses a challenge for the agencies since many guides cannot guaranty that they are available long term.
 - Retirees and especially retired teachers make some of the best guides. They are almost always available and teachers are very good at communicating and already know how to disseminate messages and interpret a phenomenon for the group.
- There is no real collaboration between guides and the tourism business.
 - There are some public funding available for the tourism sector, but none of that money is invested in the specific guide sector. Some money should be allocated to guide training.
 - The challenge is to get public funding for guide training in order to ensure quality.

- The guide is often the only person that a cruise tourist come into contact with when visiting a country. Consequently it is crucial that this guide is a good representative of Norway (not a foreigner that does not know Norway from the inside and own experience as an inhabitant).
- Although guiding is a crucial part of cruise tourists' experience in Norway, the guide industry is often not included in the planning and development of attractions.
- It is important to promote guiding as something positive and make it attractive to be a guide. This is an absolute "must" when talking to the media.

Conclusions

- The study revealed issues with the work of guides that may be contra-productive to the INNOGUIDE scope
 - Guiding is mainly a fragmented free-lance industry
 - Guides compete about jobs and price may overrule quality
 - A credo of tourist guides is to avoid tension-provoking and sensitive issues, which may hinder focus on sustainability, interculturality and the European dimension
 - Guide training is neither standardized nor generally required, and often expensive compared to the guides' modest wages. If existing, it would require local modifications to assist the guides to present details of their own region with insight and emotional commitment
 - Quality systems are generally not in place, feedback systems, "shadowing" and peer learning / mentoring are lacking
 - Guide associations are generally weak stakeholders
 - Licence for guides are not common and, if existing as a requirement, not always a base for sanctioning
 - Governments are often weak or absent in managing tourism industries, and thus unsupportive of the guide business
- On the positive side, tourist guides are motivated agents who possess a lot of explicit and tacit knowledge gained through training programs, learning through practical work as guides, and learning through active participation in their societies. They are often part of networks related to operators and agencies. Hence, training programs may be implemented with support from these networks to update guides on the INNOGUIDE ideas and scope, relating the additional knowledge and skills to existing ones. However, as guiding is a market-dependent business, the motivation to learn the INNOGUIDE knowledge and skills and have it integrated also in guiding practices might require more inclusive programs that also encompass the agencies and tour operators. A next step might be regulations of guides' interpretations with respect to the INNOGUIDE ideas and skills; however, this is not a realistic alternative.