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Development of a Peer

Mentoring training mechanism
through the use of e-learning tools

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WP3.4.2 Development of a Peer Mentoring training mechanism through the use of e-learning tools.

Abstract

The deliverable **«Development of a Peer Mentoring training mechanism through the use of e-learning tools»** is a main Training Handbook of the **«WP3 - Design of a TourX "Hospitality Labs" ToolBox for Excellence»**, particularly the **«T3.4 - Support box for tourism SMEs in developing human capital, through tailored upskilling and reskilling of human capital»** and it refers to the design and development of an intra-organizational support system for the enhancement of employee skills within the organization, which is implemented from the partners of IME GSEVEE along AKMI SA, ITALCHAMBER, SIAV, VRTD, ASOFER, EHE, DEHOGA, AVT, CEA-PME and CHENGDU. A number of employees-mentors, after having completed the training program, will have the opportunity to support and guide their colleagues to increase the level of their digital, green and intercultural skills.

Introduction – Tour-X Programme Objectives

According to the proposal, “the general objective of the project is the development of a bottom-up approach to excellence in the Tourism Sector, where the partnering Educational Providers (VET, HEIs) are increasing their ability of rapidly adapt skills provision to evolving economic and social needs. In order to achieve its specific objectives, and particularly the increase: a) in skills anticipation in the tourism industry and of sectoral employability and b) in investments in tourism related human resources to be achieved, the design of a Tour-X "Hospitality Labs" Tool Box has to be implemented, amongst other activities”.

The Support box for tourism SMEs includes the design of an autonomous self-assessment tool for the identification of skills gap as well as **the development of a peer mentoring training mechanism**. According to this, one employee will be trained to be able to identify potential gaps in terms of skills and competences of the other employees through the mentioned questionnaire (self-assessment tool). Then, he/she proceed and train his/her colleagues, by guiding and supporting them through the use of e-tools towards their upskilling. As merely mentioned previously, the self-learning mechanism will be used by an employee in order to cover his/her personal needs in terms of skills and competences. Via this way, the person will be able to have access the Tour-X e-tools in order to cover himself/herself the needs as identified by the questionnaire. This will lead to a tailored package according to the needs of each employee within the tourism company in order to ultimately cover his/her personal but also sectoral needs. The result of the questionnaire will be the identification of the skills gap @ micro / SMEs level, providing a clear set of learning outcomes for upskilling of the company's employees.

In that way, a peer mentoring training mechanism will be applied within the enterprise, which will reduce the cost and will increase its efficiency.

The above activities will consist a Self-learning mechanism for SMEs.

According to that, the present deliverable consists of the following:

- ✓ the definition, the different kinds and the forms of Mentoring,
- ✓ the goals of Mentoring,
- ✓ its relation to relevant scientific fields,
- ✓ the role of the mentor,
- ✓ the mentoring system to be followed, such as organization of individual sessions on the corresponding tools.
- ✓ its implementation to the specific programme Tour-X and the description of its implementing procedures,

The «***Development of a Peer Mentoring training mechanism through the use of e-learning tools***» is divided in three parts:

The *first part* is a brief overview of the development of Mentoring in modern societies, its various definitions, the mentor's role and the main characteristics of a good mentor. Also, there is an effort for determining similarities and differences between mentoring – coaching and counselling and also to clarify the operation of the Mentoring as a form of Educational Counselling.

The *second part* is an effort to specialize on the methodology and stages of implementing the Peer Mentoring training mechanism in the Tour-X project. In particular, it includes the description of the implementation framework, the involved parties, the tools/means and the procedures.

In the third and final part we'll present the Mentors' **Guideline for the Peer Educational Mentoring**. This includes the main principles of conducting sessions, such as the different stages in extensive detail, advice and techniques regarding the approach, in order to help the peer mentors in a number of practical matters in terms of its organization and implementation.

Part A: The concept of Mentoring:

1. Etymology

In Greek mythology, a man, under the name Mentor, was Ulysses' loyal friend. During the time that Ulysses was away at war, Mentor with the guidance of Athena, goddess of wisdom, resumes the responsibility to guide, take care of and counsel Telemachus, who was Ulysses' son. On the ancient myth, in the face of Mentor, the experience, wisdom, trust, interest, offer and guidance are met, components of educative practice.

2. Definitions - What Mentoring is:

In modern times, Mentoring, as guidance/counselling, is implemented in many fields: scientific, professional and educational. The aim of Mentoring is to help people or/and groups to manage their personal learning procedure, in order to maximize the offered perspectives and opportunities, to develop and evolve their skills and to improve their competence. Even though there is not a widely accepted definition for mentoring, it is commonly accepted that this is a collective process, where participants improve themselves and obtain benefits (practical and symbolic ones). Here, are posted some definitions:

- Mentoring is the relationship between an experienced/more seasoned person, the mentor/guide, and a less experienced/seasoned one (counselled/guided); the ultimate goal is, through aiding and guiding, the personal, educational and professional development of the latter.
- Thus, Mentoring is a collaborative relationship between two (or more) people; through the exchange of experience, views, information and practical advice for a specific sector of education, occupation or activity, in a context of trust and respect, it aims to reinforce the professional, educational and personal skills of the participants.
- Mentoring consists of a long-term relationship focused on supporting the growth and development of the mentee. The mentor becomes a source of wisdom, teaching, and support, but not someone who observes and advises on specific actions or behavioral changes in daily work.

What Mentoring is **NOT**

However, mentoring **is not** a friendly relationship focused on the personal development of one or the other party depending on the circumstances, **nor is it** a trainer-trainee relationship aimed at the development of teaching skills and techniques, **where the mentor has control over the process.**

- The mentee always has control over their own learning process.
- Mentoring does not impose opinions or solutions. It identifies and proposes collaboratively!
- Mentoring does not evaluate, compare, or educate.

3. The mentor's role

Mentoring seems to contribute to the improvement of human capital, with the role of the mentor being of critical importance. Most approaches appear to accept that the mentor is a "trustworthy and wise" person who provides advice, willing to help meaningfully and prevent fatal mistakes. The mentor is not a professional advisor, but rather an individual with experience and integrity, known for their willingness to share skills and knowledge. For this reason, the mentor must establish a relationship of trust and collaboration, always allowing the mentee to "make the final decision."

From the above, it is clear that mentoring encompasses many functions, such as:

- Teaching
- Advising
- Supervision
- Guidance

However, it is primarily a learning process in which the mentee plays an active role, with the mentor essentially offering a "different perspective on observing problems," "reframing issues," and "providing constructive feedback."

4. Mentoring – Coaching – Counselling: similarities and differences

It is crucial for all parties involved in a mentoring relationship to clarify what does not constitute a mentoring relationship from the outset of such a program. Otherwise, there is a risk of misalignment in expectations and activities, to which the mentoring relationship cannot, in essence, respond. One key distinction that needs to be clarified is that between mentoring and coaching, as well as between mentoring and consulting.

There is no scientific consensus about the differences between Mentoring and Coaching. There is often confusion between the two. Although mentoring and coaching are often considered the same, it seems they are also essentially different.

Generally, we could say that in coaching there is a clear context of well aired goals and targets that the trainee wishes or/and has to achieve.

On the other hand, in the case of mentoring, even the goals themselves are under consideration and redefinition, whereas the relationship of mentor and trainee comes forward as the causal factor of this procedure.

One could think of the coach as walking behind, motivating, while the consultant walks ahead, pulling. The mentor, however, is someone who walks alongside the individual being mentored. In the mentor's role, you are "beside" the people in your team. You work with them, guide them—not just verbally. It is about "hands-on" guidance. You engage in the work together. You lead by example, showing additional ways to succeed. Mentors go deeper, becoming more involved with the individual as a whole.

As for the relationship of Psychology and Mentoring, it seems that Mentoring is not a counselling program/service, neither are mentors social workers. Mentors help clarify the needs of the mentees, help them reframe their personal targets; they motivate them and encourage them towards this direction.

5. Application Fields and Main Condition:

Mentoring can be described as a Practical Science, distinguished by its interdisciplinarity, as it draws its scientific foundation from the principles and methods of the Sciences of Psychology and Counseling, Management, Pedagogical Science, Sociology, and Sociolinguistics. However, it stands apart from these fields both in terms of its goals and the methods used to achieve them. Mentoring's application fields may be considered:

- Personal development and unlocking potential.
- Addressing positive or negative challenges in personal/work environments.
- Understanding dysfunctional beliefs.
- Methodology for developing plans aimed at desired outcomes.
- Managing events that provoke fear or anxiety.
- Time management at a personal or work level.
- Reframing perspectives and maintaining a positive approach for action.
- Collaboration to leverage business solutions and practices.

6. Mentoring as a form of Educational Counselling on Life-long Learning and Training Programs

In education, Mentoring is applied to various sectors: the introductory training of educators, students' guidance in higher education, career counselling, and also the educational counselling in the framework of Adult Education. Especially in that last one, Mentoring seems to be able to contribute to the increase of the effectiveness of Life-long Learning and Training

programs, as it is an educational and learning practice, orientated towards exploring specific requirements, developing individual skills and satisfying educational needs of adults.

As already mentioned, the purpose of Mentoring is to help individuals or/and groups to manage their personal knowledge, in order for them to maximize the offered perspectives and opportunities, to develop and evolve their skills and to improve their competence. It is an "educational collaboration" between somebody with great experience and a person willing to learn from that experience.

Therefore, Educational Counselling- Mentoring is an action that empowers and develops the sense of self-understanding, thus reinforcing the educational and personal skills of the mentee. As a result, practical advice "deflates" difficulties and creates conditions for development and progress, achieving to multiply the results of life-long learning programs. Although the decisive element of Educational Counselling is the relationship between Mentor and Mentee, we should highlight that Mentoring is still a learning process.

7. Trainers in Educational Mentoring

Mentoring ("wise guidance") is collaborating for development: one person shares knowledge, skills, information and views in order to encourage somebody else's personal, educational and professional development. Mentoring requires that the mentor and the mentee cooperate to achieve certain goals and exchange sufficient feedback, in order to ensure that these goals are achieved. Through this process you can open a way in knowledge by sharing ideas, views and information.

Taking into account all the above and according to scientific and methodological requirements in adult training programs, we conclude that the adult trainer potentially constitutes the best case of mentor in the context of the "Life-long learning program from social partners for the development of soft skills", as he is fairly well acquainted with the needs of the beneficiaries that have participated in educational programs and he can meet these requirements. In particular, he has significant teaching experience of the training course that the beneficiary has followed and he is a person of recognized scientific and professional status. At the same time, during the educational program in question, a relationship has been formulated in advance between the educator and the beneficiaries; this is possible to act favorable in formulating a "mentoring relationship". Therefore, the mentor is the most appropriate person to implement perfectly the specific Educational Counselling/Mentoring procedure.

8. The advantages of Educational Mentoring

There are many advantages of Educational Mentoring and they concern both agents of a "mentoring relationship", the mentors and the mentees.

The mentor's benefits

The benefits for the mentor can be summarized in the following:

- he develops his organization and communication skills
- he discovers new areas of concern through the beneficiaries' view
- he gains new views on situations through the communication with the mentee
- he increases his self-esteem and the satisfaction from his work
- he leads to acquiring professional experience in new fields
- he shares his knowledge and experience

The mentee's benefits

The benefits for the mentee can be summarized in the following:

- he gains new knowledge and skills
- he clarifies, specifies and prioritizes goals and demands
- he clearly detects the obstacles that he will be asked to confront
- he develops his self-esteem and confidence
- he develops his communication and social skills
- he explores new perspectives
- he broadens his social networks

9. Types and Forms of Mentoring

The main types and forms that mentoring can take are largely determined by its content and structure. The most common distinctions are as follows:

- ✓ formal and informal mentoring,
- ✓ internal and external mentoring,
- ✓ individual and group mentoring,
- ✓ in-person and online mentoring,
- ✓ short-term and long-term mentoring, and
- ✓ mixed mentoring, which combines different types and forms.

More specifically:

- i. **Informal Mentoring** refers to unstructured and unrecognized mentoring relationships within an organization that develop spontaneously and evolve without external interventions or specific obligations. For example, this may involve individuals working in the same professional environment where the less experienced employee seeks the advice or guidance of a more experienced colleague. On the other hand, **Formal Mentoring** involves relationships that are organized, supported, and directed by an organization (business, educational institution) with specific goals (e.g., in a business setting, to promote corporate culture).
- ii. **Internal Mentoring** involves the presence of mentors (specialized professionals or informal advisors) within the organization that organizes this process. At the same time, the mentor works within the same organization as the mentee. In contrast, **External Mentoring** involves either collaborating with external specialized mentors hired by the organization for this purpose or outsourcing the entire activity to another organization.
- iii. **Individual Mentoring** involves a personalized approach to the mentee's questions and concerns, helping to reframe them and reposition their goals. It focuses on the dynamic developed between the mentor and the mentee. On the other hand, **Group Mentoring** can be conducted with a group of individuals (3 to 4) who share common concerns and goals. However, the group dynamic may require the mentor to have specialized knowledge in areas such as group psychology.
- iv. **Online Mentoring** refers to the development of a mentoring relationship through the internet. It is particularly useful when various factors (geographical, climatic, individual factors such as illness, disability, etc.) prevent in-person communication. The same rules apply for online mentoring as for in-person meetings (predefined timing, duration and frequency of communication, collaboration agreements, etc.).
- v. **Short-Term Mentoring** involves mentoring applications that are implemented for short periods or are tightly time-bound. In contrast, **Long-Term Mentoring** refers to mentoring that lasts for a prolonged period or continues on an ongoing basis until the set goals are achieved.
- vi. **Mixed Mentoring** combines several of the previously mentioned characteristics.

Part B: The Framework of Mentoring according the description and the requirements of the WP 3.4.2

10. Subject of Mentoring in Tour-X – sectors and skills:

The Tour-X project required a Training Needs Analysis (TNA). So, a literature review has been performed, followed by the field work, which has produced the TNA.

The TNA Training Needs Analysis (TNA) has focused on:

SECTORS in Tourism	GROUP OF SKILLS
1. Restaurants & Catering 2. Hotels & Accommodation 3. Tourist Agencies	1. Digital Skills 2. Green Skills 3. Intercultural Skills

The field work involved focus groups and interviews (semi-structured and using an interview script). All of the qualitative material gathered was duly transcribed and was based on asking the same questions in different countries, by different project partners. The work is, thus, quite unique. A thematic analysis was performed on the qualitative data gathered. Data saturation was reached in each country with the interviews and focus groups and certainly when considering the data effort as a whole. That means that more respondents were no longer necessary as respondents were starting to repeat perspectives supplied by others – nothing new was being added at a certain point. Hence, the data collection stopped.

The results are presented by country. In total 11 focus groups were conducted, with a total of 107 participants from China, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Spain and from “Umbrella organizations” also. The professions of the participants vary, from tourism specialists (such as managers of vocational education and training schools, company CEOs, representatives of public organizations, among others), students, tourism trainers (teachers), tourism professionals (cooks, receptionists, among others). The country analyses are detailed in the sections for each country and a comprehensive thematic analysis is provided per country.

As regards the interviews a total of 58 interviews were performed – in China, Germany, Greece, Spain, Italy, Portugal and also in Umbrella organizations.

Thus, the following list includes the skills that are indicated and/or extracted after looking into TNA thoroughly:

Restaurants & Catering

Digital Menu Creation
Table Platform Management
POS & Contactless Payment

Local Ingridence & eco friendly suppliers use
Cooking Techniques
Eco friendly packaging
Water Conservation
Sustainable & Eco friendly practices customer Leading/education

Tourist Agencies & Hotels

POS & Contactless Payment

Water Conservation

Means of Travel and low emmision choices selecting

DIGITAL SKILLS

1	Social Media Management
2	CRM systems
3	Data Analysis
4	Content Creation & Digital Marketing
5	Online Reservations
6	Website & App Management
7	Digital Communication & Collaboration Tools
8	Cyber Security
9	Inventory & Supply Chain Management
10	Use of AI tools

GREEN SKILLS

1	Environmental Awareness
2	Sustainable Practices
3	Waste Management & Recycling
4	Energy Efficiency
5	Sustainable Travel education and stewardship of the customers
6	Green Communication & Marketing
7	Climate Risk Assesment

INTERCULTURAL & SOFT SKILLS

1	Communication Skills
2	Empathy
3	Adaptability & Flexibility
4	Problem Solving
5	Teamwork & Collaboration
6	Foreign languages command of use
7	Cultural Awareness & cross cultural communication
8	Emmotional Intelligence & Patience
9	Customer Service Orientation (Personalization of the service)
10	Time Management & Organizational Skills
11	Hospitality & positive Attitude
12	Storytelling

11. Type of Mentoring in Tour-X:

Thus, in the Tour-X project case, we have to apply a mixed mentoring and more specifically: a short-term, informal, individual, internal mentoring, that is focusing on specific goals and may take place mainly in person and occasionally online, (depending on the working conditions and circumstances) and it will be applied in small and micro enterprises of the Tourism sector and specifically in Restaurant & Catering, Hotels and Tourist Agencies.

12. Parties involved – roles - interactions:

During the implementation of the peer mentoring of the Tour-X project, the parties involved are:

12.1 The Employer:

The entrepreneur of small and micro enterprises plays the initially key role, mainly because he/she will decide to implement mentoring within his/her business. On the one hand, the employer must be well-informed and convinced of the added value of the entire initiative, and on the other hand, he/she must meet the participation criteria. More specifically, the employer should have a clear and realistic positioning of their business within the broader competitive context of the industry. He/she must understand the future trends of the industry sector and carry out an objective SWOT analysis of his/her business, focusing primarily on the risks arising from internal weaknesses. If this pertains to underperformance due to a lack of employee skills, the implementation of these tools is recommended. Therefore, the employer should, in sequence, proceed to:

- ✓ Be informed about the programmes' objectives, the possible added value and the series of the activities.
- ✓ Has a clear vision and realistic position of his/her enterprise in the sectoral business environment, in order to decide about his/her participation.
- ✓ Proceed in the choice of the Mentor between the employees, following certain criteria
- ✓ Monitor the whole process

12.2 The Mentor

The mentor is one of the employees in the enterprise who has been selected by the employer based on specific characteristics he/she possess, which may relate to his/her specialized knowledge and skills, his/her job position and his/her general perception of the business, or his/her personality and the particular soft skills he/she possess. The mentor has been informed about the purpose and procedures of the program, as well as the expected added value and the benefits that will arise for all parties involved, including the firm. A key requirement is that they have agreed to the role they will play and the requirements of this role, and have understood their responsibilities towards the employer, themselves, and their colleagues. Thus, the Mentor should:

- ✓ Be informed about the objectives of the program and the sequence of activities.
- ✓ Be got aware about his/her duties and agree to them.
- ✓ Be trained in the tools.
- ✓ Be trained in the principles and procedures of mentoring.
- ✓ Carry out the mentoring by supporting and guiding other employees.
- ✓ Provide reports to the employer."

12.3 The Employee – Mentee

The employee is the target of the program. The upgrading of his/her skills, and consequently his/her capabilities, can serve as a key leverage tool for improving the products/services of the enterprise, enabling it to take on a more competitive role in

the market and enhance its performance. A necessary condition is the voluntary and active participation of the employee in this effort. This will occur provided that:

- The employees consider themselves an integral link in the value chain within the enterprise.
- They honestly assess themselves and acknowledge any shortcomings relative to the reference point required by their position.
- They recognize that the process of upgrading their skills benefits primarily themselves and, by extension, the enterprise.
- They are willing to engage in a learning process, assume the role of the learner-trainee, and comply with a process that has distinct roles.

Therefore, within this framework, the employee should:

- ✓ Be informed about the program and the purpose of their participation, as well as the sequence of activities.
- ✓ Voluntarily accept the role of the trainee (the verb "to learn" cannot be used in the imperative form) and comply with the demands of this role in cooperation with other participants.
- ✓ Assess their skill level using the relevant tool, under the guidance of the mentor.
- ✓ Participate in the e-learning process in the fields and educational content indicated by the tools, with the guidance of the mentor.
- ✓ Participate in the reassessment of their skill level after this process.

13. The means / tools / material:

- ✓ The Training Needs Analysis and the final list of the skills.
- ✓ The criteria for the selection of the mentor
- ✓ The Self-Assessment questionnaire
- ✓ The Mentoring training material, such as description, framework and limitations, the principles, code of ethics, factors, parameters and methodology of the mentor.
- ✓ The curricula and the training material of e-learning
- ✓ The communication material.
- ✓ The list of best practices, regarding the upskilling benefits in the given skills and sectors.

14. The Procedures

DEVELOPMENT PHASES OF PEER MENTORING MECHANISM		
PHASE A: PREPARATION	Briefing parties involved	Presenting the Peer Mentoring mechanism to the Employers
		The Employers that show interest in participating at the action detect the interest from the part of the candidate mentors
	Initiation and preparation	The Employers proceed into the Peer Mentors Selection
		The Mentors are trained as consultants-mentors. The present document along with the accompanied material is the main training Handbook.
		The Employer, along with the Mentor agree on a certain action plan in terms of time line.
		Presenting the Peer Mentoring action to the employees/trainees of the enterprise
PHASE B: IMPLEMENTATION	Process implementation	Connecting the mentor with the employees
	Initial Contact	The mentor-mentee schedule their first individual session with each one of the trainees- employees. Determination of the collaboration framework between mentor and mentee; giving answers to questions
	1st Individual Session	The employee-mentee, under the guidance and the assistant of the mentor, pass through the Self-Assessment Questionnaire
		Extracting information for the mentee's needs; personalizing the approach methodology to his/her needs and requirements - Access to the training platform and to the tailor-made training material.
	2nd Individual Session	Discussion on the observations that the mentee has gathered
		The mentor gives advice and presents conclusions for the educational and professional needs of the mentee
	Process implementation	Mentee's actions - Starting the e-learning process under the assistance/support from the part of mentor - Access to the tailor-made training material
	3rd/4th Individual Sessions (depending on the needs and the progress of each one of the employees/mentees/trainees)	The mentor is briefed and gives feedback on the actions realized on behalf of the mentee between the meetings
		The mentor is monitoring all the employees and reports (mid-term) to the employer.
		The mentor gives advice and presents conclusions for the educational and professional needs of the mentee
		The mentor relationship and the collaboration created comes to an end
	Completing Action	Writing and submitting the Final Report - Mentor reports to the Employer

14.1 Awareness, Information material & communication:

14.1.1 Awareness of the Project

The information provided to the participants regarding the program should be clear and concise, to the extent possible. Due to the different roles, three distinct texts should be prepared (WP6), each addressing the three roles mentioned above. Each informational text or tool should focus on the specific role (employer – mentor – employee), use key terms, provide incentives for each individual's participation, emphasize the overall benefit, and clearly outline the obligations of each role and the sequence of required actions.

As emphasized, this is an educational-learning process with a certain level of complexity. These two factors require the voluntary commitment of all involved parties, which leads to the need for a clear and straightforward message, ensuring that all parties understand from the outset what they are doing and why.

14.1.2 Information about the Tools

The use of various tools necessitates the preparation of accompanying manuals – usage instructions, which will explain the functionality and sequence of successive actions. User manuals should be drafted for platform and the relevant training material.

14.2 The selection of the mentor:

The relationship between the mentor and the mentee is an educational partnership, aimed at leading to positive outcomes for the mentee's educational and professional development, which may last for several weeks or months, or perhaps for a single session. Primarily, the mentee draws from the mentor's experiences. Thus, "whether the journey is long or short, the goal is the same: to help someone achieve the change they value and expect."

The literature on mentoring shows that effective mentors possess personal characteristics that foster interpersonal relationships. They are distinguished by their willingness to give, empathy, positive attitude, humor, flexibility, supportiveness, and willingness to encourage. All of these factors suggest that the ideal mentor has heightened "emotional intelligence."

However, beyond the general characteristics mentioned in the literature, which should ideally be present within the framework of the Peer Mentoring implementation in the Tour-X project, there should also be more specific characteristics that align with the nature of the project. This is especially important when considering that the selection of the mentor-counselor will be made from a limited group of individuals, specifically employees within the company.

14.2.1 Selection Criteria for the mentor

Given the above, the employer must decide on the selection of the employee who will assume the role of mentor for the other employees within the organization. Therefore, after forming an opinion and guided by the content outlined in paragraphs 3 (the role of the mentor) and 7 (Trainers in Educational Counselling-Mentoring), the employer should take into account the main characteristics of a mentor as follows:

14.2.1.1 *Special Characteristics*

- ✓ Has adequate digital skills, at the level not only to use and navigate the self-diagnosis tool and educational material platforms, but also to guide other employees to use them.

This characteristic is considered to be an on/off criterion for its selection.

- ✓ Has an overall aspect and a comprehensive understanding of the company, allowing him/her to visualize the interconnection between different departments and, consequently, the different job positions.

This characteristic is desired.

14.2.1.2 *General Mentor Characteristics*

- ✓ Has a distinct willingness to share experiences, skills and knowledge.
- ✓ Behaves in a positive way and acts as a role model.
- ✓ He/she continuously desires to learn more and to improve what he already knows, thereby encouraging others to do the same.
- ✓ Acts with trust and respect in mind.
- ✓ Shows enthusiasm for the "guidance collaborative relationship" ("mentor relationship").
- ✓ Provides guidance and constructive feedback.
- ✓ He/she won't judge, evaluate nor educate.

- ✓ He/she values other people's views and their initiatives.
- ✓ He/she listens, understands and suggests practical and realistic solutions based on his experience.

The above general characteristics are desired to the extent possible.

14.2.1.3 Additional Criteria - Evaluation of Mentor Skills and Competencies

Given that the entire Peer Mentoring process is going to be applied in small and very small businesses, the employer is required to select the mentor from a limited pool of employees, which restricts the ability to fully meet the selection criteria. However, in case the employer has more than one employee who meets the aforementioned criteria, then additional criteria can also be applied, as these are outlined in the table of the mentors' self-assessment tool, which is accompanied document to the present deliverable. This table has been developed to serve as a graded self-assessment tool for mentors. The performance (score) of candidates in relation to the table's requirements can serve as an additional selection criterion, provided it is used by the employer as an evaluation tool (and not as a self-assessment by the mentor).

Based on all of the above parameters, the employer/manager of the company will choose the employee who will play the role of the Peer Mentor within the company, for the benefit of the other employees.

Part C: Guidelines for the Peer Educational Mentoring

15. The training of the mentor:

Once the mentors have been selected and have accepted their role, they have to go through a training, in order to ensure that they are fully aware of the objectives, the subject and the means/tools and master the methodology in order to guide and support the other employees to improve their competences, through the given tools.

15.1 Training on the tools

Regarding with the first point above, it is necessary the peer mentor to have a knowledge and to be able to navigate through the Self-Assessment questionnaire and the e-learning platform with the training material. This will be accomplished by the Mentor's in-depth exploration of the accompanying tools – guides and user manuals related to the Self-Assessment tool, the e-learning platform user guide, and the training material guide.

15.2 Training on the Mentoring methodology

Apart from having the knowledge and/or the experience and the relevant hard skills related to the 15.1 above, in order to support the mentees/employees, mentors need also to be familiar and trained in mentoring techniques and approaches to provide better services. Such mentoring training is usually focused on the process itself and on different aspects of mentoring, as well as other topics related to skills. Thus, regarding with the second point above, a key stage in the preparation of the Counselors/Mentors is their Training in methodology, which includes the clarification of:

- the goals and expectations of the mentoring activity,
- their role and responsibilities,
- their individual commitments (e.g. terms of conduct, duration of individual meetings, compensation),
- the degree of personal involvement in the "mentoring relationship,"
- the handling of problems and difficulties.

15.2.1 The mentor's role

Those chosen as mentors are characterized for their **integrity**, their **communication skills** and a **significant educational and professional experience**. Judging by mentors' characteristics, it seems that most scientists conclude that a mentor is a person "wise and trusted", who gives advice, with the intention to offer help and to prevent fatal errors.

A good mentor should:

- Get to know the learner and try to understand their perspective.
- Be positive, patient, honest, and sincere.
- Be consistent, reliable, discreet, and straightforward.
- Approach the meeting prepared, but also flexible enough to adapt to changes in plans.
- Be an active listener.
- Use clear and understandable language.
- Respect the learner's cultural background and diversity.
- Be open to learning from the learner as well.
- Keep their commitments and the "Cooperation Agreement."
- Listen, understand, and offer suggestions without imposing.

A good mentor should NOT:

- Preach, lecture, or moralize.
- Tell the learner what they must do, instead of encouraging, proposing, and exploring solutions together.
- Refer to personal problems instead of simply sharing their own situation (e.g., tiredness).
- Make promises they cannot keep.

15.2.2 Principles for conducting individual sessions of Educational Counselling-Mentoring

The principles for conducting individual sessions of Educational Counselling-Mentoring concern, mainly, the mentor and mentee relationship, the collaboration agreement, the organization of individual sessions, the importance of active listening during their course, the principles of asking effective questions

15.2.2.1 Tips for Productive Meetings

The table below provides some tips that you can follow to make your meetings more productive.

START	IN THE BETTWEEN	END
What are the discussion topics? (max 3 per session).	Overview of the situation.	Summary of what was discussed - decisions & actions.
The Mentee provides information related to the discussion topics.	What decision is being sought? What goal is being pursued?	If something is needed for the next meeting. Fix the time and the place.
Analyze strengths related to the topic.	Which are the obstacles? What are the alternatives the mentee has?	Filling up of meeting forms.
Ask about problems the mentee is facing.	Knowledge, Skills Attitudes for achieving the goals	Notify the employer in case of obstacles.

15.2.2.2 The First Meeting

The purpose of the first meeting is to further support the foundations of a harmonious, collaborative relationship based on trust and mutual responsibility with the mentee, as a continuation of the first communication you had with them (whether by phone or online). It is an opportunity to agree on the logistics of your meetings and to share the expectations you have, both as the mentor and as the mentee, from this professional support and guidance relationship. Make sure you feel comfortable. Give your relationship the chance to start off in a pleasant and relaxed manner. Discuss the purpose of the first meeting. Get to know each other. Share something about yourself, your personal or professional life, and give the same opportunity to the mentee. Try to understand what they are thinking and why. The mentee's perspective is highly

valuable because it marks the starting point of your mentoring relationship. If you overlook it without appreciating it, you will begin and end this journey alone.

- Explain why you chose to be involved in this mentoring program and what you believe can be achieved together with the mentee. Ask about their expectations. It's important that both the mentee's and your expectations are accompanied by a sense of importance and realism.
- Do what you say you will do. Use your communication skills from the very beginning to make it clear to the mentee that you want to fully understand their needs and align yourself with how they experience them. Try to communicate in the "language" of the mentee so that you ensure they understand you and feel like you are someone they can trust.
- Agree on and record your goals. Move forward with a prioritization and documentation of the needs and the steps that will follow. Start keeping notes from the very beginning about what has been agreed upon, and suggest that the mentee does the same. It's important to agree on how you will track progress regarding the achievement of the goals. This will increase the chances of maintaining continuity between the meetings, as well as a sense of mutual responsibility for the expected success.
- Make sure to clarify any issues that arise immediately. Ask for and provide feedback. Don't be afraid to challenge the mentee's perceptions. As long as you respect them and remain open to their input, the mentee will appreciate your honesty and different perspective. After all, you are there to offer a different way of thinking and reasoning, starting from their own views.
- Make sure to agree on the logistics of your meetings from the beginning. When? Where? For how long? Under what conditions? Set rules for your meetings together to ensure maximum effectiveness. For example, ensure that you can work uninterrupted, without external distractions (calls, "urgent tasks," etc.). Discuss the communication methods you will use between meetings (email and/or phone) and the confidentiality agreement that ensures the privacy of your communication.
- Remember: If you do not achieve the relationship you want from the start, don't panic. Building a collaborative relationship based on trust, mutual responsibility, and motivation towards a common goal takes time. If you feel anxious, don't

hesitate to contact the implementing body and speak to the responsible supervisor about your concerns.

15.2.3 Mentor's and mentee's relationship

Mentor and mentee are the key players of the mentoring relationship. That's why it is necessary for the mentoring relationship to be characterized by honesty and confidentiality. The mentor does not solve problems; he is mainly willing to listen, encouraging and leading the thoughts of the mentee towards new directions.

The importance of the "mentoring relationship" lies in the fact that it offers personal and professional development, not only for the mentee, but also for the mentor himself. In the past, mentors were considered authorities. This is no longer valid. Interaction and mutual benefit for both parts can help the mentoring relationship evolve.

15.2.3.1 Stages of the mentoring relationship

		MENTOR	MENTEE
EXPECTATIONS	Before the mentor and mentee meet, both have expectations. These expectations are shaped by their needs and, at the same time, redefine these needs.	- Knowledge & more experience in mentoring - Potential collaborations & networking - Sense of contribution to the mentee's professional successes	- Achievement of goals - Professional development, change, gains - Sense of security due to new knowledge - Greater confidence in business decisions due to the guidance received - Work-life balance - Development of collaborators - Networking - Taking risks
INITIAL STAGE	- Mentor-mentee introduction - Communication - Building trust - Defining roles - Setting expectations & goals - Defining the purpose/expectations of the relationship	- Sees the mentee as a person with potential - Cares about their development	- Admires the mentor's skills - Respects the mentor for their support & needs encouragement, useful business advice, and new ideas
MIDDLE STAGE	- Defining more specific needs & goals - Defining the method of collaboration - Reviewing goals - Feedback - Evaluation of goal achievement	- Provides professional guidance & focuses attention on the mentee's goals - Supports the mentee - Encourages the mentee to continue	- Learns from the mentor's experience - Applies new knowledge & skills - Changes the way they view things and/or manage their business - Evaluates their progress
FINAL STAGE	- The success of the relationship is judged by whether the mentor is no longer necessary - Even if the mentee is not fully independent, they should have developed personally/professionally	- Concerns from the mentor that the mentee is not yet independent - Self-awareness of the benefits of the experience	- Opportunity for independent action and use of skills and knowledge - Development of talents & potential - Self-awareness of the benefits of the experience - Positive attitude
REDEFINITION	- Termination of the relationship - Collaboration - Friendship	- Less guidance - Encouragement	- Less need for guidance - More autonomy & independence - Increased confidence in achieving goals and business development

15.2.3.2 Barriers – What to avoid

The following are potential barriers to the success of a mentoring relationship, along with 12 bad practices that should be avoided:

Most difficulties that can hinder the success of a mentoring relationship stem from:

- Poor mentor - mentee matching
- Personality issues (self-interest, lack of discipline, dishonesty)
- Lack of awareness of their roles in the relationship
- Lack of commitment from both parties
- Inconsistency, distant behavior, negative attitudes, and perceptions
- Dissatisfaction with the way the mentoring process is conducted
- Unrealistic expectations (mainly from the mentee's side) regarding what can be achieved through mentoring
- Lack of boundaries in the mentor-mentee relationship
- Lack of support from the part of Employer

There are 12 bad practices that a mentor should avoid in order to protect the effectiveness of the mentoring relationship, which is the most predictable factor for its success, regardless of the mentor's knowledge of the mentee's business area:

1. Believing that, due to greater experience, you know better than the mentee what is in their business interest.
2. Frequently reminding them how much they still have to learn.
3. Deciding for them when and on which topic you will discuss.
4. Speaking more than the mentee and constantly ensuring that they are paying attention to you.
5. Frequently confirming that the mentee understands how trivial the issues they bring up are, compared to the more important topics you raise.
6. Reminding the mentee how fortunate they are to have your undivided attention.
7. Not showing or acknowledging any personal weakness. Presenting yourself as a role model for all aspects of the mentee's professional and personal development.
8. Rarely, or never, asking the mentee what expectations they have from you.

9. Demonstrating how important your connections are by revealing information they do not need, or do not want, to know.
10. Discouraging any deviation from the course of the conversation. Never allowing any light-heartedness or humor.
11. Having the mentee record instances when they did not follow your advice.
12. Never, ever, acknowledging that the meetings with the mentee can also be a learning and developmental experience for you.

These potential barriers and bad practices must be recognized and managed to ensure a productive and beneficial mentoring relationship.

The key prerequisites required for the success of a mentoring relationship are:

Commitment from both the mentor and the mentee

- Equal relationship
- Clear boundaries and roles
- Ability for a long-term relationship
- Mutual commitment and consistency
- Trusting relationship
- Non-judgmental attitude
- Appreciation of diversity and uniqueness
- Shared responsibility
- Objectivity
- Mutual participation and communication
- Understanding of abilities
- Meaningful goals
- Respect

These elements are fundamental for creating a productive and effective mentoring environment, fostering growth, and ensuring a mutually beneficial relationship for both the mentor and the mentee.

15.2.4 The "cooperative educational agreement"

The "cooperative educational agreement" constitutes an important stage in developing and completing a mentor-mentee relationship. It includes **a voluntary "moral commitment"** to this particular process, through confidentiality, understanding and acceptance.

The "cooperative educational agreement" constitutes the first founding step of the Mentor-Mentee relationship. It is useful for forming the limits of the relationship and for securing that mentor and mentee have clearly described their expectations and goals for the duration of the mentoring conduct period.

15.2.5 The importance of "active listening" during individual sessions

During the session, the important thing is for the mentor to "actively respond to" the questions and concerns of the mentee; "participation is essential for understanding". So, the "listening ability" proves to be the most important virtue, for developing a trust relationship between Mentor-Mentee, as well as for determining, understanding and solving the beneficiaries' matters and questions.

Active listening acquires special importance in establishing a mentor relationship between Mentor and Mentee, as it helps to build trust, allowing the mentee to find out that the Mentor shows genuine interest.

Active listening can be characterized as a dynamic and interactive process, which includes various elements of communication, such as attention, understanding, and simultaneous evaluation of verbal and non-verbal communication.

15.2.6 Principles of Posing Effective Questions

"Posing questions" is especially important in the process of questions and answers; it constitutes a determinative element in dialogue development.

As far as the types of questions are concerned, the main distinction is "multiple choice" and "open-ended"; the latter facilitate to a greater extent the communication and development of trust between the members of a "mentoring relationship", as they require active observation and participation to what is said. On the other hand, closed-ended questions can, in some cases, help clarify critical matters, as they require concrete answers.

Below are some questions (indicative) that can be used from the Mentor's part during the First Meeting:

- ✓ Why did you choose the sector of Tourism you are in?
- ✓ What other sectors do you have professional experience in?
- ✓ During your career, have you made any career transitions? Was it a difficult process?
- ✓ If you could go back in time, what would you do differently?
- ✓ Would you choose another field of study, career, or business if given the chance?
- ✓ Would you like to change anything about your work?
- ✓ What do you do to stay informed about the sector of Tourism?
- ✓ What do you consider to be the biggest challenges for an employee today in the sector of Tourism?
- ✓ Which skills have been most helpful to you in your work so far?
- ✓ What are the most important sources of guidance/information for your work?
- ✓ Did you have any relevant training before starting your business?
- ✓ How do you think mentoring will help your business?

These questions are designed to facilitate a deep and insightful conversation with your mentee, helping you understand their background, experiences, and expectations.

Further, below are some other productive questions addressed to the mentee during the next sessions.

- ✓ What do you expect (to gain) from today's meeting?
- ✓ What topic would you like us to focus on today?
- ✓ What concerns you? What is troubling you?
- ✓ Can you describe in detail the current situation you are facing?
- ✓ What is going well?
- ✓ What is indicating to you that there is a problem?
- ✓ What is under your control?
- ✓ Where would you like to be in a year from now? How can you measure your success?
- ✓ What do you not know about this project/plan? How could you learn more about it?

- ✓ What change could your own improvement bring to the company's performance? What would this offer to you?
- ✓ What would you do if you knew you could not fail?
- ✓ What do you enjoy doing in your job?
- ✓ What could you do differently next time?
- ✓ What did you do well?
- ✓ What will you do next?

15.2.7 Other useful tools for mentors

15.2.7.1 The Code of Ethics for mentors

The Code is based on four ethical principles, which also represent the main areas of responsibility through which ethical and deontological issues are examined. The code is presented separately, as accompanied material.

15.2.7.2 The Self-Assessment Tool for mentors

It refers to a questionnaire*, which is designed to assess the skills and competencies of those interested in becoming mentors.

**This specific questionnaire was developed as part of the European mENTERing project and is considered intellectual property.*

15.2.7.3 Monitoring & Reporting Templates

This tool refers to a number of templates that will assist the Mentor in monitoring the progress of the employee's support and will serve as informational material for documenting the entire action, as well as for reporting to the employer.