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Agreement n.2015-1-BG01-KA202-014314 is an Erasmus+ project.
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Green Ideas For Tourism (GIFT) for Europe

greentourism.eu Online Tool

Teacher/Trainer User Manual

1. Introduction

With the growing importance of sustainable development for the European tourism comes a need for better practice-oriented qualification for professionals. We've identified a need by tourism businesses for personnel that understand both the positives of sustainable management on a grand scale and the practical measures, which can be implemented in the enterprises' everyday functioning. The practice-oriented content on sustainable management in the curriculum of European vocational schools is usually insufficient or outdated. The *GIFT for Europe* project aims to improve the market relevance of vocational education and training by creating a free of charge, continually updated source of practical information and examples on the subject – the *greentourism.eu online tool*.

Educational practices related to the tool

1.1 Education for Sustainable Development

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), or *Development Education*, addresses the need to help students acquire knowledge and skills necessary for the understanding of the complex global processes that affect their lives and their environments. *ESD* focuses the attention of learners on the ever increasing interconnections in the world, due to the process of globalization, and aims to develop key competences in order to shape behaviours needed for sustainable development. It fosters skills such as critical thinking, reflection, systemic thinking and decision-making.

The growing interdependencies in the world face young people with the challenge of processing enormous amounts of information in order to position themselves as citizen and participate actively and meaningfully in social life. The question of how our actions influence the lives of others and vice-versa, has today outgrown the limits of our communities, cities and even countries, setting the question of our behaviour in an interconnected world. This question is central to the concept of sustainable development and is at the core of EDS. Development Education has been recognised as a priority on a global level by the UN. It is one of the approaches pointed in Target 4.7 of SDG 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals, adopted in 2015, by the global community. It is also being addressed on EU level through the DEAR (Development education and awareness raising) programme which facilitates dialogue among national and EU policy-makers and practitioners.

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The focus on the present online learning tool is put on the tourism industry, which is one of the major economic activities in Europe. The importance of introduction of sustainable tourism practices for the strengthening of the sector's competitiveness is reflected in various EU documents and tools such as the Agenda for a sustainable and competitive European tourism, the European Tourism Indicators System (ETIS), the EU Ecolabel and others.

The present tool gives teachers the opportunity to approach a number of topics related to sustainable tourism and provides extensive and comprehensive theoretic information on the subject. Its innovative approach based on concrete examples from existing tourism businesses across Europe allows the learner to apply the knowledge directly and to see in real time how managerial decisions in the tourism industry can impact the environment.

This case-based, interactive approach allows learners to be introduced to the main principles of ESD, with a focus on sustainable tourism, in a hands-on manner, which allows them to proactively search for information and apply it to real situations.

1.2 Project Based Learning

Project Based Learning (PBL) is an approach based on the use of concrete, hands-on cases and examples to introduce the learner to a given topic. As its name suggests, it is based on inviting the learner to achieve a certain result by engaging in a practical activity (a project) and learn in the process. It differs from the "traditional" lecturing approach, where the student has the content delivered to him by the teacher and is then assessed on the ability to memorize it, as it offers students the possibility to work autonomously on a given topic and reach the conclusions themselves.

In *PBL*, the student is "immersed" in the topic and is invited to acquaint himself with the theoretic part of the "lesson" in order to apply it in practice and solve the problem that has been put before him. The role of the teacher consists mainly in pointing to useful information and overlooking and facilitating the work. It puts the learner in a position of having to make choices, and thus encourages him to seek the right tools and information in order to complete the task. *PBL* is often suitable for work in groups and allows for the combining of different subjects.

The present tool uses the *PBL* approach by putting learners in the position of actual managers of different types of tourism businesses and gives them the opportunity to make actual managerial decisions and see how they affect the environmental footprint of the business. The *Online tool* contains all the theoretical information needed for a deeper understanding of the complex and intertwined processes that link a given decision with its impact on the environment. The user is free to search and explore this information in order to use it to achieve the desired result.
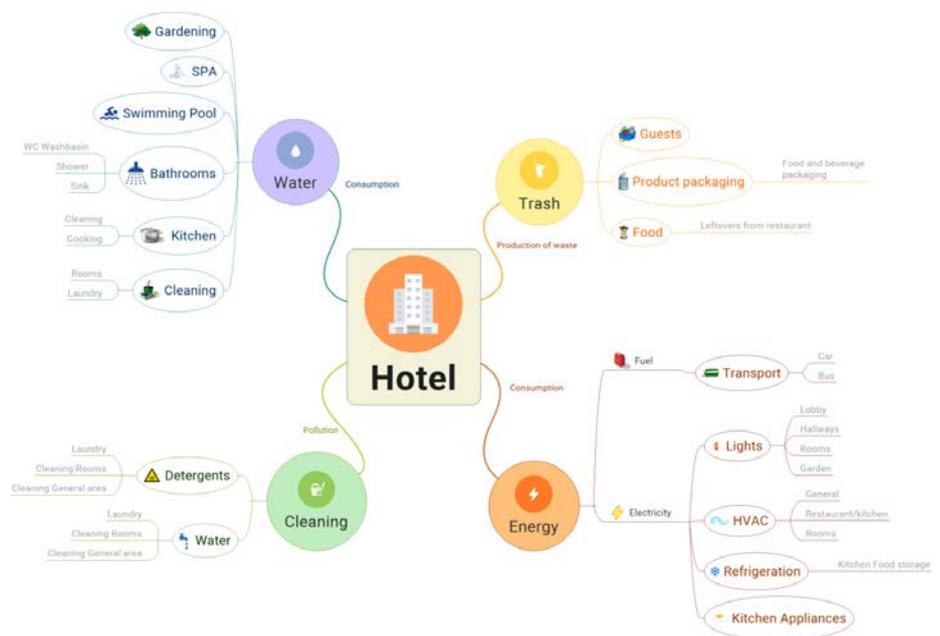
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1.3 Mind mapping

Mind maps (or *Concept maps*) are one of the best ways to organize your knowledge on a specific subject and to visually present an idea. They can be helpful when presenting new information or as a way for a student to write down information in a way that helps him both understand and memorize it.

Every mind map starts with a main concept, placed in its centre, presented as a word and/or an image, usually within a geometric shape. Branching out of the main subject are the subordinate ideas or characteristics, and so on. Different colours, shapes and images can be used to systematize them better. Using such visual cues helps with remembering the presented information.

Mind maps can also be used by students to take notes. They offer more possibilities than using a traditional linear plan structure and improve retention, especially when done by hand, using diverse graphics to present different ideas, for example including different two and three-dimensional shapes, colours, fonts, illustrations, etc. Visually recording information is also more fun and thus more engaging for the students.

Mind maps are a way for groups of students to develop a conceptual framework which could eventually guide planning, development and evaluation of abstract interrelated ideas. They are a form of active engagement of multiple people to develop a deeper level of learning. Mind mapping provides a mediating object, with fewer words, to demonstrate an individual or group's knowledge of a topic. The fewer words and visual nature of concept maps support visual learners or those persons with learning differences. Rather than relying on narrative explanations or essays to demonstrate knowledge, concept maps honour the visual relations between subjects, thus recognizing and supporting the varied learning needs that naturally occur in the classroom.

This example shows the use of a mind map to present the negative environmental impact of a hotel:

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2.   Tool description

The introduction of sustainable environmental practices requires not only a good understanding of the need for better management, but also practical tools needed to make change happen. By presenting real case studies and providing the students with tourism professionals' first-hand experience, *greentourism.eu* serves as a link between tourism and green economy to strengthen cooperation between the current and future needs of the tourism business and vocational schools. The *tool* gives a realistic overview of the functioning of tourism businesses, and highlights the impact of managerial decisions on the environment in the form of a simulation where the user is able to adjust the business model. By introducing online based educational tools, the ability of teachers to teach environmental responsibility in tourism will be enhanced.

2.1   General features & overview

The *GIFT for Europe Online tool* lets you teach, using real case studies and makes a direct link between the environmental footprint of SMEs, their environmental behaviour and their economic indicators. The *tool* is innovative both in terms of the methodology it uses and in term of the content it offers to schools. It:

- Contributes to strengthening the link between tourism vocational schools and the professional world of the tourism industry.

- Presents outstanding examples of excellence, showing how innovative technologies, are applied in the tourism industry.

- It introduces environmental issues in vocational education in a way that shows the students how to use natural resources sustainably and avoid tourism activities that can lead to the depletion of the environment; it stresses the fact that the tourism industry is dependent on a resilient and functioning environment.

- The tool uses illustration and diagrams to visually organise the information for the environmental management of the tourism business.

- It increases the competitiveness of students on the labour market by introducing them to the latest practices in sustainable tourism management and stimulates them to come up with new creative ideas by solving real case studies.

Electronic, web-based, dynamic content, easily accessible by teachers and students, helps to increase the level of digital competence and provides a comprehensive overlook of the functioning of the tourism industry by highlighting its links to environmental sustainability. The Online tool's relevancy to the latest environmental practices will be maintained by the Teacher\Educator Users' ability to upload more content.

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There are two main types of user accounts – educator accounts (for teachers and trainers) and learner accounts (for students and trainees), with the educator accounts having access to additional features, including the capability to add content to the site and monitor the test results of users with learners' accounts from the same School or Company.

In order to be confirmed as a teacher or trainer and activate the full functionality of your account, please contact the Green Ideas For Tourism representative in your country or region.

2.2   Sustainable tourism section

The *Sustainable tourism* section of the *GIFT tool* gives an overview of the principles and effects of socially and ecologically responsible management. It helps to answer the main question "What is sustainable tourism?", explains the importance of sustainable tourism and its main impacts in social, cultural, economic, environmental and political development. This section also provides a glance at the measurement of sustainable tourism as well as current practices around the world. You will also find a test for this section to help you fully understand the topic.

2.3   Case studies section

The project strengthens cooperation between current and future needs of the tourism business and vocational schools, by presenting real case studies and providing users with the industry's responsible managers' experience and will serve as a link between tourism and green economy.

In order to provide our users with an objective view, we have selected good practices from different countries and types of hotels. You can choose to see only hotels from a specific country or of a specific type and you can sort the case studies by their name or the date they were added to the tool. All case studies are presented with vivid pictures and analyses.

Case studies have been arranged following a clear structure to provide insight to various sustainable approaches. The section starts with the stories behind each individual hotel about how they have successfully adopted their own sustainable practices, and then share with you the different views and concepts on sustainability based on real experiences as well as useful data and technical details. You can also check out which green labels and awards the given hotel has received. At the end of each case study, you can find a comprehensive summary where hotel savings have been listed.

Editing Case studies

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If you are familiar with a tourism enterprise, which has implemented an Environmental management system, and wish to present it as a positive example using the *Online tool* you can add it to the tool's content. You may do so by choosing *Case studies* from the *List* menu, which can be found in the main website menu once you have been confirmed as a teacher/trainer by an administrator.

From the next screen choose "Create new".
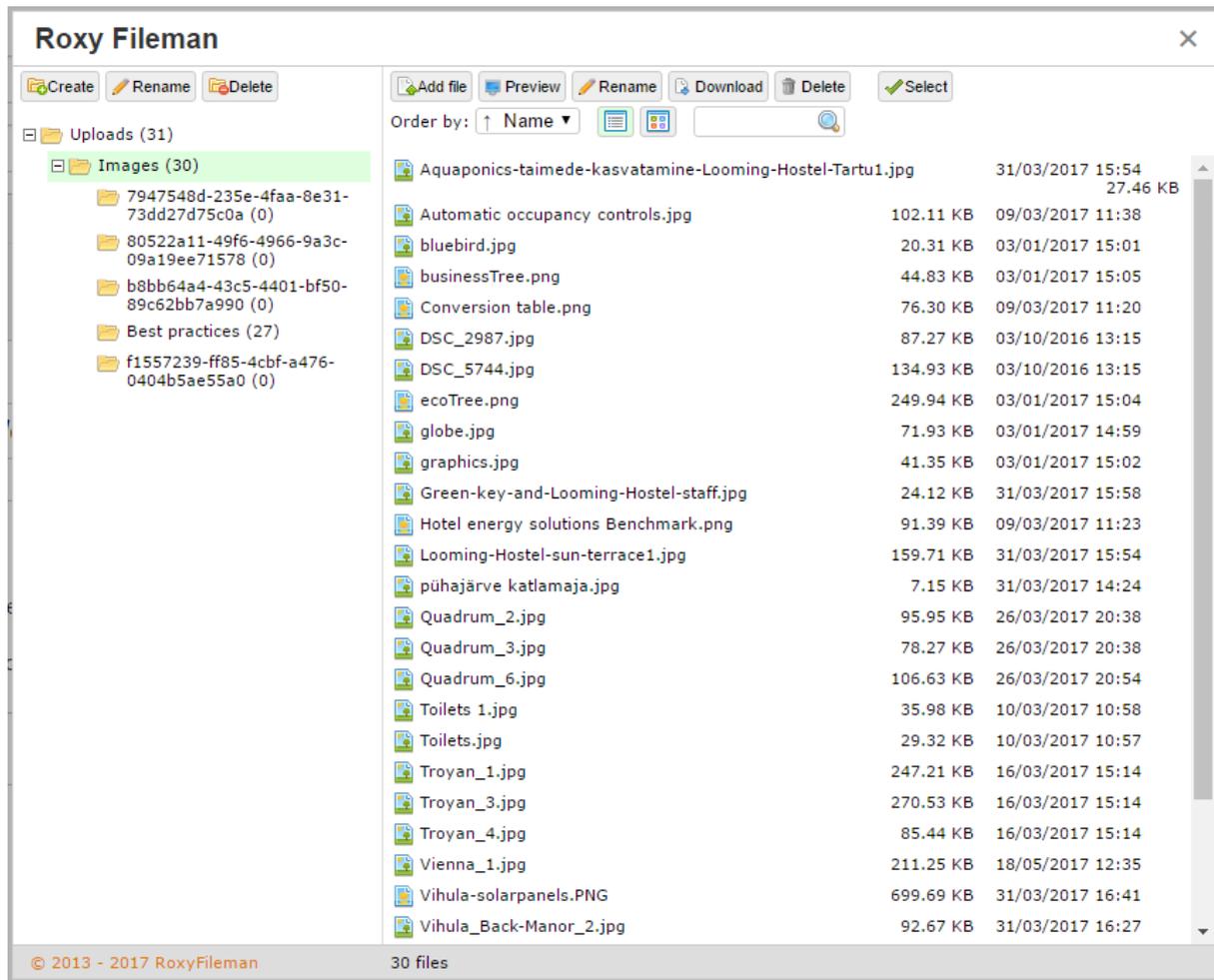
The Case study editor page will appear.

The first section of case study items serve to give a general description of the business and it's practices and management philosophy. There you can enter the enterprise's *name*, a main (header) *image* to represent it, it's *website* and a short *introduction* sentence, *country*, and *Hotel type*, all of which will appear in the case study's description in the *Case studies* page. The most important of these items is the *Description* – this is where you input the main article, describing the story of the case study.

The content you add in the *Description* field is the main body of the article, describing the story behind the implementation of the hotel's sustainable practices. When describing the case study make sure to use photos illustrating the hotel's practices and character. While working within the *Description* window, you are given the tools to use different formatting and alignment, insert tables, images, hyperlinks, bullet-points, etc.

To insert an image choose *Insert/edit image* from the *Insert* menu, or simply click on the *Insert/edit image* button in the toolbar. The *Insert/edit image* window will appear.
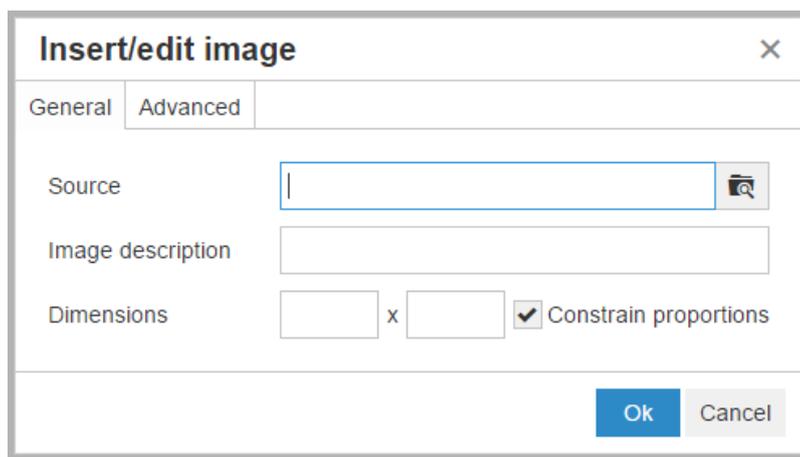
Click on the *Browse* button to the right of the *Source* field, this will take you to the *Roxy Fileman* file manager window.

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Here you can upload the image files you wish to add to your article to the website file server by clicking the *Add file* button and choosing the file you wish to upload. All images you wish to use in your content **must** be uploaded to the file server. You can also use the file manager to browse, rename, organize and delete images you have previously uploaded, however keep in mind, that changing the location of a file on the server will break all hyperlinks leading to it.

Once your file has been uploaded, choose it, by clicking on it from the list and click the *Select* button. This will take you back to the *Insert/edit image* window, where you can choose specific dimensions for the image or just click *Ok* to insert the image in its original size. The image will appear in the article at the text input cursor.

The *Language* field determines in which version of the website your article will appear. If you wish to add the same case study in multiple languages, you need to create a separate entry for each language

The *Country* and *Hotel type* dropdown menus allow you to choose the country in which the hotel is located and it's type. These are useful as users can choose to only see Case studies of a specific country or type.

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In order to prevent accidental edits you are required to click on the *Approved* checkbox before saving the article.

In the savings section you can describe the way the implemented measures have reduced the use of *Energy, Water, Heating,* and *Hot Water.* You have to enter a value in the *Savings* field, which represents the reduction in percent and a short *Description* of the implemented measures contributing to the savings, preferably citing exact figures.

When you are done editing your Case study click the *Save* button **Save** at the bottom of the page.

If you wish to edit Case study you have previously created open the Case studies list and click on the *edit* icon next to the Case study's name. Alternatively you can delete a Case study by clicking the *delete* icon.
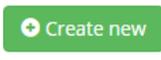
2.4   Best practices section

Best practices provide users with practical solutions on how to improve sustainability. In this section, best practices are categorized under 12 topics in sustainability: management and monitoring, water, energy, waste, cleaning, air, green purchasing, communication and environmental awareness, social responsibility, risks, transportation, nature and cultural heritage. Each category focuses on the impact on the environment, the potential in terms of saving, and related solutions.

Some best practices are also illustrated by videos to provide more information on step by step implementation in real hotel environments. At the bottom of each Best practice description you will find the ecomap – a simplified infographic to show the main functional areas in most tourism businesses and to indicate where each practice is implemented.

Editing Best practices

If you are familiar with a practice related to sustainable management, which isn't part of the tool's content you can add it by choosing Best practices from the List menu, which can be found in the main website menu once you have been confirmed as a teacher/trainer by an administrator.

From the next screen choose Create new. **Create new**

The *Best practices* editor page will appear.

What you put in the *Title* field is how your practice will appear in the Best practices section

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The content you add in the Description field is the main body of the article, describing how the best practice is implemented, its environmental and financial benefits. It would benefit the article if you add an example with exact figures.

You can learn how to add images in the Description field in the Editing case studies part of section 2.3 of this manual.

The *Language* field determines in which version of the website your article will appear. If you wish to add the same best practice in multiple languages, you need to create a separate entry for each language.

In order to prevent accidental edits you are required to click on the *Approved* checkbox before saving the article.

The *Categories* field allows you to choose within which of the 12 Best practice categories your practice will appear. You must choose more at least one category.

The *CaseStudies* field allows you to choose one or more of the tool's Case studies, which have implemented the practice you are describing.

The *EcoMaps* field allows you to choose in which zones of a hotel would the practice be implemented, as shown in the graphic at the bottom of every Best practice.

When you are done editing your *Best practice* click the *Save* button [Save] at the bottom of the page.

If you wish to edit a *Best practice* you have previously created, open the *Best practices* list and click on the *edit* icon next to the Best practice's name. Alternatively you can delete a *Best practice* by clicking the delete icon 🗑 .

2.5   Simulations section

This section allows you to try different measures in an attempt to make a hypothetical hotel more environmentally friendly and profitable at the same time.

In this section you will find the following interesting features:

- An interactive section allowing students to make managerial decisions

- A single base tourism business example, used for multiple scenarios

- Different scenarios presenting challenges in the following best practice categories: Water, Energy, Waste, Cleaning

- The section lets you choose from a list of measures in different categories, limited by a scenario-specific budget

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- Each measure (best practice) has an investment cost, footprint reduction, and maintenance cost reduction (savings) effect

- The effects of your decisions are represented through graphics as part of the mind map

- Which hotels from the case studies have implemented the measures you have chosen in real-life situations.

Within this section, you will learn about the measures' cost-effectiveness and the real-life application of best practices.

2.6 Green labels section

This section provides you with practical information on well-known environmental authorities in different countries, which would help you in learning environment related criteria and improving your own management. Under each institution, we have provided you with website links, organization descriptions, information of geographical level of recognition, justification, and target group in a nutshell.

2.7 Library section

The library provides you with relevant intellectual outputs in the field of green tourism. It also contains various guides, studies and articles from leading humanitarian and scientific organisations, such as universities, the UN World Trade Organization, and the Travel Foundation.

2.8 Test

Here you will find tests for the topics covered in the Sustainable tourism section, and for each category in the Best practices section. You can see the test results of students/trainees from your school/company by logging into your account. As a teacher or trainer you can use this section to add a personalized test.

Editing Questions

By choosing the Questions item from the List menu on the homepage of the tool you can add questions to be used in tests for student/trainee users.

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From the next screen choose *Create new* **⊕ Create new** .

The *Question* editor page will appear.

The *Title* field defines the short name of your question, which is what appears when questions are listed for selection.

The content you add in the *Description* field is the phrasing of the question as it will appear to users taking a test.

You must also choose a language and a category for your question.

In the *Answers* box you can add multiple answers by clicking on the Add button and then choosing which answers are correct by checking the corresponding box.

Click the *Create new* **Create new** button once you're done editing your test question.

If you wish to edit a question you have previously created open the questions list and click on the *edit* icon ☑ next to the question's name. Alternatively you can delete a question by clicking the *delete* icon 🗑 .

Editing Tests

By choosing the Tests item from the List menu on the homepage of the tool you can add questions to be used in tests for student/trainee users.

From the next screen choose *Create new* **⊕ Create new** .

The Test editor page will appear.

You can then enter a *Name*, *Description*, and *Language* for your test.

To add questions to your test dragging test questions from the lists in the different question categories to the *Current test* box

Click the *Create new* **Create new** button once you're done editing your test.

If you wish to edit a test you have previously created open the tests list and click on the *edit* icon ☑ next to the question's name. Alternatively you can delete a test by clicking the *delete* icon 🗑 .

2.9   How to start

As a start, please register on our website to gain full access to its functionality. Fill in the required information and set up a password. You will receive an email containing a link to confirm your registration. In order to unlock the

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additional functions dedicated to teachers and trainers you need to <u>contact</u> your local partner organisation to have your account validated. If you encounter any difficulty, please feel free to contact us. We would be happy to assist you.

After the registration is done, you can go ahead and learn, share, and contribute knowledge to eco-tourism!

About the GIFT for Europe project

GIFT for Europe is an Erasmus+ project, which gathers leading organizations from different fields – education, e-learning, environment preservation and sustainable development, all of them focused to help people to meet the challenges of tomorrow. The partners have joined efforts in order to bring together their expertise in development education, innovative educational practices, e-learning and innovative managerial practices for sustainable development with the aim of creating an educational tool that introduces environmental sustainability topics in the formal curricula of tourism vocational secondary schools and tourism staff trainings. The role of the student is shifted from a simple receiver of information to an active participant in the educational process, a process in which space is made for new ideas coming from the learner.

Background: Environmental responsibility has been recognized as a key factor for the competitiveness of the European tourism industry, as cultural and natural resources are its main assets. At the same time, the European Commission, within the framework of the Europe 2020 strategy, is encouraging educational measures directed towards fighting youth unemployment. Special emphasis has been put on vocational education, thus recognizing its potential to provide specific knowledge and skills, which contribute to raising youth employability.

Focus: The *Green Ideas For Tourism for Europe* project *(GIFT for Europe)* is an *Erasmus+* KA2 project which seeks to enable and empower students and teachers to take actions in the field of tourism that contribute to creating a sustainable society. In particular, it is aimed at providing a comprehensive and easy to use online tool for teaching sustainable development in secondary schools and professional training programs.

Topics: The most relevant topics addressed by the *GIFT for Europe* project are:

- Energy and resources
- Enterprise, industry and SMEs
- New innovative curricula/educational methods/development of training courses

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Goals: The goals of the project GIFT for Europe are to provide outstanding examples on how real businesses in tourism changed their everyday routine to become environmentally responsible enterprises. We hope to inspire students for future actions. The tool contributes to raising the awareness of students from tourism vocational schools about the links between the tourism industry and the environment. The project contributes to the development of highly qualified workers, equipped with the knowledge of environmental management and innovation trends and prepared to face the environmental challenges in the tourism sphere.

Consortium: The project consortium consists of organizations with rich experience in the fields of sustainable tourism management (Ecosystem Europe), environmental policies (SEI Tallinn), global education (Centre for Inclusive Education), e-learning (Context Learning) and a tourism vocational high school (the Vidin Vocational School of Tourism).

Impact: In the long term, the existence of tourism professionals familiar both with the operational challenges of tourism SMEs and the best environmentally sustainable managerial practices contribute to the development of a more sustainable, and therefore more competitive, European tourism industry.