MANPOWER & TRAINING NEEDS ANALYSIS OF THE VIETNAM TOURISM INDUSTRY

Executive Summary

Developed by:
European Union funded Environmentally & Socially Responsible Tourism (ESRT) Capacity Development Programme
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INTRODUCTION

Background

The key to sustained and sustainable growth in Vietnam’s evolving tourism sector is internationally competitive and flexible enterprises built on the quality of their products and services and delivered by a workforce that is trained to a high standard and able to develop and grow within the workplace. Working alongside these enterprises, is the requirement for a creative public sector, at local and national level, which is focused on providing support for their colleagues in order to deliver high quality experiences to visitors to Vietnam. Modernizing human resource management of tourism firms is a key way to enhance quality in enterprises, their products and their services that are provided to tourists and the public sector which works with them. Tourism is an ever-changing sector in terms of customer expectations, markets, products, technologies and services and anticipating and coping with these changes is a crucial challenge for tourism in Vietnam.

The Training Needs Assessment (TNA) survey was conducted through a suite of custom designed questionnaires and targeted interviews with tour operators and travel agencies; accommodation and food service providers; transport companies involved with tourism; MICE, nature, cultural, heritage, adventure and sports tourism organizers; craft and retail; technology companies; Technical and Vocational and Education Training (TVET) schools; and key public sector organisations.

This Training Needs Assessment is about anticipating and interpreting how the wide range of changes that are impacting on tourism impact on the skills that are required across Vietnamese tourism.

Purpose of the study

The EU-funded Environmentally and Socially Responsible Tourism Capacity Development Programme (ESRT) is a sector capacity-building programme for all major stakeholders in the tourism sector in Vietnam. It is designed to integrate responsible tourism practices into all aspects of policy, planning, destination management, business operations, education and awareness-raising at national, regional and provincial levels.

Within this broad commitment, a major focus of the ESRT Programme is on employment and training, intended to ensure that Vietnam, its Government and people have the capacity and capability to maximize the benefit of a shift
to an environmentally and socially responsible paradigm for future tourism.

The purpose of the 2013 National Training Needs Assessment for the tourism sector in Vietnam is to provide up-to-date information of the skills and training needs of both public and private sector organisations and enterprises involved with tourism in Vietnam.

The study recognises the skills needs in all regions and provinces in the country, the demands of emerging tourism sectors and the specific needs of women and ethnic minorities seeking to work in the industry.

Specifically, the Training Needs Assessment:

- Includes core tourism sectors (accommodation, tour operators) but also address new and emerging areas - adventure and sports tourism; cultural and ethnic tourism; MICE tourism; spa and wellness tourism; e-tourism
- Forms the basis of a new Human Resource Development strategy for tourism
- Informs and allow up-dating of Vietnam Tourism Occupational Standards (VTOS) and Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, (MOLISA) occupational standards for tourism
- Enables Vietnam to operate effectively within the competitive post-2015 tourism labour market in ASEAN
- Allows schools/ colleges and universities to update their programmes
- Links training needs to national tourism product priorities - coastal, cultural, city breaks, eco-tourism

The outcome of the Training Needs Assessment is a national report which:

- Provides a picture of skills and training needs for tourism in Vietnam at national and provincial level
- Provides contextual analysis which highlights the specific environment and characteristics of tourism in Vietnam
- Identifies areas of skills shortage and recruitment challenges
- Provides job analysis which defines the main training requirements for key professional jobs within the industry
- Defines new and emerging skills requirements in tourism
- Defines the skills and competencies that will be required of tourism professionals in the future

At a practical level, an effective national Training Needs Assessment of the tourism sector will help to establish whether there is a need for training within key areas of the industry and to help identify what training programmes should contain in terms of learning outcomes and curriculum.
The objectives of environmentally and socially responsible tourism have significant implications for the people who work in tourism.

From an employee perspective, responsible tourism in this context provides what the International Labour Organisation (ILO) describe as ‘decent work’, employment which takes place in appropriate physical and psychological conditions, is rewarded in a way which allows people to provide decent lives for their families and gives opportunities for both work satisfaction and growth.

For employers, the tourism enterprises, environmentally and socially responsible tourism recognizes that workers who are treated with respect and dignity are able to provide high quality products and services to their customers. This, in turn, enhances the visitor experience and creates the link between satisfied, engaged employees, high quality service, customer satisfaction and enterprise profitability.

For Government, investment in enhancing the skills and competencies of tourism employees adds value to the overall tourism industry within the national economy and enhances the reputation of tourism as a sector of career choice for young people.

Environmentally and socially responsible tourism also embraces the specific needs and opportunities of ethnic minorities and women within the Vietnamese economy and society. Tourism offers particular opportunities for these groups, both within formal tourism enterprises and as part of the very large informal economy where real opportunities exist to enhance their skills and improve livelihoods. The social and economic position of both ethnic minorities and women are recognized in constitutional and legal terms in Vietnam.

The Training Needs Assessment study consisted of a number of surveys, using questionnaires and face-to-face interviews. A summary of responses to each is shown in the table below.

**Summary survey statistics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List</th>
<th>Questionnaires returned/ interviews conducted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation Questionnaire</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tour Operator Questionnaire</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism Schools/ Colleges Questionnaire</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism Universities Questionnaire</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCST Questionnaire</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VNAT Departmental Questionnaire</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Sector Interviews</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>544</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In constructing this Training Needs Assessment, different approaches were employed to identify potential informants. VNAT provided a full listing of registered hotels and tour operators from which potential respondents were chosen. All 63 provincial Departments of Culture, Sports and Tourism (DCST) offices were included in the study together with the main operating departments of VNAT. A selective sample of tourism, colleges and universities was drawn up, designed to reflect both public and private providers.
In seeking information on new and emerging sectors of Vietnamese tourism, the choice was made to seek depth and richness from informants in selected provinces rather than attempt comprehensive coverage of all 63 provinces. A final list of 12 provinces was selected for inclusion within the in-depth component of the Training Needs Assessment project. Potential respondent lists for the new and emerging sectors were drawn up from internet sources and compiled into a database for each of the twelve provinces. Specific interviewees were selected locally from this database, based on parameters drawn up for each province.

This Training Needs Assessment is a national study and responses were sought, via electronic responses, from tourism enterprises on a national basis and from all 63 provincial DCST offices. At the same time, more localized depth was sought in order to gain in-depth information at a local level in 12 selected provinces. Thus, the outcomes of the study allow for interpretation in both national and more localized terms which is important in terms of developing appropriate training responses.
The accommodation sector in Vietnam is highly diversified. Accommodation ranges from luxury resorts and business hotels through smaller, star-rated hotels and also includes hostels and homestay facilities. Hotels in the 3 – 5 star range are regulated and registered by VNAT; other establishments are registered at a provincial level with their local DCST.

Currently, there are a recorded 3,128 accommodation providers in Vietnam of which 1,956 are hotels (3, 4 and 5 star), 666 small hotels and hostels (unclassified, 1, 2 star), 434 rented apartments, 53 tourist villas, 11 tourist villages, and 8 campsites. The national hotel system classifies the hotels on a scale from 1 to 5 stars; 3,840 rooms are classified 1 star; 6,977; 2 star; 7,752, 3 star; 4,966, 4 star; and 5,251 are 5 star. The number of rooms available in Vietnam has grown rapidly. In 1992, there were 13,050 rooms and, according to the 2004 census, this number reached 85,381, an increase of 654% in 12 years. By 2010, the number had reached 135,200 rooms, which will make an additional increase of 158%. ¹

**Average number of total employees, revenue and expenditure by star ranking, 2012**²

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>3*</th>
<th>4*</th>
<th>5*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average number of employees/ hotel</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average number of employees/ available room</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>1.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average salary &amp; related expenses/employee/month</td>
<td>US$224.80</td>
<td>US$369.22</td>
<td>US$464.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average sales per employee/ month</td>
<td>US$1,076</td>
<td>US$1,399</td>
<td>US$2,351</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The accommodation sector is the primary employment destination for graduates of hospitality and tourism programmes at Technical and Vocational and Education Training and university level. The Training Needs Assessment survey evaluated industry perceptions of the skills which graduates bring to the workplace as a result of their training. Technical and Vocational and Education Training graduates are evaluated positively in terms of their customer service, communication skills and foreign language abilities but are seen to be much weaker in technical areas, leadership and management, environmental management and planning.

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Overall, the ratings of university graduate skills are lower than those for Technical and Vocational and Education Training students. This might be deemed surprising in areas such as communications and foreign languages. The ratings for both Technical and Vocational and Education Training and university graduates clearly points to the need to enhance the industry relevance of educational programmes and to ensure that VTOS standards have appropriate focus on workplace-related competencies.

Recruitment of staff, in the accommodation sector, is primarily based on soft skills criteria, with personality and enthusiasm, communications and foreign languages rated as the top three criteria. Formal recruitment considerations,
including references from schools and previous employers, curriculum vitae (CV), participation in formal education, both industry specific and general education (high school, university) and qualifications/ certification are rated much lower and carry relatively little weight in the recruitment process.

Recruitment criteria – accommodation sector (n=180)
Rating 1 = Not Important at all; 2= Slightly important; 3= Important; 4= Extremely important

Overall, the accommodation sector evaluates the skills levels of its current workforce as poor and mediocre. This represents a real challenge for the sector and for Vietnamese tourism as a whole because accommodation constitutes a major contributor to visitor perceptions and satisfaction. Poor skills, in all probability, contribute to sub-standard service and products in the accommodation sector, directly impacting on consumer evaluations and, ultimately, on revenue generation and profitability. What is of particular concern is the low rating accorded to the existing skills of key technical and customer-facing positions in food and beverage, front office, housekeeping and resort areas. By contract, managerial staff is seen in a rather more positive light, although their ratings are also ‘satisfactory’ rather than outstanding.
Staff turnover

The study sought reasons for employee turnover in the accommodation sector and a summary of responses is presented below.

Reasons for staff turnover in the accommodation sector (n=125)

The data on turnover highlight the changes faced by accommodation businesses in meeting the expectations of its employees and retaining the most talented employees within the sector.
Key skills

The study sought information from the accommodation sector on the key skills gaps within the sector and the consequent training needs for accommodation in Vietnam. The priorities identified across the sector from unclassified through to 5 star properties all relate to what might be called ‘soft skills’, competencies which do not relate to the technical qualities of the hospitality product but focus on communications including languages; customer service-related; and selling/marketing competencies. This is a major finding from this study and is one which has significant implications for existing Technical and Vocational and Education Training and university programmes and for the focus within occupational standards such as VTOS.

There is also evidence of demand for skills in important technical support areas such as food hygiene, quality management and health and safety. These are important underpinning skills areas and their high rating has important implications for both VTOS and Technical and Vocational and Education Training/ university training programmes. By contrast, important product-related skills areas such as Vietnamese and Western cuisine are not among priority skills areas, despite the importance of quality food experiences to the contemporary tourist.

*Evaluation of key skills in the accommodation sector (n=155)*

*Rating 1 = Not important at all; 2= Slightly important; 3= Important; 4= Extremely Important*
The Training Needs Assessment study sought respondent perceptions with respect to future skills needs within the accommodation sector. The responses were unequivocal in that there were two stand-out responses – communications and foreign languages. This prioritization suggests that these are areas where respondents believe that enterprises themselves do not have the capacity to develop the requisite skills while other areas can be developed in-house, provided that employees have appropriate communications and language skills. This finding has major implications for Technical and Vocational and Education Training and university programmes as well as for the focus of major VTOS standards for the accommodation sector.

**Future skills priorities for the accommodation sector**

Future skills priorities for the accommodation sector include:

- Accommodation is a varied sector in size and also geographically
- Larger and international brand properties limited to a relatively small number of provinces. These properties have distinctly different skills needs than smaller operations and may suggest the need to differentiated training programmes in those provinces with larger operations compared to more remote areas where tourism is less well developed.
- Dominant focus on soft/ service/ communications/ personal skills – these are well regarded by the industry in graduates from Technical and Vocational and Education Training schools and universities
- There is a limited focus on technical skills. With the exception of culinary training, is it the case that other practical skills do not have a place in hospitality programmes in colleges and universities? Should MCST/ MOET withdraw/ reduce investment in college-based practical training in all areas except kitchen?
- Technology/ IT/ web skills are under-played as a skills area by the accommodation sector, especially larger and international brand properties; however, the skills are important for smaller properties
- Importance of managing third party agency relationships for smaller businesses – tour operators, e-booking agencies
- The findings are limited in their focus on financial/ revenue skills which are of considerable importance to larger businesses
- Existing skills levels are not highly rated although soft skills are higher rated – implications for in-house/ external training?
- Recruitment criteria are predominantly informal/ based on 'soft' criteria
- There is a regional dimension to recruitment criteria – urban provinces place more emphasis on aesthetic factors (appearance)
- Staff leave accommodation employment because of pay and work environment suggesting that the workplace is uncompetitive alongside other sectors which require similar, generic or soft skills. This may be an issue which Vietnam Hotel Association (VHA) could address on behalf of the sector.
- Implications of findings with respect to competition need to be considered by Technical and Vocational and Education Training and university educators.
MANPOWER ANALYSIS OF THE TOUR OPERATORS AND TRAVEL AGENCY SECTOR

The tour operations and travel agency sector in Vietnam is highly fragmented, with the vast majority of businesses being small in size and stand-alone operations, rather than being parts of national or international chains. There is no comprehensive listing of all travel agencies/tour operators in the country so estimates of the total number of businesses were not possible to obtain. Characteristic of many travel agents/tour operators in Vietnam is horizontal integration with other areas in tourism within the one business, notably transport, accommodation and restaurants. This is clearly reflected in the skills profile of employees reported here. The travel agency and tour operations sector in Vietnam is not closely regulated and this impacts on employment and career development opportunities.

The majority of travel agencies/tour operators provide in-country services, either as in-bound partners to international agencies or in-country to provide services to visitors once in Vietnam or to domestic tourists. These agencies generally offer comprehensive travel services including ticketing for all forms of transport, events and accommodation.

There is a growing demand for outbound travel and the services of outbound agencies and operators in Vietnam. According to data from the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) and World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), outbound tourism in Vietnam is growing rapidly in the last decade, growing from 271,000 tourists in 2001 to 1,700,000 in 2011 with an average daily expenditure of US$93. There are few operators who only offer outbound services as, generally; these businesses are multi-functional. However, the majority of agencies engaged in outbound services are located in the major cities and are among the larger operators.
Staff turnover

Reasons for staff turnover – travel agencies and tour operators (n=92)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low salary</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work environment</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal reasons</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Move to competitor</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of skills &amp; knowledge</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This data pose a change for enterprises in this sector in that dissatisfaction with the work environment and salary levels are major drivers for change when employees are considering their future options.

The core employment areas or occupations in the travel agency and tour operations sector are located in traditional skills areas of tour guiding, tour operations, ticketing and tourist information. Given the overlap with related areas, there are also positions such as driver and events coordinator listed among the roles.

Key skills

An emerging role in the travel agency/tour operator market is that of the specialist business, focusing on specific sectors of the market, for example business travel or sports tourism, especially golf. While not of significant size in Vietnam at this time, specialist agencies are a growing trend worldwide and, as they emerge in this country, they will require greater focus and specialism in the skills which employees require.

The Training Needs Assessment survey asked respondents to report their level of satisfaction with the skills levels of both Technical and Vocational and Education Training and university graduates when they join the company.

The evaluation of Technical and Vocational and Education Training graduates showed the highest level of satisfaction with their skills in soft competency areas such as communications, languages and customer service. The lowest ratings were allocated to environmental management and operational/technical skills in the travel agency/tour operations area.
Evaluation of the skills of university graduates shows similar highest ratings for soft skills areas to those for Technical and Vocational and Education Training graduates and, in some instances, the ratings are higher. Operational and technical skills are poorly rated.

The Training Needs Assessment survey asked travel agency/tour operations respondents to identify the criteria which they employ in selecting new entrants for posts within their organisations. Recruitment of staff, in this sector, is primarily based on soft skills criteria, with personality and enthusiasm, communications and foreign languages rated as the top three criteria. Formal recruitment considerations, including references from schools and previous employers, curriculum vitae (CV), participation in formal education, both industry specific and general education (high school, university) and qualifications/certification are
rated much lower and carry relatively little weight in the recruitment process.

Tour operators – selection criteria for new entrants (n=90)

Rating 1 = Not important; 2= Slightly important; 3= Important; 4= Extremely Important

The Training Needs Assessment survey asked respondents to rate the current skills levels of a range of positions within the sector. Overall, while ratings were adequate in most area, the responses do not suggest a high level of confidence in the abilities of staff and there are evident skills gaps and training issues here. The skills of operational staff in customer contact roles was rated among the lowest.

Tour operators: current employee skills levels (n=75)

Rating 1 = Very poor; 2= Poor; 3= Good; 4= Excellent
The evaluation of the key skills areas for travel agencies and tour operators clearly identifies that soft skills are priorities in areas such as customer service, languages (especially English), communications, sales, marketing and selling, both traditional and electronic. These skills are following by what can be described as personal skills areas relating to organizational, team working and problem solving capabilities. Those skills rated lowest range across a number of areas but include a number of management and financial areas.

Key skills areas – tour operators (n=83)
Rating 1 = Not important at all; 2= Slightly important; 3= Rather important; 4= Extremely important

An evaluation of the future skills needs of the travel agency/ tour operations sector identifies four discrete areas, although the weighting placed on each is not the same across all areas. The dominant skills area, in terms of the future of this sector, fall under the communications heading and also includes foreign languages, a broad range of soft skills capabilities, customer service and personality. Second in importance are a range of personal competencies including independent working, life and social skills, problem solving and team work. The third field relates to technology, including e-commerce, on-line sales and handling social media. Finally,
the lowest significance is attributed to technical skills or competencies in areas such as tour design, field trips and key sports areas.

*Future skills: tour operators*
Conclusion

Conclusions and implications for the travel agency / tour operations sector include:

- Soft skills, communications, foreign languages are top skills needs for the sector; also planning skills (for tours)
- These are also the priority future skills for the sector
- Technology skills (web-management, web-design) are also highly prioritized by travel/ ops companies of all sizes
- Outbound travel skills are in greater demand in larger companies and in larger city locations
- Graduate skills (Technical and Vocational and Education Training and university) are rated satisfactory in soft skills areas but rather less so in technical areas
- Skills levels in smaller businesses are not particularly well rated; they are deemed better by larger companies
- Travel companies offer services across a wide range of ancillary/ related areas and therefore specialist skills and multi-skills are in demand
- Travel companies require skills across most of the new and emerging skills
- Recruitment is based on soft/ personal skills/ capabilities although rather more formal in larger companies
- The causes of turnover (low pay, challenging working conditions) present a challenge for the sector which will need collective action, maybe through Vietnam Society of Travel Agents (VISTA).
- Concern for the impact of increasing competition has training implications within companies but also as a wider theme in Technical and Vocational and Education Training and university programmes.
MANPOWER ANALYSIS OF NEW & EMERGING TOURISM SECTORS

This chapter reports the findings from the key sector interviews with new and emerging sectors in the Vietnamese tourism industry, businesses which have not been traditionally accommodated within human resource planning for tourism or in the programmes offered by tourism colleges and universities. In many instances, the skills highlighted in this chapter are found elsewhere across tourism, in hotels and tour operating businesses but what this chapter shows is that there are also skills and training needs which require more targeted focus in order to support the growth and development of Vietnamese tourism.

Each of the sub-sectors included in this chapter as illustrating the emergence of new skills in tourism represents considerable diversity in the focus of the enterprises/operations that were included, their size and location. Therefore, brief and illustrative examples of one or two examples of the types of businesses that fall under that sub-sector have been included in the main Training Needs Assessment report, with an indicative picture of the tourism skills required for those businesses.

The analysis of sub-sectors in this chapter also highlights the great number of tourism enterprises in Vietnam which operate across two or more sub-sectors of tourism and this is particularly the case with those operations included in the interview survey. About one third of all respondents highlighted commercial or other interest in more than one sub-sector of tourism.

Offering services across sub-sectors has clear implications for the required skills profile of those working there or seeking employment. It is probably inadequate or insufficient to have skills which are confined to any one single area of work and the imperative is clearly for dual- or multi-skills workers.
The tourism attractions sector

Tourism attractions cover a wide range of facilities and enterprise types. Worldwide, typically, the sector includes natural, historical cultural and contemporary attractions - examples can include scenic waterfalls, temples, battlefield sites, museums, memorials, animal parks/ zoos and theme parks. As such, they can be located under national or local government management, national parks agencies and within the private sector.

Key occupations

The interview survey identified a wide range of occupations across the tourism attractions sector. These included managerial staff (general management, restaurant management, administration), technical specialists (conservation, heritage conservation, zoologist, researcher), tour guides, event coordinators, entertainers and performing artists, service staff (casino dealers, receptionists, waiters, ticketing agents) and support staff (gardeners, security, web/ IT). Of these, tour guides were by far the most frequently identified.

Key skills

Key skills for tourist attractions (107 multiple answers by n=182 respondents)

- Foreign Languages: 19%
- Environmental, Cultural & Social Skills: 21%
- Product Knowledge & Innovation: 7%
- Guiding: 5%
- Other: 21%
- Personal, Communication and Presentation Skills: 27%

Recruitment to the tourist attractions sector is from a wide variety of sources, both within Vietnam and overseas. What is absent from sources indicated is any reference to educational programmes in Vietnam, either within the Technical and Vocational and Education Training or university systems. Key skills for which recruitment is problematic include general presentation skills (for guides, attraction staff), guiding and foreign languages. Skills gaps after recruitment are most commonly closed through in-house training (52% of respondents).
Future skills priorities also reflect those areas where respondents anticipate most challenges in future recruitment, with foreign language skills topping this response by some distance.

The restaurant and informal food sector

The restaurant and wider food sector is by no means an emerging and new tourism sector in Vietnam in that its services have existed for a long time, serving both the local community and visitors. However, the sector has always changed and evolved and continues to do so and, in skills terms, it is catering for this change which is particularly important for Technical and Vocational and Education Training schools and other training providers as well as the industry itself.

The restaurant sector in Vietnam includes an unenumerated number micro-businesses within what is called the informal sector as well as a continuum of more established and higher end providers through to fine dining across a range of local and international cuisines. Emerging trends include the internationalisation of cuisine as restaurants open offering food for which there is little or no tradition in Vietnam. The growth of tourism in the country has seen and continues to see a growth in 4 star and 5 star international hotels with attendant high end food and beverage operations. There is also growth in the international, fast food sector with the entry of operators such as Burger King, Kentucky Fried Chicken and Starbucks and this style of business has major impacts on skills development in the sector.

What this study also highlights is the way in which restaurants are frequently located within wider tourism businesses such as travel, accommodation and cultural/ craft outlets which has implications for the skills required in the sector.

Future skills priorities for tourist attractions (49 multiple answers by n=182 respondents)
Key occupations

*Key occupations in the restaurant sector (79 multiple answers by n=182 respondents)*

The following table shows the key occupations in the restaurant sector:

- Waiting Staff: 30%
- Chefs/Cooks: 28%
- Reception/Sales: 22%
- Managers: 10%
- Bartenders: 4%
- Other: 6%

Key skills

*Key skills for the restaurant sector (182 multiple answers by n=182 respondents)*

The following graph shows the key skills for the restaurant sector.

- Personal, selling and related skills: 34%
- F & B Service: 9%
- Food Preparation/Cookery: 10%
- Communications and Languages: 27%
- Other: 11%
- Product skills: 9%

It is noticeable that skills beyond technical cookery and service are accorded far greater significance than might have been expected. This points to the need for Technical and Vocational and Education Training and university programmes which are less technical and more broadly based in their focus. Within the technical skills areas, there is little evidence of respondents separating skills in terms of their cultural dimensions, identifying Vietnamese cookery as requiring different skills from Japanese or Western cuisine. Given growth areas in the industry, this may be somewhat short-sighted of respondents. Skills shortages are identified as both communications/languages and technical cookery and service skills. Recruitment combines both internal promotion and external sources, frequently fairly local and from the community in which restaurants are located. Training is predominantly in-house rather than making use of external sources.
The spa and wellness sector

The spa and wellness sector is fast growing in Vietnam and is located both within the wider hotel/resort industry and as stand-alone operations in tourist areas and cities.

**Key occupations**

*Key occupations in spa/wellness tourism (61 multiple answers by n=182 respondents)*

The following graph shows the key skills within the spa and wellness sector.

**Key skills**

*Key skills in Spa/Wellness (156 multiple answers by n=182)*
Recruitment in the Spa/Wellness sector includes internal promotion but, externally, is diverse in the sources used, both local and international. Few candidates are recruited from colleges/universities, probably because they do not offer programmes in this area. Key problems in recruitment relate to candidates’ foreign language skills and the lack of appropriate practical experience in the Spa/Wellness industry. Training staff in-house is the overwhelming response to skills deficiencies, with a limited contribution from external training, generally in the area of spa product knowledge.

The main area where new and additional skills are required is in the area of spa therapies and massage, combined with service, communications and languages skills.

The sports tourism sector

Globally, sports tourism is a rapidly growing area and this is equally true in Vietnam. Sports tourism (and related areas of adventure tourism) in Vietnam covers a range of areas, both formal and informal and is offered in primarily non-urban situations, along the coast and in the mountains. Sports and adventure tourism activities in Vietnam include marine water sports, river sports, golf, cycling and trekking.

### Key occupations

*Key occupations in sports tourism (170 multiple answers by n=182 respondents)*

- Tour Guides: 21%
- Sales and Marketing: 28%
- Tour Operations: 22%
- Hospitality: 16%
- Sports Instructors: 6%
- Other: 7%

What these data show clearly is that, while sports and adventure tourism is an important and growing sector in Vietnam, the main focus for enterprises operating in this area is on delivering tours in this area. Actual engagement in the provision of sports tuition and coaching is limited to specialist agencies and clubs, which cooperate with tourism businesses. Thus, golf tourists will have their package organized through a specialist agency in Vietnam but on-course coaching and support will be provided through a partner golf club.
The single most important source of recruitment for employees in sports tourism is through internal appointments but the sector also utilizes a wide range of external sources including Technical and Vocational and Education Training colleges and international sources. The major skills deficiencies for the sector when recruiting new staff are foreign languages, communication skills, a lack of previous practical experience, sales and marketing skills, guiding skills and customer service.

Responding to skills gaps among their staff, sports tourism providers rely overwhelmingly on internal training strategies (over 50%) but also make use of external training, job rotation/enlargement and service outsourcing.

In terms of new and emerging skills for the sector which are scarce or not currently available in Vietnam, respondents prioritized web marketing, web design, e-commerce and wider IT skills; sales and marketing; adventure tourism skills; and event/conference organization.
The nature tourism sector

Given the wealth of natural resources for tourism in Vietnam, both formally within National Parks and, in a wider sense, in both coastal and mountain regions, the nature tourism sector plays an important role.

Key occupations  
*Key occupations in nature tourism (160 multiple answers by n=182 respondents)*

Key skills  
*Key skills in nature tourism (372 multiple answers by n=182 respondents)*

Recruitment to nature tourism companies is varied, including a high level of internal promotion. External sources include colleges but are primarily informal sources through word-of-mouth as well as some evidence of formal advertising through print and social media. The key skills gaps when recruiting are foreign languages, staff with previous experience, sales and marketing skills, communication skills and field guiding for eco-tourism. In-house training is the dominant response to skills gaps with limited use made of external sources.

Skills areas where an evident gap exists in Vietnam in the nature tourism sector include web marketing and e-commerce, sales and marketing, adventure and water sports skills, and customer service/ problem-solving capabilities.
The cultural tourism sector

Given Vietnam’s rich history and diverse minorities, it is not surprising that cultural tourism is of increasing importance to the country’s tourism industry.

**Key occupations**

*Key occupations in cultural tourism (184 multiple answers by n=182 respondents)*

The cultural tourism sector has some overlap with tourist attractions and with events in that attractions and events often provide the physical focus for cultural tourism experiences. Here, we are mainly concerned with businesses, generally tour operators, which organize cultural experiences on behalf of, generally, groups of visitors.

**Key skills**

*Key skills in cultural tourism (424 multiple answers by n=182 respondents)*

Recruitment to cultural tourism companies is varied, including a high level of internal promotion. External sources include a significant number of responses for tourism colleges but also include a range of informal sources through word-of-mouth as well as some evidence of formal advertising through print and social media. The key skills gaps when recruiting are foreign languages, staff with previous experience, sales and marketing skills and customer service skills. In-house training is the dominant response to skills gaps with limited use made of external sources.

Skills areas where an evident gap exists in Vietnam in the cultural tourism sector include web marketing and e-commerce, sales and marketing, cultural performance skills, and customer service/ problem-solving capabilities.
The crafts, souvenir and tourist retail sector

In this Training Needs Assessment, the craft and retail sector constituted a small group of respondents but this is, undoubtedly, an increasingly important component of Vietnamese tourism. It includes both traditional, culturally-based craft shops and the contemporary tourist retail sector, including duty-free.

**Key occupations** *Key occupations in craft, souvenir and tourist retail sector (78 multiple answers by n=182 respondents)*

Recruitment to this sector is not through formal college/university routes but is primarily internal and from local, community sources.

**Key skills** *Key skills in crafts, souvenir and tourist retail sector (187 multiple answers by n=182 respondents)*

Problem skills areas in recruitment include communications, sales, languages and customer service. Product development skills area also identified but there does not appear to be a problem finding the required craft technical skills. Skills gaps are addressed almost exclusively through in-house training.
The meetings, incentives, conferences and events (MICE) sector

The MICE sector is of growing importance in Vietnam, aided by the development of dedicated facilities, such as the White Palace Convention Center in Ho Chi Minh City and the National Convention Center in Hanoi, and recognition of the potential of traditional and contemporary cultural festivals and events.

**Key occupations**  
*Key occupations in the MICE sector (132 multiple answers by n=182 respondents)*

As a consequence, there are a growing number of bespoke event management companies in Vietnam which work alongside existing tour companies who also operate in this sector.

**Key skills**  
*Key skills in MICE tourism (314 multiple answers by n=182 respondents)*

Perhaps reflective of a new and expanding sector, MICE tourism enterprises recruit from both internal and external sources. External sources include colleges and the use of social media. Key skills gaps are identified as communication, skills, and the lack practical experience, weaknesses in sales and marketing and deficiencies with foreign languages. In the region of 80% of responses identify in-house training as the method most used to overcome skills gaps. Soft skills together with those specific to MICE operations are identified as those which will be priority areas for development in the future.
The transport services sector

Tourism transport is a sector that includes a variety of local, national and international operators across air, land (road and rail) and water-based (rivers, lakes, ocean) modes. The sector includes local coach/ bus and taxi/ limousine services as well as the national railway system, long distance buses, cruise ships and the airline sector, both domestically-based and foreign carriers serving Vietnam. Each of these providers draws on local labour markets and combines skills which are specific to the form of transport (pilots, drivers, engineers) and a range of more generic tourism skills, particularly those which focus on customer service roles (reception, service delivery), cleaning/ housekeeping as well as sales and marketing. Food and beverage skills are also of importance within the sector as key areas of tourism transport provide a range of ancillary services, both on-board and in terminus facilities (airports).

Some areas of transport have a well-established tradition of training and development that occurs independent of other sectors within tourism. The airline sector is particularly notable in this regard with most positions requiring specific in-house training within the company – cabin crew is probably the best known skills area but other technical and service positions are also developed in-house. The airline sector is the one area of tourism employment in Vietnam where direct competition is faced in terms of recruitment from foreign carriers and regional and Middle East carriers employ a significant number of Vietnamese cabin crew, recruited without experience but also from local carriers. Likewise, railway systems tend to train their own staff, even those in customer-facing roles and exhibit little cross-over with other sectors of tourism. This is true of both mainline services and specialist tourist trains.

The tourism transport sector offers services that range from simple/ basic to the complex sophistication of First Class in the airline or cruise sector. At a local level, services range from the basic offerings of taxis and service buses through to the demands of personalized limousine services which can include guiding and related travel roles.

This survey established the importance of communications, service and foreign language skills across all forms of tourist transport. Travel companies which depend significantly on local travel providers (taxis, tour buses) would like to see their employees better equipped with skills in these areas in order that they can enhance their services to tourists. Communications, service and language skills are seen as a weakness across the tourism transport sector, particularly with regard to local transport.

The tourism services sector

Tourism services are also diverse in the organisations which fall within its ambit. This field within tourism includes businesses offering financial, information, health and public services and can be taken to include currency exchange bureau, insurance services, telecommunications services for tourists (including the now declining internet cafes), health services (clinics, hospitals) which cater extensively for tourist needs, customs and immigration services and tourist police. In many cases, these are services which may not see their
primary focus as located within tourism and traditionally may not have participated in training or wider HRD that has a tourism focus.

The interview survey of emerging sectors was not able to identify and include a wide range of operations within tourism services. However, of the few respondents who identified themselves with this sector, skills required ranged over mainstream tourism areas (food preparation and service), marketing and tour guides alongside conservation, events, and research and regulation enforcement skills.

The skills required for work in this sector were identified to include foreign languages, communication skills, management, administration and financial competencies, planning and culture and heritage skills. These are also reflected in the range of future skills required within the sector but there is a focus on environmental and cultural awareness identified.

The skills challenge for this sector lies in the reality that many of those working in tourism services do not necessarily identify themselves as tourism workers and do not necessarily see skills associated with the tourism component of their work as their priority.

Conclusions

Conclusions and implications for new and emerging skills include:

- New and emerging sector businesses are the key to the future prosperity of tourism in Vietnam as they are, generally, high value-added and include some of the fastest growing specialist areas (spa/wellness; golf) in global tourism.
- New and emerging skills areas transcend/cross over most other sectors within tourism and share skills requirements with many of them.
- They are often required within organizations/enterprises where mainstream, conventional skills are also required.
- The core skills can be divided into three areas: a) the same range of soft and service skills highlighted in the accommodation and travel agencies/tour operators and offered within these mainstream businesses; b) core accommodation or service skills offered in a specialist context (transport, cruises); and c) specialist skills, often highly technical (conservation, diving, golf) for which bespoke training is required.
- There is little evidence that the new and emerging skills are available through mainstream Technical and Vocational and Education Training or university education programmes although some of them are evident in new programme plans of some schools (events).
- Some of the new and emerging tourism skills areas are highly specialist and training is currently limited or not available in Vietnam (PADI dive instructor; conservation expert in national parks; festival and event organization; golf course management). Staff is commonly recruited from overseas and there is, therefore, opportunity for a small number
of high quality, specialist training programmes in these areas.

- Some of the new and emerging skills are regionalised in where they are required (sports, cultural, MICE tourism, for example) and there may be a need to focus training in selected, regional Technical and Vocational and Education Training schools and universities.
Training needs in VNAT

The Vietnam National Administration of Tourism (VNAT) is an agency of the Ministry of Culture Sports and Tourism (MCST). It has the functions of advising and helping MCST to manage and execute the State’s management mission and authority for tourism throughout the country.

VNAT consists of a number of departments, responsible for Travel, Hotels, Finance, International Cooperation, Personnel Organization, Tourism Marketing and Administration. Other functions are the Tourism Information Technology Center, the Institute for Tourism Development Research, the Vietnam Tourism Review and the Tourism Newspaper.

An analysis of survey data from the 11 VNAT units allows certain conclusions to be drawn.

The current skills levels reported for VNAT personnel are deemed satisfactory but clearly have some scope for improvement for officials and for senior officials.

According to the survey findings, training for officials and staff is carried out in many ways such as sending officials and staff to training courses at universities or institutes, hiring external training experts and on-the-job training. The most common forms include sending them to training at universities/ institutes and hiring international training experts.
When asked about the importance of recruitment criteria for officials and staff, with the exception of “References / Testimonials”, each of the following criteria were evaluated as “extremely important” or “important” as shown in the table below:

*Evaluation of recruitment criteria for VNAT officials and staff (n=11)*
*Rating 1 = Not important; 2= Slightly important; 3= Important; 4= Extremely important*
In order to identify the training needs of VNAT staff, respondents were asked to assess the importance of key skills areas for the future.

The table below highlights the importance of community engagement and sustainable development as the priority skills for the future of tourism’s national government officials. It also highlights a combination of both technical tourism capacities and personal skills and competencies as key to the skills makeup of future VNAT officials.

**Importance of key skills – VNAT staff (n=11)**

*Rating 1 = Not important; 2 = Slightly important; 3 = Important; 4 = Extremely important*
Training needs of provincial DCSTs

Provincial Departments Culture, Sports and Tourism (DCST) offices were surveyed, using an 18 item instrument. The aim of the survey was to collect information relating to the quality of current workforce of the DCSTs and specific needs for training programmes of enhancing capacity to be prioritized in the next future.

The questionnaires were sent to all DCSTs throughout the country. The total number of questionnaires sent was 63. A total of 56 valid questionnaires were received and were processed for synthesis and analysis.

Based on a synthesis of survey data from the 56 DCSTs, certain observations can be made. It is clear that the DCSTs, managing tourism administration in very different provinces in terms of size, tourism profile and importance of tourism to the provincial economy, have diverse staffing profiles and, probably, skills requirements.

Of the DCSTs who responded to the question “what type of training do you provide for your staff?” there is only one department that did not implement any training and intensive courses. The other departments implemented various forms of training as below:

- Sending staff to participate in training courses in college/ training institute.
- Employed external experts or training companies/ cooperating with external trainers to conduct training for employees.
- Arranged on-the-job training for employees with in-house trainers from the DCSTs.
- Miscellaneous other forms of training.

Of the above-mentioned forms, the most common used is to combine with training institutes/universities/colleges in order to organise training course for officials and staff. On-the-job training account for considerable percentage (40.4% of DCSTs selected this answer). In terms of diversifying the training, a majority of the DCSTs applied the first and second forms of training.

When asked about the importance of official and staff recruitment criteria, except for “References/ Testimonials”, the DCSTs evaluated the following criteria “extremely important or important” as below:

- Personality and Enthusiasm
- Communication Skills
- Previous Work Experience
- Certification/Accreditation
- Foreign Language Skills
- Tourism/ Hospitality College or University Education
- General Education
- Performance at Interview
- Appearance
- Professionalism of CV
In DCSTs, generally speaking, staff promotion from internal sources has been used to encourage the loyalty of officials and staff. A total of 33 of the 56 DCSTs (58.2%) have implemented this method. Significantly, there are 3 DCSTs with percentage of internal promotion above between 95% and 100%. However, the percentage of the DCSTs that has not promoted officials from internal source is still high (41.8%).

The survey result showed that officials and staff turnover is considered to be a problem in 23 provinces & cities out of the total of 56 (accounting for 41.8%).

The common reasons for turnover were reported as

- Family situation
- Low salary/wages
- Not suitable work position for their perceived abilities
- Stressful work environment.

Among the 4 groups of DCST officials surveyed in terms of skills levels the group of a) senior officials, b) officials and c) technical/supporting staff are rated good or excellent, and d) other staff is rated fair. None of groups were rated poor. There is no considerable difference across the DCSTs on this rating.

Conclusion

Conclusions and Implications for public sector employees in tourism include:

- The core skills of VNAT and DCST staff at all levels appear to be sound
- Based on their academic backgrounds, VNAT and DCST appear to have developed their skills based on theoretical understanding rather than practical experience
- Recruitment is based primarily soft/ generic skills of communications, languages and related competencies
- Community and industry liaison is recognized as a key skills requirement and this highlights the value for DCST/ VNAT staff to gain private sector experience
- There is clear indications that VNAT/ DCST staff have the technical skills to contribute to ad manage future Training Needs Assessments
ANALYSIS OF EDUCATION & TRAINING IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

Education and training for tourism in Vietnam is offered by a large number of public Technical and Vocational and Education Training schools, close to 60 universities and a number of private instructions.

According to MCST, the total number of full time teachers in public tourism colleges and universities is 1,460 with a further 600 part time teachers. There are also 2,579 industry-based trainers with Vietnam Tourism Certification Board (VTCB) certificates.

A total of 17 schools took part in survey which can be classified as follows:

- The survey included 14 Government institutions including 9 under MCST and Ministry of Industry and Commerce; and 5 under provincial administrations or Provincial People’s Committee
- 2 private institutions participated in the survey
- 1 enterprise institution participated

The participating schools and colleges graduated a total of 10,317 full time students in 2012, of which, 62.5% were female. This is very much in line with the regional gender breakdown. On average, each college trained 667 graduating students in 2012. However, the range of graduating students per college was high, from less than 150 to over 1,000. Only three of the schools/colleges have female ratio below 50%. At these 3 schools, the number of graduating students was quite low in 2012 (less than 150 students).

The number of short course students who graduated in 2012 from the participating schools and colleges was 8,880 of which 44.9% were female. On average, each college trained 522 graduating short-course students in 2012. Of the 17 schools, 2 do not have short course students.
When considering teachers by educational level, the survey shows that 9% of teachers are vocational graduates, 60.1% of teachers graduated from universities, and 38.5% teachers have studied to post graduate level. About one third of teachers can teach in English. Of the 16 schools which answered this question, 3 do not have any teacher able to train in English.

The number of management staff across the 17 colleges was 450 persons, an average of 26 per college of which 3.2% are vocational graduates; 42.3% are university graduates and 54.5% have studied to post graduate level. The number of administrative staff across the responding schools/colleges was 484, of which 10.4% were vocational graduates, 77% university graduates and 5.2% completed post graduate education.

All colleges reported issues of staff turnover. In 2012, 12 of the 17 colleges experienced staff turnover. Teachers are the largest turnover group, accounting for over 50% of the total. According to the data, there were 5 main reasons for staff turnover. Family situation is the main reason (64.3%) followed by low salary (14.3%); promotion opportunities (7.1%); location far from home (7.1%); and the need to move to another place to live (7.1%).

Teachers are recruited from backgrounds as university graduates, from tourism/hospitality businesses and teaching staff of other universities/colleges. The survey shows that the following 7 criteria for recruiting staff are considered as the most important in staff recruitment:

- Personality & Enthusiasm
- Certification/Accreditation
- Communication Skills
- Previous work experience in the tourism/ hospitality industry
- Tourism/Hospitality, College or University/ Education
- Foreign Language Skills
- Performance at Interview

It is encouraging to note the inclusion of professional working experience in tourism and hospitality here as, in vocational education, such experience is vital to help to overcome the skills gaps identified by the tourism industry.

Most colleges agree that the skills of current staff members that have worked in the organisation for 2 years or more are satisfactory. The following table identifies those teaching skills areas where teachers are rated “good” or “quite good” by their colleges.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good level (80% or higher)</th>
<th>Quite good (Higher 70% -under 80%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human resources management</td>
<td>Food &amp; Beverage Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reception operation</td>
<td>Bar operation &amp;management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment management</td>
<td>Housekeeping management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facility &amp; equipment management</td>
<td>Sale &amp; marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial management</td>
<td>Housekeeping operation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food production</td>
<td>Hotel management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MICE Organisation and management</td>
<td>Travel management</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The surveyed colleges identified 12 challenges, of which 6 were prioritised:

- Competition with other colleges and Universities (increase of international colleges, universities with international training programmes, increase of tourism schools/ colleges/ universities)
- Low entry levels of students but a demand for high ability outputs
- The lack of training facilities, equipment, programmes, English teachers
- Limitation in language skills of tourism students
- Global economic crisis
- Low professionalism in tourism business

The following table identifies the key skills needs for those entering teaching in Technical and Vocational and Education Training schools and highlights on a range of communications, language and technical skills.

**Key skills needs for teachers in Technical and Vocational and Education Training schools**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key skill</th>
<th>Rating 1</th>
<th>Rating 2</th>
<th>Rating 3</th>
<th>Rating 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication skills</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>2.87</td>
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<tr>
<td>Customer Service Skills</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>2.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Hygiene</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health &amp; Safety</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>2.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Skills</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>2.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showing Initiative</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>2.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational Teaching method</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>2.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation and Creativity</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>2.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Working Skills</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>2.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training Skills</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>2.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Awareness</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>2.65</td>
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<tr>
<td>Problem Solving Skills</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>2.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product Development Skills</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>2.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality Management</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>2.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese/ Asian Cuisine</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>2.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selling Skills</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>2.65</td>
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<tr>
<td>Telephone Skills</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>2.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web marketing &amp; Sale skills</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>2.67</td>
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<td>Social media skills</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>2.80</td>
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<td>2.45</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organizational Skills</td>
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<td>2.88</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>2.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing &amp; Promotion Skills</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>2.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Cuisine</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>2.45</td>
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<tr>
<td>Event Organisation &amp; Management</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>2.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership/ People management skills</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>2.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Skills</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>2.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Skills</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>2.65</td>
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<tr>
<td>Decision-making Skills</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>2.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese history/culture</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>2.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference/ meetings Organisation</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>2.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Management Skills</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>2.65</td>
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<tr>
<td>Procurement Skills</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>2.65</td>
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<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurial Skills</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>2.65</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pricing and Revenue Management Skills</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>2.67</td>
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<tr>
<td>Business Management</td>
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<td>Accountancy Budgeting/ financial...</td>
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<td>2.71</td>
<td>2.67</td>
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<tr>
<td>Web Design/Maintenance</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>2.71</td>
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<tr>
<td>Water sports/ diving</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusion

Conclusions and implications for Technical and Vocational and Education Training schools include:

- Core programmes in Technical and Vocational and Education Training schools are sound and appropriate in the content
- There is a real challenge for the schools to focus on soft skills – foreign languages, communications, service – because of limited capacity to deliver in these areas
- A focus on these soft skills may require a reduction in technical training with the exception of culinary training
- There is a need to recognise regional/provincial specialist needs
- There is a need to create programmes (full-time, in-service) to meet emerging needs
- There is a need for Technical and Vocational and Education Training schools to work more closely with the private sector
- Schools would benefit by recruiting and training teachers with international private sector experience
OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

Tourism labour market

The tourism labour market in Vietnam, as in most countries, is highly diverse in terms of the skills and skills levels it requires. Tourism ranges from the complexity demanded for products and services at 5 star level through to the very different demands within the informal and small business sectors. Both are equally important within the context of contemporary Vietnamese tourism but projections for future growth in international tourism are focused far more on the top end of the market than on expanding and developing the international backpacker market. At the same time, domestic and regional tourism are both growing rapidly in Vietnam and are sectors which draw heavily on the products and services of the lower star/ informal/ small business sector in accommodation, food services and others sectors.

This Training Needs Assessment highlights the need to conceive of the tourism labour market as, in fact, more than just a single entity. As a minimum, it would be of value to those undertaking planning activities which relate to employment and skills development in tourism to think of the labour market in terms of distinct entities, both of which demand attention and support but whose requirements are significantly different. The analysis in the Training Needs Assessment segments responses on this basis for the accommodation and travel agency/ tour operations sectors and this does highlight distinct differences in skills expectations across both sectors. Such disaggregation, in turn, could have implications for both vocational standards (VTOS) and the programmes which are offered by training institutes throughout the country.

Consideration of the tourism labour market has, traditionally, focused on core skills areas of accommodation and travel agency/ tour operations work, rightly so in that these sectors provide by far the highest numbers of jobs within the tourism economy. This Training Needs Assessment, however, highlights that this approach is simplistic and leads to the neglect of a wide range of work areas which are either highly specialized within existing sectors or sit alongside them without receiving proper attention as work/ skills areas. The analysis of new and emerging skills in this study highlights the range of employment areas that exist within tourism’s public and private sectors but which have been substantially ignored in previous studies of the Vietnamese tourism labour market. This Training Needs Assessment highlights these areas as career opportunities for school and college leavers and pinpoints opportunities for training programmes.
in some of the specialized areas.

The dominant conclusion from this Training Needs Assessment with respect to skills needs in tourism is the priority which all sectors of the industry (public and private) place on soft skills – communications, foreign languages (particularly English), service interaction skills and related areas such as problem solving, IT and presentation skills. To a significant degree, the industry also rates these skills highly in the graduates that they recruit from Technical and Vocational and Education Training schools and universities. The challenge here, however, is that these represent a suite of skills which are also highly valued by other service sector businesses such as finance, international trade and IT. Therefore, the skills focus which tourism would like to see in its future graduates also makes them very attractive within the wider services economy and tourism will need to recognize this in competing for skilled labour.

Women in the tourism labour market

In numerical terms, women are well represented in the Vietnamese tourism industry, occupying just over half of all positions in both the public and private sectors. However, in common with many other countries worldwide, women are at a disadvantage when it comes to promoted positions, especially within larger operations and are under-represented in management and supervisory roles, especially at the higher grade end of the market. Women are also more vulnerable to the impacts of seasonality in employment and are more likely to fill part-time and temporary positions.

At the same time, women are over-represented in training programmes within the Technical and Vocational and Education Training sector and, therefore, it can be concluded that there is a high level of attrition of young women who have recently entered the industry, for reasons of pay, work levels or for personal/family reasons.

Disadvantaged and minority groups

Ethnic and minority groups in Vietnam live in some of the more remote and poorer provinces and are such face disadvantage with respect to educational opportunity, both within the school system and through Technical and Vocational and Education Training. Their participation in higher end tourism businesses is limited for structural reasons because such operations are not side-spread in provinces where they live.

The future skills profile for tourism employees is one which features skills that require a combination of good general and vocational education. Participation in such programmes may be a challenge for ethnic minority groups.

Environmentally and socially responsible tourism

Environmentally and socially responsible tourism includes recognition of the importance for what the ILO calls “decent work” and this study highlights that working conditions and low pay are the main reasons why employees leave tourism employment. Tourism faces competition for the best skills in Vietnam and will only be able to compete effectively when the sector recognizes both the economic and social benefits of offering good pay and working conditions to its employees.

This Training Needs Assessment highlights some of the skills requirements for those sectors of tourism which prioritise environmental and social responsibility, notably nature and cultural tourism. Developing modules and programmes in these areas can enhance awareness of environmental and social aspects in tourism. However, the Training Needs Assessment also highlights that
Tourism skills and skills standards

Environmental management is an area rated poorly in the evaluation of current Technical and Vocational and Education Training and university graduates and is not a priority in future skills needs.

The current expansion of VTOS provides an excellent opportunity to accommodate key findings from the Training Needs Assessment, both in terms of the skills areas that are covered and in the flexibility of the standards that are adopted. The priority placed on soft skills – communications, foreign languages (particularly English), service interaction skills and related areas such as problem solving, IT and presentation skills – suggests that all VTOS standards from Levels 1 to 5 could usefully accommodate these areas alongside technical competencies. There is also evidence that the interpretation of skills needs within any one vocational skills area does vary geographically and is distinctly different in major urban centres from remote, mountain provinces. This study points to the value of allowing both local and national dimensions to VTOS standards. Finally, the new and emerging skills analysis in this study point to specialist skills areas which may merit the development of bespoke skills standards within VTOS, which would be subsequently recognized for certification by VTCB.

New and emerging skills

The Training Needs Assessment identifies that a range of key skills are of increasing importance within Vietnamese tourism and that these areas have suffered from neglect through existing programmes in Technical and Vocational and Education Training schools and universities. These skills are generally complementary and, indeed, an extension to existing ‘mainstream’ skills in travel and accommodation but also impinge on areas not traditionally seen as part of tourism – public services, transport, culture and heritage. There are also a small number of new and fairly technical skills areas for which no training currently exists in Vietnam and where skills are currently imported from other countries.

There is also a clear need for greater awareness of these new and emerging areas in tourism in the public sector agencies and within the Technical and Vocational and Education Training teacher community.

Training and training needs

Training needs across all sectors highlights the common importance of soft skills – communications, foreign languages (particularly English), service interaction skills and related areas such as problem solving, IT and presentation skills. At the same time, far lesser priority is placed on traditional technical or operational skills areas.

Programmes and curricula

The graduates of existing educational programmes from both Technical and Vocational and Education Training schools and universities are rated highly for their soft skills – communications, foreign languages (particularly English), service interaction skills and related areas such as problem solving, IT and presentation skills. However, their technical capabilities are not valued to the same degree.

Technical and Vocational and Education Training schools currently offer programmes in core and traditional areas of accommodation and travel agency/tour operations but do not appear to address the skills required by the new and emerging sectors of tourism in Vietnam. There is also little evidence that programmes offered reflect the regional/provincial variation in skills demands.
Training Needs Assessment and research in the tourism industry

of the private sector.

This Training Needs Assessment provides a picture of the training priorities for the Vietnamese tourism industry and addresses the range of skills needs that must be addressed in order to support the complexity of the national and provincial tourism industries.

This Training Needs Assessment is a starting point and provides valuable insights with which to guide policy and practice. However, in an ever changing world in tourism industry, economic and social terms, it is important that data on training needs are up-dated on a regular basis, employing comparable methodologies to this study so that changes can be tracked and acted upon.

There is also a strong case to regionalize the Training Needs Assessment, indeed to undertake specific and simply executed studies at a provincial level so that provincial authorities can contribute to local skills planning in partnership with Technical and Vocational and Education Training schools, universities and the private sector.
This Training Needs Assessment provides information and perspectives which have value for Government through competent Ministries (MCST, MOLISA and MOET) in addressing the economic and social of tourism development and its place within the skills and labour market environment in Vietnam. Specifically, an evaluation of this Training Needs Assessment leads to the following recommendations for Government and its Ministries:

- Disaggregate tourism from the wider services sector in assessing labour market trends and needs at a national and regional level in order to allow more industry specific responses through education and other measures
- Approve a Technical and Vocational and Education Training curriculum model which allows for regional/provincial variation according to local skills needs and the role of new and emerging sectors
- Support the development of education and training for tourism which is internationally competitive in terms of its curricula, facilities and staffing
- Review investment policies with respect to some practical facilities in Technical and Vocational and Education Training schools, particularly in non-culinary areas
- Monitor impact and implications of ASEAN labour market changes and Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRA) for the tourism industry in relation to the Training Needs Assessment
- Support a bi-annual model for the replication of the tourism Training Needs Assessment at a national and provincial level

VNAT and the provincial DCSTs are the executing agencies for Government policy with respect to tourism and must have the capacity and capability to deliver on Government priorities in this area. Specifically, an evaluation of this Training Needs Assessment leads to the following recommendations for VNAT and DCSTs:

- Address the implications of the Training Needs Assessment at national and provincial level with all stakeholders
- Interpret the specific implications of skills needs and developments at a
Engage the Tourism Advisory Board (TAB) in a review of the Training Needs Assessment outcomes and its outcome implications

Plan to implement a bi-annual model for the replication of the tourism Training Needs Assessment at a national and provincial level

Develop the staff competency to undertake a bi-annual model for the replication of the tourism Training Needs Assessment at a national and provincial level

Upgrade VNAT and DCST staff competencies relating to community and private sector liaison

An evaluation of this Training Needs Assessment leads to the following recommendations for VTOS and VTCB:

- VTCB to investigate skills needs of new and emerging sectors in depth
- Expand VTOS standards to facilitate inclusion of new and emerging skills areas as optional extensions
- Enable the extension of VTOS standards to incorporate provincial/local skills needs

Tourism education and training providers

An evaluation of this Training Needs Assessment leads to the following recommendations for Tourism Education and Training Providers:

- Up-date curricula in response to Training Needs Assessment priorities, particularly with respect to enhancing teaching of soft skills, communications, foreign languages and related areas
- Consider incorporating new and emerging skills areas within curricula as relevant to the locality
- Review role of practical training, especially in non-culinary areas
- Review the range of part-time courses offered for industry personnel to focus on identified industry skills needs
- Up-grade teacher competencies through collaboration with tourism industry and through teacher industry attachments
- Place greater priority in teacher recruitment on relevant tourism industry experience, particularly internationally

Tourism industry associations

An evaluation of this Training Needs Assessment leads to the following recommendations for Tourism Industry Associations:

- Promote clear policies and operating strategies within the membership in support of skills development for existing and future employees and partnerships with education/training providers
- Promote the business case to the membership for skills and skills development at a tourism enterprise level
- Adopt policies that promote among its members tourism employment that is socially and ethically responsible in the workplace conditions and levels of pay
### Private sector
An evaluation of this Training Needs Assessment leads to the following recommendations for the Private Sector:

- Seek to develop understanding by senior managers and owners of the business case for skills development and the contribution of a skilled workforce to the success of a tourism business
- Adopt employment policies that are socially and ethically sustainable

### Donor agencies and NGOs
An evaluation of this Training Needs Assessment leads to the following recommendation for Donor Agencies and NGOs:

- Adopt a balanced approach between investment in training hardware (kitchens, training bedrooms, travel agency facilities) and sustainable software and capacity development (curricula, teacher/staff development)