

Skills WatchTower — “Validation of the TOUR-X Skills Needs Questionnaire”

Purpose of this report. This text documents the focus-group and written-consultation validation carried out for the Tourism Skills Needs Questionnaire under Task 5.2, and the adjustments incorporated into the final instrument. It is intended as supporting evidence for the WatchTower revision file.

Project	CoVEs for the Tourism Industry (TOUR-X) — 101056184
Responsible partner	Hellenic Open University (HOU) — P5
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Purpose of this final web copy. This text explains how the WatchTower was designed, validated, implemented and initially populated with evidence. It is intended for publication in the public Results section.

1. Purpose and methodological role

As part of the development of the Skills WatchTower (watchtower.tour-x.eu), the TOUR-X consortium carried out a structured validation exercise for the Tourism Skills Needs Questionnaire and its accompanying Skills and Competences Matrix [1][2]. The objective was to verify that the survey items were clear, relevant and complete for tourism SMEs, and to capture adjustments needed to reflect national and regional realities. Validation combined a live, multi-stakeholder focus group with structured written consultations across partner countries, consistent with the quality-assurance provisions of the project methodology [3].

2. How the validation was carried out

The validation process consisted of two complementary strands. A live online focus group was held on 26 June 2025 with stakeholders connected to the Pact for Skills (Tourism) Large-Scale Partnership [4] and PANTOUR, the Erasmus+ Sectoral Alliance implementing that partnership for tourism [5], who reviewed the questionnaire section by section as part of a dedicated session [6]. In parallel, the draft questionnaire was circulated for written feedback to reviewing organisations in Greece and Italy, who returned structured comments on each thematic section. This combined approach is consistent with the adapted validation model recorded in the Final Technical Report [2].

2.1 Pact4Skills and PANTOUR live focus group (26 June 2025)

The session, coordinated by the DAISSy Research Group of the Hellenic Open University (HOU) with participants connected to Pact for Skills and PANTOUR, walked through the questionnaire section by section, gathering feedback on relevance, clarity and completeness for tourism SMEs. Proposals recorded during the session included: enriching the business-profile categorisation with a legal/operational-form question; harmonising scale-based items around a consistent agreement-based wording and simplifying response options; broadening the digital-skills section to cover AI-driven customer-service tools; extending sustainability items beyond energy/waste practices to include crisis and climate resilience; introducing a “Front Office with Digital Interaction” role for reception staff working extensively with digital tools; adding a forward-looking question on anticipated skills gaps; broadening leadership assessment to include soft skills such as communication, collaboration and emotional intelligence, rated on a coverage-based scale; strengthening the training section with items on skills-assessment procedures and funding awareness; and, for emerging skills, reformulating questions toward actual business practice and adding a social-inclusion dimension covering the employment of migrants and people with disabilities [6].

2.2 Greece — written consultation

Four Greek organisations reviewed the questionnaire in writing in early July 2025: the Region of Attica / Tourism Directorate, KEKPA (Centre for Business Innovation for Digital Attica), the Competitiveness Observatory, and the Institute of the Greek Tourism Confederation (INSETE) [7]. The Region of Attica proposed a thematic-tourism-form field and greater weighting of soft skills. KEKPA, drawing on Attica's 2022-2023 RIS3 priorities, proposed digital skills linked to smart-destination management and digital storytelling/AR-VR/AI applications. The Competitiveness Observatory proposed seasonality, forward-looking skills-priority, skills-assessment-procedure, training-timing and strategic-workforce-planning questions. INSETE proposed a “Conference/MICE Tourism” category, an “island areas” location tag, a legal/operational-form question, climate-risk-adaptation and digital customer-service items, the “Front Office with Digital Interaction” role, a soft-skills sub-section, a training frequency/follow-up question, a funding-awareness question, and a question on collaboration with accessibility-support bodies [7].

2.3 Italy — written consultation

ENAI Veneto reviewed the questionnaire in writing, structured around the same five thematic sections [8]. Proposals included a glossary for acronyms, items on social well-being and interaction with the host community, a “thermal baths” tourism-area type, a role dedicated to facilitating interaction with local institutions and residents, training on cross-facility experience exchange, a prompt on improving the attractiveness of frontline roles, and an open reflection item on how professional roles may evolve owing to climate, technological and environmental change [8].

3. Changes incorporated into the final questionnaire

Cross-checking the consolidated feedback against the final questionnaire (TOUR-X D5.2, Step 3, 9 July 2025) confirms that the following adjustments were carried through into the final version: an expanded business-profile section, including a legal/operational-structure question and a “Conference Tourism” activity category, with islands listed as a distinct location type; sustainability items widened to include climate resilience and natural crisis management; the digital-skills section explicitly covering AI-driven automation and a dedicated digital customer-service/chatbots/virtual-assistants item; a new “Front Office with Digital Interaction” job-role category; a forward-looking question on the skills staff will need to strengthen over the next 1-2 years; an expanded soft-skills assessment covering communication, teamwork, problem-solving, creativity, time management, leadership, resilience and emotional intelligence; a structured skills-assessment-process question; a training-funding-awareness question (including Erasmus+ and national/EU schemes); a training frequency and follow-up question; a strategic-workforce-development-plan question; a barriers-to-training question; and new items on collaboration with migrant-integration and accessibility-support bodies. Scale-based questions were also harmonised around a consistent agreement-based wording [2][9].

4. Significance for transferability and evidence

The documentary record of this validation process is significant for two reasons. First, it demonstrates that the questionnaire was developed through an evidence-based, multi-stakeholder process rather than finalised without external input, consistent with the quality-assurance logic underpinning Task 5.2 [1][3]. Second, it enables future users of the WatchTower methodology to distinguish between the stable methodological core of the instrument and elements that may still require contextual adaptation when the tool is transferred to another region or institutional environment [2].

Acknowledgements

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References and source framework

- [1] TOUR-X Application Form, Technical Description (Part B), Task 5.2 and Milestone MS16. Internal project source.
- [2] TOUR-X Final Technical Report, WP5 / Task 5.2 — Skills WatchTower. Internal project source. Records the adapted validation model and its rationale.
- [3] HOU, Final Methodology for Implementation of WP5 — Task 5.2, 14 February 2025. Internal methodological source.
- [4] European Commission, Pact for Skills — Tourism Large-Scale Partnership (EU upskilling/reskilling initiative across 14 industrial ecosystems). https://pact-for-skills.ec.europa.eu/about/industrial-ecosystems-and-partnerships_en
- [5] PANTOUR — Sectoral Alliance for Skills in Tourism (Erasmus+), implementing the Pact for Skills Tourism Large-Scale Partnership. <https://nexttourismgeneration.eu/pantour/>
- [6] Pact4Skills and PANTOUR live focus-group session, 26 June 2025, coordinated by the DAISSy Research Group, HOU. Internal project record.
- [7] Written consultation responses, Region of Attica / Tourism Directorate, KEKPA, Competitiveness Observatory, INSETE, July 2025. Internal project record.
- [8] Written consultation response, ENAIP Veneto. Internal project record.
- [9] TOUR-X live Skills WatchTower survey, D5.2 Step 3 (9 July 2025). <https://watchtower.tour-x.eu/tourism-workforce-skills-needs/>