



## Abstract

The current publication provides research results that support TAD project in the creation and development of a professional profile and a course to train the Accessible Tourism Advisor (TAD Advisor).

Through the state-of-the-art report carried out, it was possible to understand the existing VET offers and market needs via the analysis of enterprises' facilities and the professional education and training offers from four different European areas of Lithuania, Belgium, Italy and Portugal.

Concerning VET provisions, the research applied in Belgium showed that despite the interest in training (often paid by tourism offices of the main Belgian regions), VET providers don't tackle that subject in their (very scarce) training courses on tourism.

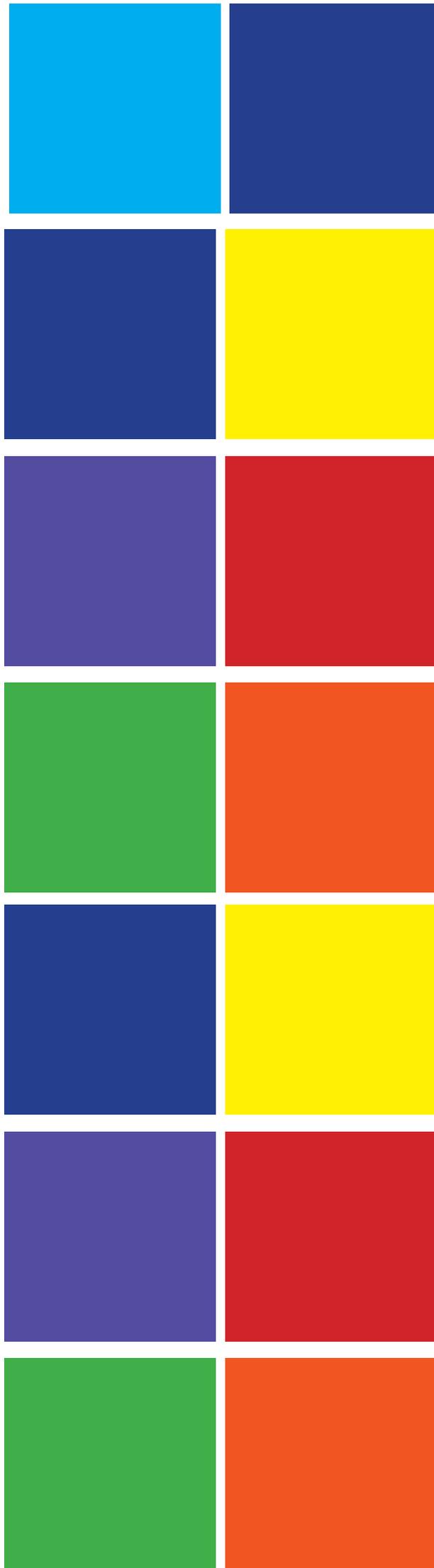
In Lithuania VET organization don't have direct accessible tourism related topics. Nevertheless, training programme can be applied as continuous vocational training programmes or compliment modules of the existing ones: social services, catering, room management, etc. The report makes clear that the TAD report should be a starting point for development of vocational education programme curricula the accessible tourism topic in Lithuania.

Even in Italy the scenario is repeated in this dimension. Among the main reasons stated by the VET providers, the lack of teaching materials, the lack of environments for practical exercises and the lack of specific preparation by teachers on the subject and lack of awareness on accessibility by companies. It was also found that the supply of standardized contents, not really flexible according to the needs of a constantly evolving market, is a critical issue.

In Portugal, several Training Units are dedicated to accessible Tourism and they can be inspirational to other countries and to TAD Project.

The introduction of a new professional profile in the national and/or regional frameworks in the involved countries is quite a complex and long procedure but it can vary per targets of the course and its length. Despite it's not impossible, it is in general terms very difficult to add new professional profiles to the ones already in the "official catalogue system" unless it is something decided by the Regional or National Governments.

The overall exercise allowed the project partners to map the SMEs operating in the tourism sector, focusing on 30 SMEs. SME survey showed that the role of the



ability advisor is needed and should be provided by VET Schools. 42 % of respondents of tourism sector SMEs, agree that an ability advisor role is essential generally, to bring more focus on accessibility in tourism and travel, to ensure adequate quality of service. 28 % of the respondents – SMEs, think an ability advisor would give customers more confidence when choosing a tourism service/offer.

Using the Pantou accessible tourism directory access statement template as a tool the project interviewed 10 enterprises in Lithuania, Italy and Portugal to evaluate how accessible their businesses are.

Interviews showed that accessibility is perceived as a competitive advantage, and at the same time, it is implemented by enterprises to comply with national and regional regulations, related to safety and accessibility for people with disabilities.

Based on the collected data, an in-depth analysis was performed on the accessibility of enterprises. This helps to support the case for establishing Ability Advisors as a new role that will operate effectively within enterprises that provide tourism services.

The VET training programs offer, together with the analysis of the enterprises' accessibility services, allowed the project to find the gap between the training offer and the demand by enterprises.

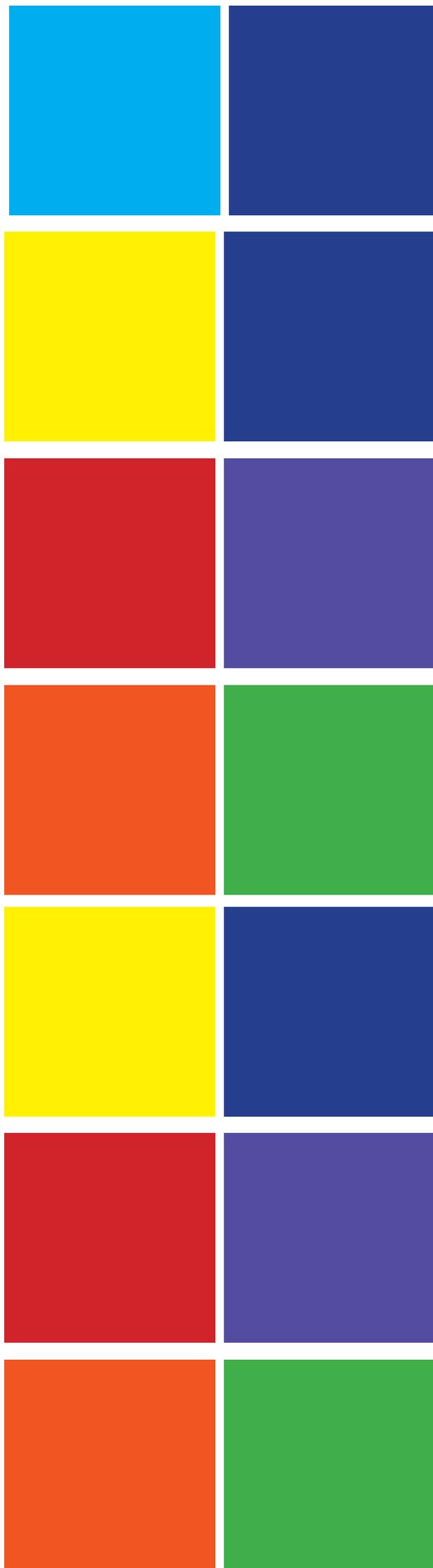
This gap indicates the market need for such an expert, a self-employed and entrepreneurial professional able to perform services as Accessible Tourism Advisor, advising enterprises in the tourism sector and contributing to improve enterprises' services and increase the capability of tourism for all in Europe.

The results of the exercise allowed to map the TAD Advisor professional profile, based on the demand found in the enterprises which have been consulted.

The professional profile will be tailored to the target group of learners aged 20 to 35, currently unemployed or underemployed. Gaining the required skills, they will be able to start a self- employed activity as external consultants or to be employed as internal service providers, able to carry on accessibility assessments, inspections,

consultations and audits and inform SMEs managers how accessibility can be integrated in their businesses.

The development of accessible tourism is one of the pressing issues for the EU tourism market and the current report and professional profile to be created will contribute to a common open framework, approaching the issue from cultural, economic and legal perspectives, sharing each single region's good practices and data and exploiting the complementarity of the partner's organisations and widening the stakeholders' network at a European level.



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