



**Nature Guide
Network**



European
Regional
Development
Fund

**WP3 ACTIVITY 3.6.:
DEVELOPMENT OF A JOB DESCRIPTION “NATURE GUIDE”**

AND

**WP3 DELIVERABLE 3.3:
JOB DESCRIPTION "NATURE GUIDE"
FOR GERMANY, LITHUANIA AND POLAND**

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Lead Partner:



Project Partners:



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INTRODUCTION

The Activity 3.6. “Development of a job description “Nature Guide” and the Deliverable 3.3 “Job Description "Nature Guide" für LT, PL and DE” is a continuation of all WP3 activities, mainly such as 3.3. “Definition of a professional profile for Nature Guides” and 3.4 “Drafting the Nature Guide training program”, which combines previous findings and sets a clear basis for project partners understanding who is a nature guide and what are typical nature guide activities.

METHODOLOGY

The Activity 3.6. and the Deliverable 3.3 were prepared with further elaboration of WP3 Activities 3.3 and 3.4 in close cooperation with project partners, who stated their opinion on every topic. The Job description follows the same patterns that was used in description of Nature Guide profile but includes more aspects for deeper understanding of specific job-related aspects, such as personal requirements and structural obligations.

In addition, real examples of existing job descriptions were researched (e.g. of a banker ([Link](#)), a guest relation officer ([Link](#))), however, the national legislations for such job description have to be revised in every country still. The job description was elaborated mainly in WP3 working team and was presented to all project partners for commenting. After gathering of the comments, the profile table was modified and discussed again among WP3 working group members.

RESULTS

1. A JOINT NATURE GUIDE JOB PROFILE

Who is a Nature Guide?

A Nature Guide is an enthusiastic and inspiring person who provides tour offers primarily in nature and presents connections and flagship objects of natural and cultural heritage of a certain area. He / she is a professionally trained mediator who interprets links of ecosystem and human interaction, mainly advocating for deep ecology concepts and bridging his clients towards nature conservation. A Nature Guide is a presenter of most attractive nature sights who leads to experience natural sounds, shapes, senses and tastes, and interprets natural heritage in interactive, intriguing and safe way.

Responsibilities and Duties

A Nature Guide organizes and leads nature exploration and observation tours, field trips, nature education activities, guides people to the nature and provides in-depth knowledge about the region and its natural wonders. Further he / she provides knowledge-specific or more general tours about certain area’s natural heritage in different manner e.g. by bike, foot or canoe. A guide person advocates for nature conservation and in some cases participates in nature conservation actions together with protected areas managers of national parks, nature parks or biosphere reserves. He / she guides through established routes or designs new route offers while ensuring safety and managing risks during the tours. A Nature Guide is managing bookings and administrative side of business, is caring about the enterprise status on the market and invests in market visibility. In order to have a sustainable existence on the market, he / she builds a network with other nature guides and tour operators (locally and beyond) and creates a connection between nature conservation and the local community that promotes sustainable use of nature by nature tourism offers.

Typical Working Places

Usually, a nature guide is an entrepreneur in nature tourism, nature conservation or nature education, i.e. he acts primarily outdoors as a tour guide, interpreter or trainer. In addition, he / she can work as an employed nature expedition leader for a travel company or another tourism provider (e.g. a hotel). With the appropriate further qualification, a certified nature guide can also take on practical nature conservation tasks in certain protected areas. In addition, he / she can be active as a teacher in NGOs, private or public institutions with a focus on experiential outdoor and nature education.

Requirements and Personal Skills

People who want to become a nature guide should meet the following requirements and have the following skills:

- Deep interest in and first knowledge of nature, nature conservation and culture of the area (s) in which you want to be active
- Authentic appearance as part of the area / region
- Respect for local protection area regulations and cooperation with local protected area administrations
- Good communication skills (oral/written) and an interest in dealing with people of different ages, levels of educations and origins
- High service orientation and willingness to provide guidance (strong role presence; playfulness in different topics and situations), to interact with the guest and if necessary, moderate conflicts between guests or different interests
- Completed first aid training
- Minimum age: 18 years
- Knowledge of at least one foreign language (ideally English or the language of a neighboring country)
- basic IT skills for business administration
- Physical fitness for longer distances: on foot, by bike, by canoe, etc. (recommendation if these activities are the focus of your own offer).

Qualifications and Training

The Nature Guide Training is strongly oriented towards a multidisciplinary approach in terms of content and methods and accordingly contains a good mix of theory and practice: almost half of the training time takes place outdoors and includes countless practical exercises for building your own practical experience.

A variety of methods is used to help provide future tour guests with a wide range of interaction, experiences, fun and learning opportunities - these include, for example: observations and research in nature, experiential group work, interpretation workshops, discussions, presentations, practical and methodical work along lectures, analysis of concrete conflict situations, role-play and simulations.

The training conveys content and values in the following three modules:

I – Nature/culture/history of a specific region and country

- Basics of ecology and ecosystems,
- Natural resources and social uses (flora, fauna, etc.),
- Ecology and recreational resources,
- Geographical characteristics and geology,
- Socioeconomic and natural environment interaction,
- Cultural landscape,
- Wilderness and animal tracing

II – Management/Legislation/Ethics of a specific region and country

- Nature protection policy, legislation, and ethics
- Ecotourism / nature tourism
- Meaning and responsibility of nature guide as actor in land use (focus on nature protection),
- Guiding opportunities in protected areas,
- Route planning and trip organizing,
- Risk prevention and safe guiding,
- Marketing and Communication,
- Accounting and finance management, sales management,

III – Interpretation/didactics/methodology

- Environmental and nature interpretation and education,
- Different methods of nature guided tours and active trips, e.g. nature photography, canoeing, biking
- Nature guide's profile and responsibilities, espec. leadership and rhetoric qualities
- Interpretive strategies and tools,
- Didactics and methodology of running tourist groups, incl. psychology and problem solving in group,
- Design and evaluation of interpretive routes,
- Outdoor techniques and tools,
- Preparing the route

After completing a Nature Guide training, the trained person has gained the following competences and skills:

Keen knowledge of methodology for designing and leading an interpretative tour for various target groups having an enjoyable nature experience. Furthermore, he/ she on the one hand is able to adapt rapidly and flexibly to group needs and changing outdoors conditions and on the other hand uses his / her rhetorical, interactive and group dynamic skills for being an appropriate event host, mediator and group leader. As entrepreneur the trained Nature Guide has keen knowledge in sales, business management, time planning and safety rules, as it is customer service. As important actor for a sustainable tourism he / she is able to organize interesting but also appropriate tours in the nature of protected areas and ecologically sensitive places.

2. NATIONAL ADAPTIONS TO THE JOINT NATURE GUIDE JOB PROFILE

In view of the fact that there has been no tradition of any kind of Nature Guide training in either Lithuania or Poland, this Nature Guide Job Profile shown here is trend-setting and quality assurance and thus serves as a template for the future development of a consolidated training in both countries. In Germany, it looks a little different, as there are already two state-recognized training profiles with a focus on nature tours:

- 1) Certified nature and landscape guide (ZNL; with a focus on guided tours in nature, which is not an official profession) and
- 2) Certified nature and landscape guides landscape maintenance (GNL; with two main focuses: practical nature conservation measures and guided tours in nature, which is an official profession).

Although the GNL can demonstrate significantly more training hours, the ZNL was used as the basis for the job profile due to its content orientation (stronger focus on guest management). At the same time, however, the deficits of the ZNL training were analyzed and discussed. Finally, and in cooperation with all project partners, the general and nationally specific expectations regarding to a Nature Guide job profile (also based on the analysis of WP activity 3.1 and 3.2) were compiled. Thus, the job profile for the German side was expanded to include important subject areas (above all marketing / business and interpretation methodology) as well as a large number of hours. The German team welcomes this expansion and will use the job profile to optimize ZNL training in Germany. Since the ZNL training has a nationwide coordinated examination regulation and a corresponding ZNL profile, this process may prove to be very difficult. It is more promising to dedicate oneself to the development in the state of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania (in the South Baltic area) and to communicate the newly created job profile more strongly in this region and to promote it as an appropriate job description.

CONCLUSIONS

The job description "Nature Guide" is first in its scope attempt to reach out identity of a nature guide profession in Lithuania, Poland and Germany and possibly beyond. The job description sets out clear standard of project partners understanding of: Who is nature guide? What requirements she/he has to have for such job? What are the possibilities in the market to employ such profession?

The result of this joint process serves both the further development and optimization of the a future Nature Guide training in all three partner countries as well as the basis for the qualification or further qualification of interested and already practicing guides. In addition, this document is intended to provide information and awareness-raising about the profession of the nature guide.