

# How to Manage My Own Skills

## Project newsletter No 1

**July 2007**  
**Plovdiv, Bulgaria**

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Welcome to the pages of the first issue of "HOW TO MANAGE MY OWN SKILLS" project newsletter. It is developed in order to announce the activities undertaken by organisations partners within the project, as well as project achievements, results and products. The team, responsible for the preparation of the newsletter wishes you a pleasant and useful reading.

### **What could be found in the first issue:**

- Overall information about the project
- News
- 1. "The need analysis reports in tourism sector. Key tendencies from Bulgaria, Greece, Belgium and Estonia"
- 2. "Job profiles in Hotels"
  - Online area – here we present the official website of the project where you can learn more about this European initiative.

### **OVERALL INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROJECT**

"How to manage my own skills" is a 24-month project (01.10.2006 – 30.09.2008) funded by Leonardo da Vinci programme of the European Commission. As an European initiative, it involves organisations from Bulgaria, Greece, Belgium and Estonia.

The project coordinator is the Department of Social, Work and Educational Psychology, Sofia University, Bulgaria. Other participants from Bulgaria are "Bulcont" a guidance centre and "Zgura-M" Ltd. from Plovdiv. Greece is



presented by Diakrisi -a private consultancy company. Our Belgium partner is @thlas – a tourism consultancy company and the partner from Estonia is “Siksali Development Centre”.

The project offers a chance for unemployed people to identify, review and self-assess their competence, skills, knowledge and thus to make a successful career within the tourism sector. It will propose quality assurance indicators for those employed in the tourism sector so that they can review and evaluate their skills, aptitudes and abilities. Furthermore, the project will provide innovative materials, targeted to tourism business owners and HR managers to help them in recruiting qualified and motivated personnel. Within the project a system, providing useful and sustained information will be developed. That system will contribute to the enrichment of vocational education training approaches in the field of one dynamically developing economic field – the Tourism.

## **NEWS**

This section is designed in order to keep you informed about interesting facts, events and results, related to the project. In this first issue of the newsletter we are going to present to you the outcomes of the work of the project team until the present moment.

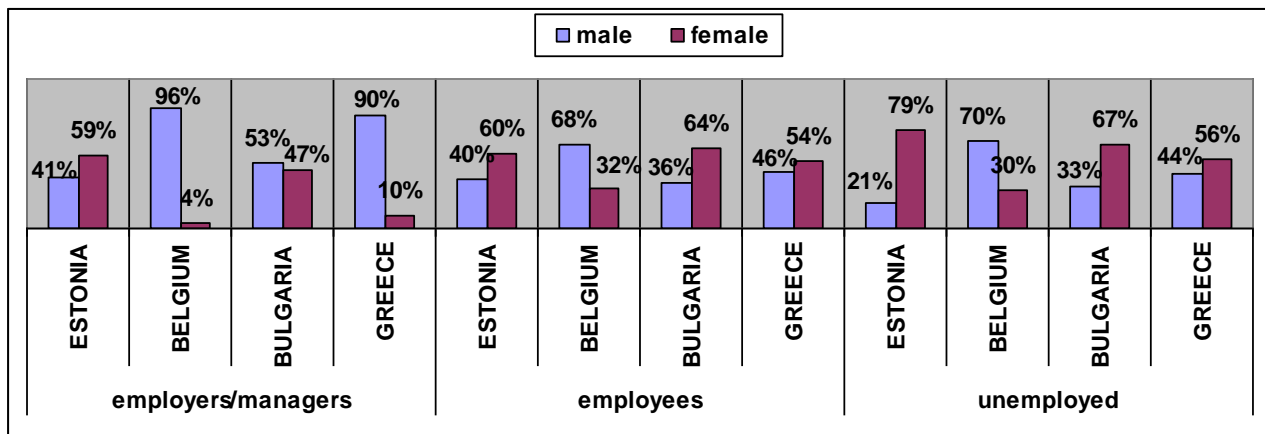
### **The need analysis reports in tourism sector. Key tendencies from Bulgaria, Greece, Belgium and Estonia.**

Within the first stage of the “How to manage my own skills” project a need analysis research was conducted by partners in each participating country. The main idea of the research was to investigate the tendencies regarding employment status and level of vocational training among the three target groups. These groups are priority for the project and thus three different questionnaires were distributed to Employers/Managers from tourism sector, Employees and Unemployed (Job seekers). After the finalisation of the research, in the summary of the results, were included in National need analysis reports for Bulgaria, Greece, Estonia and Belgium.

The most interesting tendencies from the national reports were gathered in a common report, presenting the key trends in comparative analysis between the four countries.



1. The first question concerns **Gender** of the interviewed:



### Estonia

Most of the employees and unemployed who filled in the questionnaire were female, accordingly then 60% and in the age category of 40-49; and 79% in the age category of 20-29 years, whereas employers/ managers in the tourism sector were mostly male—59% and aged mainly 40-59.

### Belgium

From the target group of managers, Belgium received 28 valid responses and only one of these was a woman. Over half of the employees and unemployed were male.

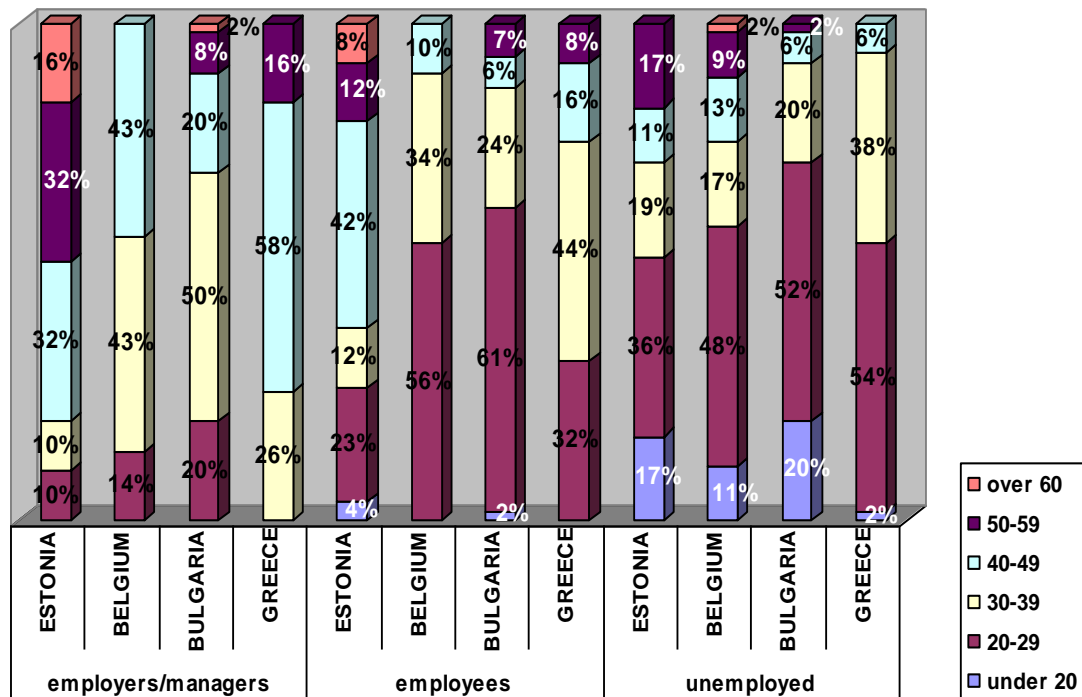
### Bulgaria

There were almost equally as much male employers/ managers as there were female ones, but in the field of employees and unemployed, female respondents dominated.

### Greece

Firstly we compare how many males and females are in the tourism field and here it is clear that it is dominant by males, the difference of male and female employees in the tourism industry is not significant however looking at the category of manager/owners the difference between male and female is enormous.

2. The second question concerns **Age** of the respondents in the 4 countries:



### Estonia

Most of the employees and the jobseekers who filled in the questionnaire were in the age category of 40-49; and 79% in the age category of 20-29 years, whereas employers/ managers in the tourism sector were aged mainly 40-59.

### Belgium

56% of employees and 48% of unemployed ones are aged between 20 and 29 years, whereas there are equally 43% of employers/ managers aged 30-39 and 40-49 years. Just a little bit over one third of the employed ones are 30-39 years old.

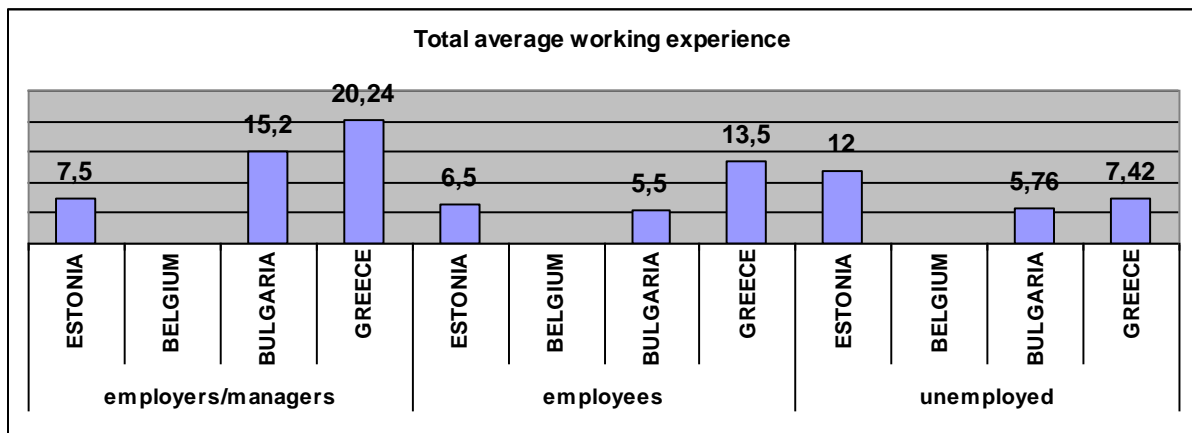
### Bulgaria

Over half of the employees and unemployed ones are aged 20-29 years. On the other hand half of the employers and 24% of employees are aged 30-39 years.

### Greece

When comparing the age between the three types the majority of persons are between the age of 20 to 49, which is when a large proportion graduate their school and/or university and start working in the tourism industry and by the time they reach their fifties the number of employees that remain in the Tourism industry start falling sharply and then the only explanation for that is the very high demand placed on people to perform day in/ day out in a very demanding industry in Greece.

3. The next question covers the **Total average working experience**, shown by Employers/managers, employees and unemployed.



### **Estonia**

The average working experience in the tourism sector of employers/managers was 7,5 years, but that of the employees was an year less —6,5 years. The total working experience of jobseekers was 12 years, but 9% of those who had already worked in the tourism sector have had working experience of 2 years.

### **Belgium**

Unfortunately in Belgium no specification about its respondents was given.

### **Bulgaria**

As can be seen, the average working experience of employers/ managers— 15,2 years is almost three times longer than that of employees—5,5 years or jobseekers —5,76 years.

### **Greece**

Once again the results of working experience differs greatly between the three types with the average number of years of work experience of the unemployed is 7.42 years where as the persons currently employed the average years of work experience is 13.5 years, Owners or/and managers have 35% more work experience than the average employee with an average work experience of 20.24 years.

4. Another question investigates to **what extent the following are important for a successful professional realisation in the tourism sector:**

Two of the most popular suggested aspects for a successful professional realisation in the tourism sector of each country from the three different questionnaires are presented in the following table:

The most important aspects for a successful professional realization in the tourism sector				
	ESTONIA	BELGIUM	BULGARIA	GREECE
<b>EMPLOYERS/ MANAGERS</b>	Professional skills and knowledge in the particular field	General knowledge and understanding of the profession	Professional skills and knowledge in the particular field	Knowledge in history and culture of the region
	Communication skills	Communication skills	Communication skills	Foreign languages
<b>EMPLOYEES</b>	Communication skills	Communication skills	Communication skills	Communication skills
	Foreign languages	Foreign languages	Computer skills	Foreign languages
<b>UNEMPLOYED/ JOBSEEKERS</b>	Communication skills	Communication skills	Communication skills	Communication skills
	Foreign languages	Foreign languages	Foreign languages	Foreign languages

### Estonia

As for the following aspects for a successful realisation in the tourism sector, all of the respondents considered communication skills as the most vital aspect. The second most important aspect for employers/ managers was professional skills and knowledge in the particular field, but for employees and unemployed it was foreign languages, which was the least important factor for employers/ managers.

### Belgium

Both unemployed and managers rate communication as the top need regarding the basic skills, whereas the employees estimate the languages as top development need. The three types of respondents assess an improvement in professional skills as important. The computer skills and knowledge about the region are assessed as a much smaller need.

### Bulgaria

Communication skills were considered important in all of the three different groups of respondents. Employers/ managers highlighted professional skills and knowledge in the particular field as well and computer skill were appreciated mostly by employees.

### Greece

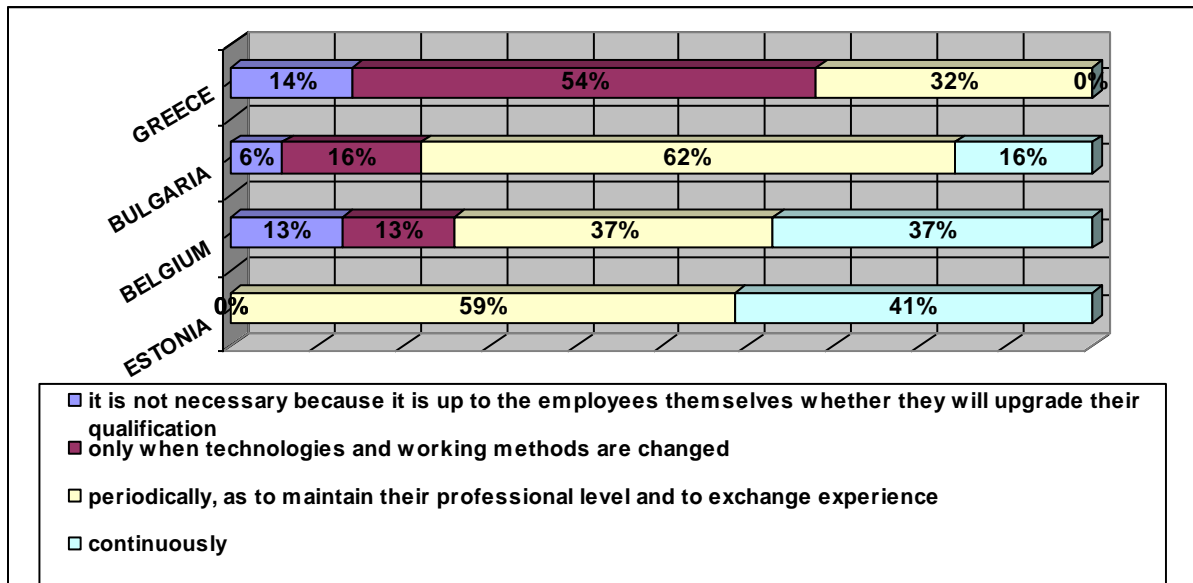
Among all of the respondents foreign languages were believed to be important, whereas communication skills were mainly assessed by employees and unemployed.

5. The question for **TRAINING and re-training** was asked to all three target groups. In order to distinguish the different opinions, here we provide some visualisation of the results of the three groups.

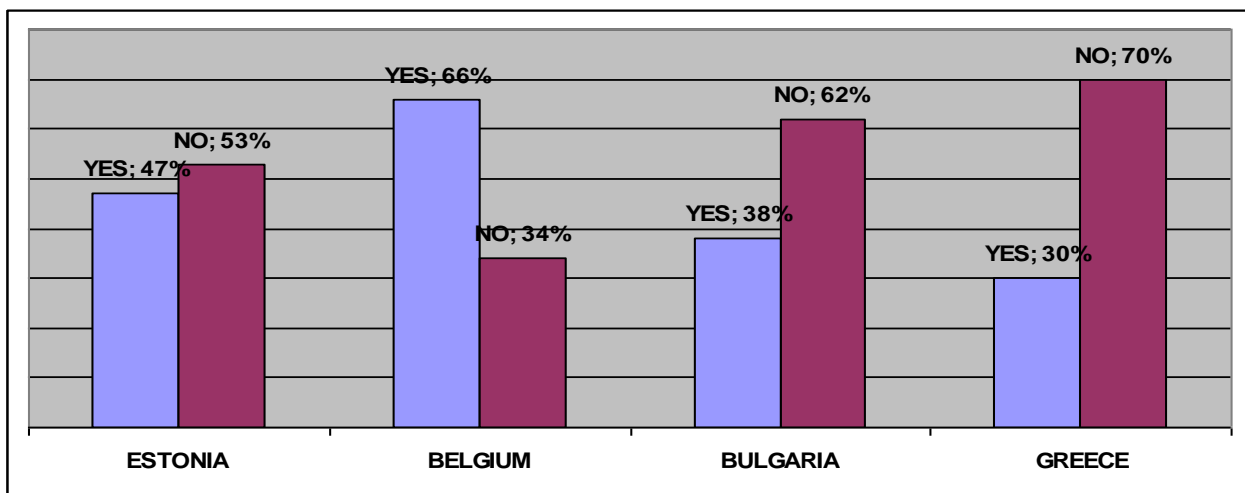
**According to Employers/managers from the 4 countries, Training and re-training of the staff** seems to be necessary mostly in Bulgaria and Estonia, where over half of the employers and also 32% of Greek managers



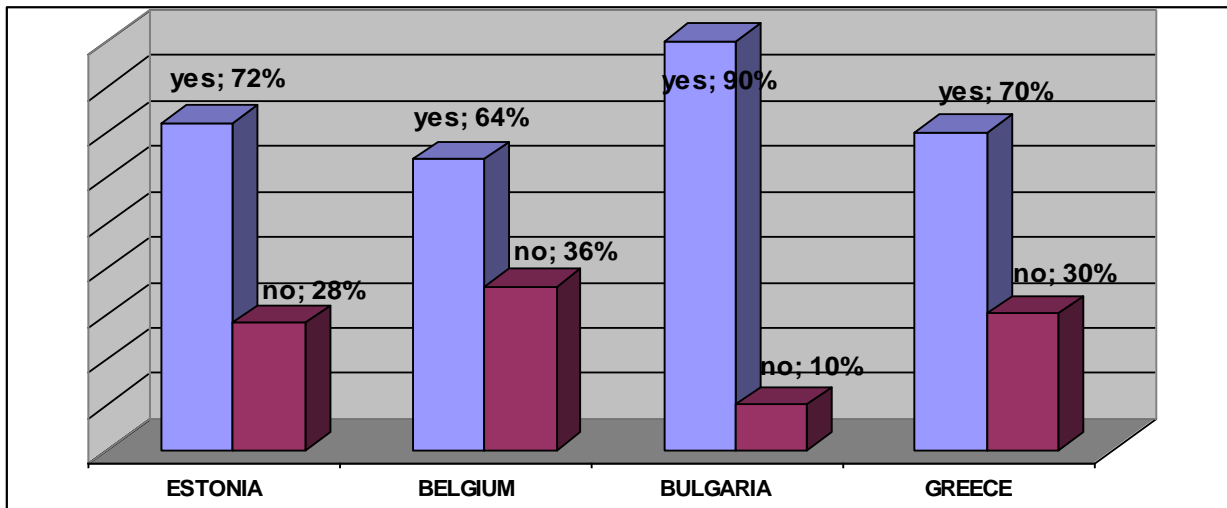
think retraining is needed periodically, as to maintain staff's professional level and to exchange experience. Quite a large group of the respondents in Belgium (37%) and Estonia (41%) believe their staff needs retraining continuously.



Over half of the **Employees** in Estonia, Bulgaria, and Greece have not participated in training and re-training courses organized by the institution in which they work. Only in Belgium 66% of the respondents have had some kind of training courses.



In all four countries the majority of respondents from the **Unemployed (jobseekers)**, would participate in training courses to gain skills required in the tourism sector. The unemployed seem to be keen on training themselves in Bulgaria, where 90% of respondents are willing to take part in different courses.



In the following table it can be seen that in Estonia, Belgium, and in Bulgaria most of the unemployed believe that organisations in the tourism sector which are recruiting staff should organize training courses in the tourism sector, whereas in Greece—also in Estonia—over half of the respondents thought specialised training organisations should have this responsibility.

When answering the question about to what extent the organisations recruiting staff should offer and provide for training and re-training courses, over half of the respondents of Bulgaria (51%), Belgium (52%), and Estonia (62%) thought that periodically, as to maintain their professional level and to exchange experience. In Greece most of the respondents, that is 66% of them, believed that these training courses should be offered continuously. Just a small group of people in all of the participated countries believed that training and re-training courses should be provided only when technologies and working methods are changed.

6. The last question concerns the level of interest in the results from “How to Manage my own skills” project. The majority of all respondents in all four countries are interested in project results, except for Greece where more than a half of all of the respondents had generally no interest in finding out the results of the project.

We selected the most interesting answers, describing the overall situation in the 4 countries where the research was held. The full versions of National need analysis reports as well as the Comparative report are already prepared. You can expect them soon on the official website of the project. If you are interested to receive them by e-mail, please contact the project partner organisation in your country.

## **Job profiles in Hotels:**

Another attractive and useful achievement of “How to manage my own skills project” is the identification of 21 job profiles in 7 key work-units within the hotels. Each of the profiles gives clear explanation of duties and responsibilities relevant for the positions.

For example, **FRONT OFFICE / RECEPTION DESK** unit includes 3 working positions – the Receptionist on the lowest level, Shift leader front office on supervisory level and on Managerial level – the Front office manager.

The unit **RESERVATIONS** includes Reservation agent on the lowest level, Reservation supervisor and Sales manager on the top managerial level.

Another key unit is **ROOMS DIVISION** unit. Here again there are 3 positions on 3 different levels – Chambermaid on the lowest, Floor supervisor housekeeping on the supervisory level and Executive housekeeping on managerial level.

The forth key unit is the **ADMINISTRATIVE**. Here on basic level works the Secretary, on supervisory level there is F&B Controller and on the managerial level is the Finance director.

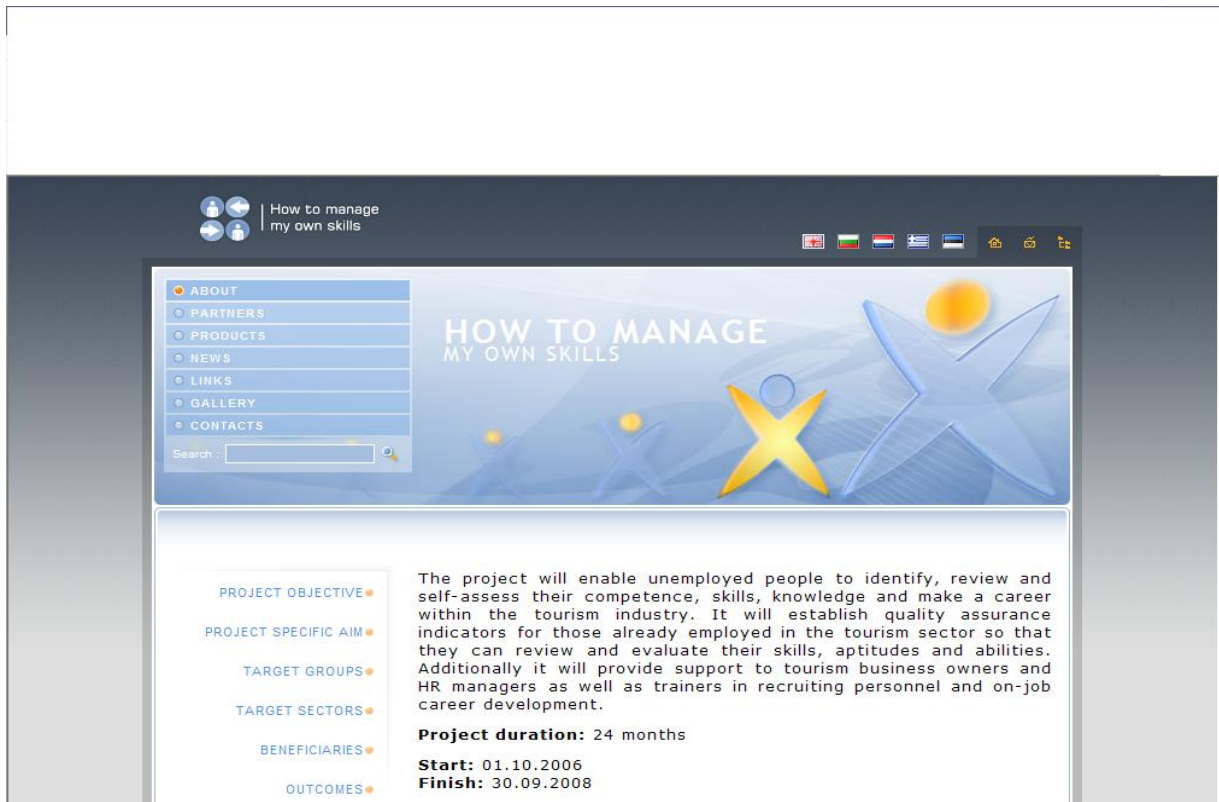
We are sure that the information provided here has attracted your attention. That is why you can expect the next issue of the newsletter where the rest 3 key units will be presented.



## ONLINE AREA

Visit [WWW.MANAGEMYSKILLS.EU](http://WWW.MANAGEMYSKILLS.EU) the official website of "How to manage my own skills" project.

Here you can find everything related to the development of this European initiative. You will reach the latest news. By "products" menu you can view all the project products and outcomes as soon as they are released. In "links" you will have a shortcut access to the websites of relevant organisations in the field of vocational training and tourism sector - the project target spheres.



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