



grassroots
young entrepreneurs in eco-health tourism

Sustainability & Ecotourism

Theoretical background



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Message From The Editor

Let me share a little secret with you: building self-confidence is all about believing in yourself and your abilities. And guess what? You've got what it takes!

Embarking on a career path in ecotourism opens up a world of exciting adventures and meaningful contributions to our planet. Picture yourself exploring lush rainforests, snorkeling in crystal-clear waters, or immersing yourself in vibrant cultures—all while making a positive impact on the environment and local communities.

But here's the thing: to carve out your place in this dynamic field, you'll need to set achievable goals, take care of yourself, and challenge any doubts that may creep into your mind. Be brave enough to try new things, learn from your mistakes, and surround yourself with people who cheer you on every step of the way.

It won't always be easy, but trust me, every effort you put into your journey will be worth it. So go ahead, dream big, speak up for yourself, and never stop growing. The world is waiting for you to make your mark in ecotourism, and I have no doubt that you'll shine bright as you embark on this incredible adventure.

Believe in yourself. You've got this!



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2a

Ikigai & Career Development



“

*Entrepreneurship education in
eco-health tourism, GRASSROOTS
empowers young people to make a
positive impact on the environment
and their communities*

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2A Ikigai & Career Development

Introduction

Welcome to the world of ecotourism—a vibrant and diverse field where passion meets purpose, and adventure intertwines with conservation. As you embark on your journey into this exciting realm, one of the first steps you'll take is identifying your niche.

Ecotourism isn't just one-size-fits-all; it's a mosaic of activities, destinations, and roles waiting for you to explore and make your mark. Whether you're drawn to the call of the wild, captivated by cultural heritage, or driven by community development, there's a niche that aligns perfectly with your skills, interests, and aspirations.

But how do you find your place in this vast landscape of possibilities? That's where we come in. In this guide, we'll walk you through the essential steps to not only identify your niche but also to kickstart your career in ecotourism with confidence and purpose.

From acquiring relevant education and training to gaining practical experience and building your network, we'll equip you with the tools and insights you need to thrive in this dynamic industry. So, get ready to uncover your passion, hone your skills, and embark on an adventure that's as rewarding as it is exhilarating.

Let's dive in and discover your niche in the world of ecotourism!



2A Ikigai & Career Development

Identifying your niche

Ecotourism is a broad term that encompasses many types of activities, destinations, and roles. You should identify your niche or specific area of ecotourism that interests you and aligns with your skills and goals. For example, you could focus on wildlife conservation, cultural heritage, adventure tourism, or community development. You may also choose to work as a guide, planner, manager, researcher, or educator. By finding your niche, you can refine your options and target your job search accordingly.

Get relevant education and training.

Depending on your niche, you may need different levels and types of education and training to start a career in ecotourism. Some jobs may require a degree in tourism, environmental studies, anthropology, or related fields. Others may require specific certifications or licenses, such as first aid, wilderness survival, or scuba diving. You should also learn more about the local culture, history, and ecology of the places where you want to work, as well as ecotourism best practices and standards.



2A Ikigai & Career Development

Identifying your niche

Practical experience, network building and reputation

One of the best ways to start a career in ecotourism is by gaining hands-on experience in the field. You can do this by volunteering, completing an internship, or working for an ecotourism organization, project, or company. This will help you develop your skills, knowledge, and network, as well as demonstrate your commitment and passion for ecotourism. You can also create your own portfolio or blog to showcase your work and accomplishments.

Another effective way to start a career in ecotourism is by building your network and reputation within the industry. You can do this by joining professional associations, attending events and conferences, and connecting with other practitioners and experts in ecotourism. You can also use social media, online platforms, and word-of-mouth to promote your services, share your ideas, and solicit feedback. By building your network and reputation, you can increase your visibility and credibility, and find more opportunities and referrals.



2A Ikigai & Career Development

Introduction to Ikigai and its applications in career development

Welcome to the world of Ikigai—a Japanese concept that holds the key to unlocking a life of purpose, fulfillment, and joy. In a fast-paced and often chaotic world, the search for meaning and direction can sometimes feel like a daunting journey. But fear not, for Ikigai offers a beacon of light, guiding us towards a path that resonates deeply with our hearts and souls.

At its essence, Ikigai is about finding the intersection of four fundamental elements: what you love, what you are good at, what the world needs, and what you can be paid for. It's the convergence of passion, vocation, mission, and profession—a harmonious balance that brings forth a sense of profound satisfaction and contentment.



2A Ikigai & Career Development

Introduction to Ikigai and its applications in career development

But Ikigai is more than just a concept—it's a philosophy, a way of life that encourages us to explore our innermost desires, talents, and aspirations. It invites us to embrace our uniqueness, to cultivate a deep sense of self-awareness, and to live with intention and purpose.

In this guide, we'll delve into the depths of Ikigai, uncovering its secrets and unraveling its mysteries. Together, we'll embark on a journey of self-discovery, tapping into the core of our being to unearth our true Ikigai—the reason we get out of bed each morning with a sense of purpose and excitement.

So, whether you're feeling lost and searching for direction or simply seeking to infuse more meaning into your life, join us as we explore the transformative power of Ikigai. Let's embark on this journey together and discover the profound joy that comes from living a life aligned with our deepest passions and values.



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2A Ikigai & Career Development

Definition of Ikigai

Ikigai is roughly translates to "a reason for being" or "**a reason to wake up in the morning.**" It's often described as the intersection of four elements:

1. What you love (your passion)
2. What you are good at (your vocation)
3. What the world needs (your mission)
4. What you can be rewarded for (your profession)

The idea is that by finding the overlap between these four aspects, you can discover a sense of purpose and fulfilment in your life.

It's about finding a balance between what you enjoy, what you're good at, what is meaningful to you and others, and what can sustain you financially.



2A Ikigai & Career Development

How does it work?

The concept of Ikigai works by helping individuals identify and pursue a fulfilling and purposeful life. Here's how it typically works:

1. **Identify your passions:** Reflect on what activities or pursuits bring you joy, fulfilment, and a sense of satisfaction. These could be hobbies, interests, or anything that excites you.
2. **Recognize your talents and strengths:** Take stock of your skills, abilities, and natural talents. Consider what you excel at and what comes easily to you.
3. **Understand the needs of the world:** Explore the problems, challenges, or needs in your community or society that resonate with you. Think about how you can contribute positively to addressing these needs.
4. **Consider what you can be rewarded for:** Assess the opportunities available to you in terms of earning a living. This involves understanding the market demand for certain skills or services and identifying potential career paths or professions.



2A Ikigai & Career Development

How does it work?

5. **Find the intersection:** Look for the overlap between what you love, what you are good at, what the world needs, and what you can be rewarded for. This intersection represents your Ikigai—the sweet spot where passion, vocation, mission, and profession converge.

6. **Take action:** Once you have identified your Ikigai, take deliberate steps to integrate it into your life. This may involve pursuing a career aligned with your passions and strengths, engaging in meaningful activities, or contributing to causes you care about.

7. **Continuously evolve:** Keep reassessing your Ikigai over time as your interests, skills, and circumstances change. Stay open to new opportunities and experiences that align with your evolving sense of purpose and fulfillment.



2A Ikigai & Career Development

The Ikigai concept.



2A Ikigai & Career Development

Finding your approach

Here are some recommendations for the exercise in terms of finding the right environment and approach:

Create a Personal Space: Find a quiet and comfortable space where you can engage in self-reflection without distractions. This could be a cozy corner in your home, a peaceful spot in nature, or a quiet café where you feel relaxed and inspired.

Set Aside Dedicated Time: Schedule regular sessions for self-reflection and exploration of your Ikigai. Set aside specific blocks of time in your calendar where you can focus solely on this exercise without interruptions.

Keep a Journal: Consider keeping a journal or notebook handy to jot down your thoughts, reflections, and insights as they arise. This will allow you to capture ideas and inspirations in the moment and revisit them later for further exploration.

Engage with Close Contacts: Reach out to friends, family members, mentors, or colleagues who know you well and ask for their insights. Share your reflections and thoughts on your passions, strengths, and aspirations, and invite them to provide their perspectives. Sometimes, an external view can offer valuable insights and new perspectives.



2A Ikigai & Career Development

Finding your approach

Be Open to Feedback: Embrace feedback with an open mind and a willingness to learn and grow. Listen attentively to the perspectives and insights shared by others, and consider how their observations align with your own self-perceptions.

Stay Flexible and Open-Minded: Remember that discovering your Ikigai is a journey, and it may evolve over time. Be open to exploring new interests, passions, and opportunities that may arise along the way. Don't hesitate to adjust your direction and goals as needed to stay aligned with your evolving sense of purpose.

Keep Your Ikigai Close: Once you've identified your Ikigai, keep it close to you as a source of inspiration and motivation. Create visual reminders or cues that represent your Ikigai and place them in prominent locations where you'll see them regularly. This will help keep your sense of purpose front and center in your daily life.

By following these recommendations and creating the right environment for self-reflection and exploration, you'll be well-equipped to uncover your Ikigai and live a life aligned with your deepest passions and values.



2B

Inner Development Goals



2B Inner Development Goals

Introduction

The IDG Initiative aims to address a perceived gap in efforts toward global sustainability. Despite significant knowledge about issues like climate change and poverty outlined in the UN's SDGs, progress has been slow. Recognizing the need for inner capabilities alongside technical solutions, a series of meetings involving stakeholders was held in 2021. Through analysis of 800 responses, 23 key skills and qualities were identified and organized into five dimensions for a more structured approach.

1	BEING - Relationship to Self
2	THINKING - Cognitive Skills
3	RELATING - Caring for Others and The World
4	COLLABORATING - Social Skills
5	ACTING - Enabling Change

Source: <https://innerdevelopmentgoals.org>



2B Inner Development Goals

Introduction

The Inner Development Goals (IDGs) framework outlines essential skills and qualities individuals and organizations require to effectively address complex societal issues, especially those outlined in UN Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals. It serves as a foundation for exploring both individual and collective development, with a focus on how organizations can facilitate this growth for sustainable development. Currently in its developmental phase, the IDGs initiative involves gathering input from researchers and practitioners through surveys and discussions to identify key skills and qualities necessary for success.

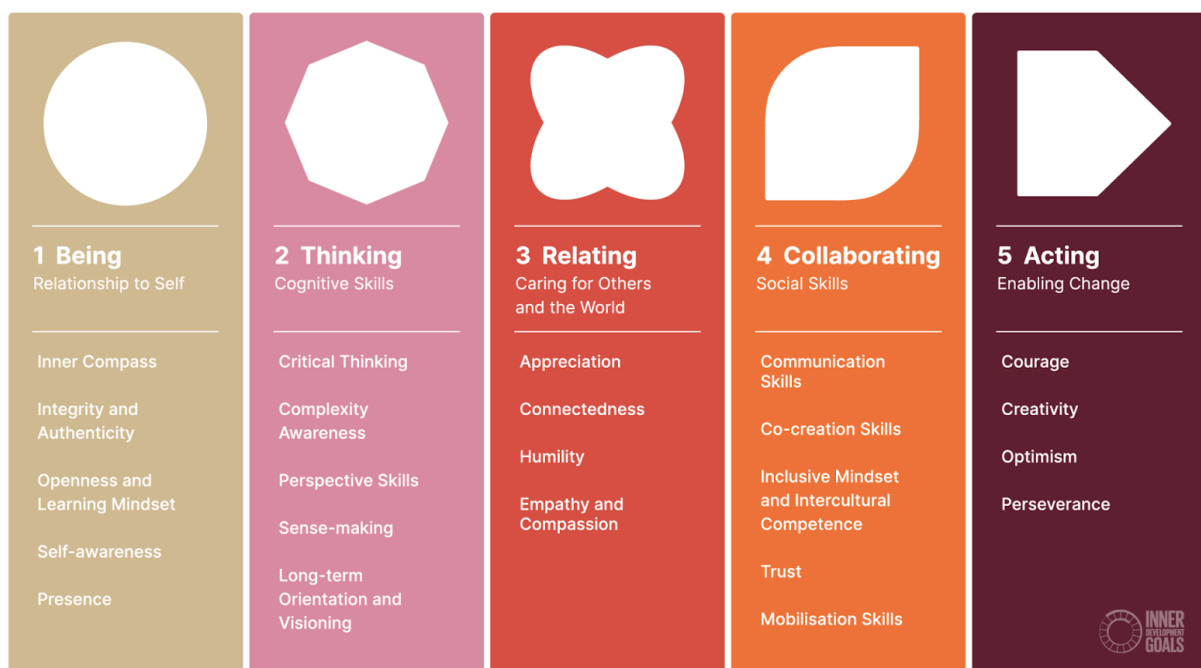
So how does it work?



2B Inner Development Goals

Introduction

The IDG framework represents 23 skills and qualities in 5 dimensions developed through two surveys. The IDGs are a work-in-progress and may continue to change as the project develops and new information and input comes in.



Source: <https://innerdevelopmentgoals.org>

Link to the Process Guidelines in its entirety

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nM6eyTc_cr9_kLJAWYrkHTShlhgU9fXD/edit

Explore the process (in short) here:

<https://innerdevelopmentgoals.org/framework/>

2c

Competencies In Ecotourism



2C Competencies In Ecotourism

Introduction & Key Competencies

A successful career in ecotourism requires key competencies such as **environmental awareness**, **cultural sensitivity**, and **strong communication skills** to engage visitors and promote sustainability. **Adaptability** and **problem-solving** are also essential for navigating challenges and ensuring responsible tourism practices. These qualities lay the foundation for thriving in the industry—let's take a closer look at the full list of essential skills and how they contribute to success in ecotourism.

Environmental Awareness: Having a deep understanding of environmental issues and a genuine passion for conservation efforts is crucial in ecotourism. This includes knowledge of ecosystems, biodiversity, and the impact of human activities on natural environments.

Cultural Sensitivity: Respect for diverse cultures, traditions, and local customs is essential in ecotourism, as it often involves interaction with indigenous communities and visiting culturally significant sites. Cultural sensitivity helps foster positive relationships with local communities and promotes responsible tourism practices.



2C Competencies In Ecotourism

Key Competencies

Communication Skills: Effective communication is vital in ecotourism to engage with visitors, collaborate with local communities, and convey important conservation messages. Strong verbal and written communication skills are valuable for guiding tours, conducting educational workshops, and advocating for sustainable practices.

Leadership and Teamwork: Leadership skills are beneficial for guiding eco-friendly initiatives, managing conservation projects, and inspiring others to adopt sustainable behaviors. Additionally, the ability to work collaboratively in teams is essential for coordinating ecotourism activities and achieving common goals.

Adaptability and Resilience: Ecotourism often involves working in diverse environments and facing unexpected challenges, such as changes in weather conditions or logistical hurdles. Being adaptable and resilient allows individuals to navigate uncertainties and respond effectively to evolving circumstances.

Problem-Solving Abilities: Critical thinking and problem-solving skills are valuable for addressing conservation issues, implementing sustainable practices, and resolving conflicts that may arise during ecotourism activities. The ability to find creative solutions contributes to the success of ecotourism initiatives.



2C Competencies In Ecotourism

Key Competencies

Customer Service Orientation: Providing exceptional customer service is important in ecotourism to ensure visitors have enjoyable and meaningful experiences while respecting natural and cultural resources. Being attentive to visitors' needs and preferences enhances their satisfaction and encourages them to support sustainable tourism practices.

Ethical and Responsible Behavior: Upholding ethical standards and demonstrating responsible behavior are fundamental principles of ecotourism. This includes practicing Leave No Trace principles, respecting wildlife and habitats, and prioritizing the well-being of local communities over commercial interests.

Entrepreneurial Mindset: For those interested in starting their own ecotourism business or pursuing entrepreneurial ventures within the industry, an entrepreneurial mindset is valuable. This involves creativity, innovation, risk-taking, and business acumen to develop sustainable and profitable ecotourism ventures.



2C Competencies In Ecotourism

Key Competencies

Continuous Learning and Improvement: Ecotourism is a dynamic field that requires staying informed about emerging trends, best practices, and advancements in conservation science. Commitment to lifelong learning and professional development enables individuals to stay relevant and make meaningful contributions to ecotourism efforts.

By cultivating these personal competencies, individuals can embark on a rewarding career in ecotourism while making positive contributions to environmental conservation, cultural preservation, and sustainable development.



2C Competencies In Ecotourism

Career Opportunities

Ecotourism offers a wide range of career opportunities for individuals passionate about environmental conservation, sustainable travel, and community development. Some potential career paths in ecotourism include:

Ecotourism Guide: Guides lead visitors through natural areas, providing information about the environment, wildlife, and local culture. They ensure that visitors adhere to ecotourism principles and minimize their impact on the environment.

Wildlife Biologist or Ecologist: Professionals in this field study wildlife and ecosystems to understand their behavior, distribution, and interactions. They may work in conservation organizations, research institutions, or national parks to assess the impact of ecotourism and develop conservation strategies.

Environmental Educator: Educators design and deliver programs to raise awareness about environmental issues, conservation practices, and sustainable living. They may work for eco-lodges, nature reserves, or educational institutions, providing interpretive tours, workshops, and presentations.



2C Competencies In Ecotourism

Career Opportunities

Community Development Specialist: These professionals work with local communities to develop sustainable tourism initiatives that benefit both residents and visitors. They facilitate community involvement in ecotourism projects, promote cultural heritage preservation, and support economic opportunities for local businesses.

Tourism Planner or Manager: Planners and managers develop and oversee ecotourism destinations, ensuring that they adhere to sustainability principles while meeting visitor expectations. They may work for government agencies, tour operators, or hospitality companies, designing ecotourism itineraries, managing facilities, and marketing destinations.

Conservation Officer: Conservation officers enforce regulations and policies aimed at protecting natural resources and wildlife in ecotourism destinations. They monitor visitor activities, conduct research on environmental impacts, and collaborate with stakeholders to implement conservation measures.



2C Competencies In Ecotourism

Career Opportunities

Sustainable Development Consultant: Consultants provide expertise on sustainable tourism practices, helping businesses and organizations integrate environmental, social, and economic considerations into their operations. They may offer advice on certification programs, green building practices, and community engagement strategies.

Adventure Tourism Instructor: Instructors lead outdoor adventure activities such as hiking, kayaking, or rock climbing in ecotourism settings. They prioritize safety, environmental stewardship, and cultural sensitivity while providing memorable experiences for participants.



2C Competencies In Ecotourism

Career Opportunities

Researcher: Researchers conduct studies on various aspects of ecotourism, including its environmental, social, and economic impacts. They may work in academia, government agencies, or non-profit organizations, producing valuable insights to inform ecotourism policy and practice.

Ecotourism Entrepreneur: Entrepreneurs establish and manage their own ecotourism businesses, such as eco-lodges, tour companies, or sustainable travel agencies. They have the opportunity to innovate new ecotourism products and services, contribute to local economies, and promote environmental conservation.

These are just a few examples of the diverse career opportunities available in the field of ecotourism. Whether individuals are interested in conservation, education, hospitality, or community development, there are numerous paths to pursue a rewarding career in ecotourism that aligns with their interests and values.



2C Competencies In Ecotourism

Developing a Personal Development Cycle

Welcome to the personal development cycle—a transformative journey of growth, self-discovery, and continuous improvement. At its core, the personal development cycle is about taking intentional steps to enhance various aspects of your life, whether it's professional, personal, or emotional.

Throughout this cycle, you'll embark on a journey of self-reflection, goal-setting, action, and reflection. Each stage of the cycle offers an opportunity for growth and development, empowering you to become the best version of yourself.

In this introduction, we'll explore the purpose of the personal development cycle and how it can positively impact your life. From setting meaningful goals to cultivating new skills, the personal development cycle offers a roadmap for achieving your aspirations and unlocking your full potential.

So, are you ready to embark on this empowering journey of self-discovery and growth? Let's dive in and explore the purpose of the personal development cycle together.

Now that you have defined your purpose in life, it is time to develop a personal development plan for several reasons:



2C Competencies In Ecotourism

Developing a Personal Development Cycle

1. Clarity of Goals: A personal plan helps individuals clarify their goals and objectives in various areas of life, such as career, education, relationships, health, and personal development. By clearly defining what they want to achieve, individuals can create a roadmap to guide their actions and decisions.

2. Focus and Direction: Having a personal plan provides focus and direction, helping individuals prioritize their activities and allocate their time, energy, and resources effectively. It allows them to stay on track and avoid distractions or activities that do not align with their goals.

3. Motivation and Accountability: A personal plan serves as a source of motivation by reminding individuals of their aspirations and the steps needed to achieve them. It holds them accountable for their actions and progress, encouraging them to take consistent steps toward their goals.

4. Flexibility and Adaptability: While a personal plan provides structure and guidance, it should also be flexible and adaptable to changing circumstances or new opportunities. Individuals can review and revise their plans as needed to accommodate shifts in priorities, interests, or external factors.



2C Competencies In Ecotourism

Developing a Personal Development Cycle

5. Confidence and Self-Efficacy: Creating and following a personal plan can boost individuals' confidence and self-efficacy by demonstrating their ability to set and achieve goals. As they make progress and overcome challenges, they develop a sense of competence and belief in their capabilities.

6. Personal Growth and Development: A well-designed personal plan includes opportunities for learning, growth, and self-improvement. It encourages individuals to pursue new experiences, acquire new skills, and expand their knowledge, leading to personal and professional development.

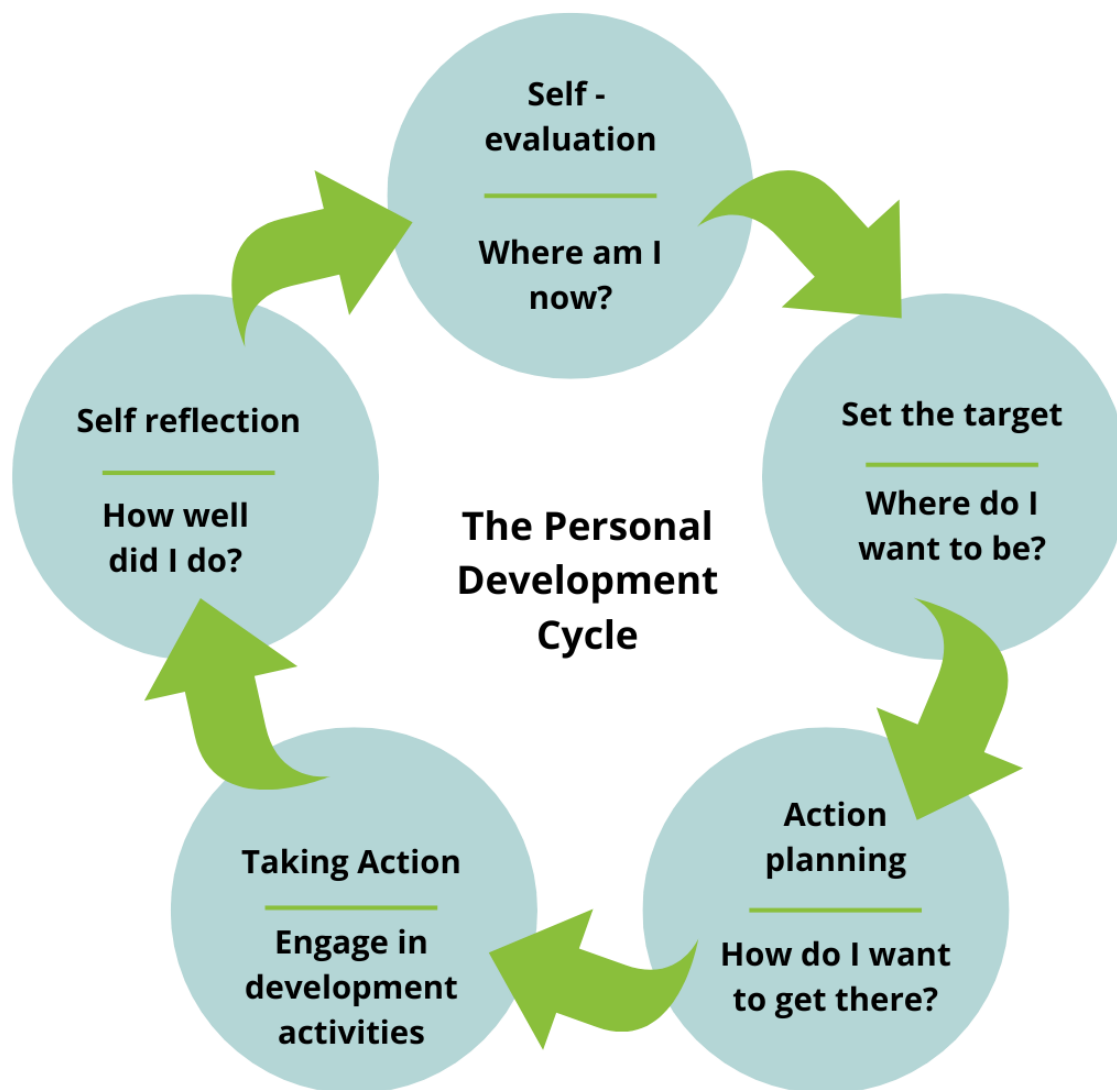
7. Life Satisfaction and Fulfillment: Ultimately, a personal plan aims to help individuals live a more fulfilling and satisfying life by aligning their actions with their values, interests, and aspirations. By pursuing meaningful goals and making progress toward them, individuals can experience a greater sense of fulfillment and happiness.

Developing a personal plan is important because it provides clarity of goals, focus and direction, motivation and accountability, flexibility and adaptability, confidence and self-efficacy, opportunities for growth and development, and ultimately, a pathway to greater life satisfaction and fulfillment.



2C Competencies In Ecotourism

Developing a Personal Development Cycle



2C Competencies In Ecotourism

SMART Goals – what are they?

SMART goals are a framework used to create specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound objectives. Let's break down each component:

Specific: Goals should be clear and specific, answering the questions: What exactly do you want to accomplish? Why is it important? Who is involved? What resources or constraints are involved?

Measurable: Goals should be quantifiable, allowing you to track progress and determine when you've reached your objective. This involves asking questions like: How much? How many? How will I know when it is accomplished?

Achievable: Goals should be realistic and attainable, considering your resources, skills, and constraints. You should ask yourself: Is this goal within my reach? Do I have the necessary resources to achieve it?

Relevant: Goals should be relevant and aligned with your overall objectives and values. Consider if the goal is worthwhile and if it aligns with your long-term plans.

Time-specific: Goals should have a deadline or timeframe, providing a sense of urgency and motivation. You should establish when the goal will be achieved and create a timeline for completion.



2C Competencies In Ecotourism

SMART Goals – what are they?



2C Competencies In Ecotourism

Summary

In this chapter we've tried to highlight some of the most important competencies to succeed in the ecotourism sector – what roles you may undertake, and how to chart a path forward. Advancing in ecotourism involves continuous personal development—assessing skills, setting structured goals, seeking knowledge, and refining approaches through experience. Using the SMART framework (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) may help you create clear, actionable objectives. By following a personal development cycle and setting SMART goals, you will have a better chance of navigating these career paths effectively – until hopefully, you find your niche.

In the next step we will come full circle, highlighting how – once you feel ready, you can create your own project to test your own ideas. Lets get started!



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GRASSROOTS Eco-health tourism

Young Entrepreneurs in Eco-Health Tourism

GRASSROOTS aims to introduce new models, skills, experiential learning, collaborative conversations, exchange of best practices, formal and informal entrepreneurship education to youth in the fields of eco-tourism sport, street food, street art and digitalization. Read more:

www.ecohealthforyouth.com

Follow our journey



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