PARTICIPANT WORKING GUIDE

LINK-UP MEDITERRANEAN

RECRUIT. INTEGRATE. DEVELOP. RETAIN.

Connect Mediterranean talent with opportunity. Recruit together. Train on the job. Build careers.

BRAIN Think Tank | Thursday, 26 November 2026 | Hilton Malta

The purpose

Link-Up Mediterranean aims to create practical recruitment opportunities for people from Mediterranean countries to work across the region's tourism and hospitality industries. The central idea is to connect employers and candidates across Mediterranean destinations, while developing joint training and on-the-job learning opportunities that help people gain skills, experience and career prospects.

The priority is to identify participating Mediterranean countries, employers, education and training institutions, and recruitment partners who can help establish cross-border recruitment pathways, work placements, apprenticeships and shared training programmes. Integration and retention matter because successful recruitment should lead to lasting opportunities for both employees and businesses.

Participation is open and evolving

This is an open, inclusive working session for anyone interested in Mediterranean recruitment, employment mobility, joint vocational training or on-the-job learning. The people in Appendix A form an initial, provisional group only — not a closed invitation list. Participants may change and increase as additional employers, training providers, recruiters, policymakers, students and other interested parties join.

At a glance

Time	Activity / location
13:00	Networking lunch — Spinola Foyer, Hilton Malta
14:30–17:00	Link-Up Mediterranean BRAIN Think Tank — Hilton Malta

How BRAIN works

BRAIN brings together different professional perspectives and networks to build concrete collaborations. The focus is on opportunities between Mediterranean countries: where employers need people, where candidates seek opportunities, how partners can recruit responsibly, and how shared workplace training can be organised. Participants are encouraged to propose real institutions, contacts, placement models and potential pilot partnerships.

Programme and working method

Time	Session	Output
14:30–14:45	Welcome, purpose and introductions	Shared challenge and success criteria
14:45–15:25	Part 1 — Map Mediterranean recruitment needs, candidate opportunities and existing joint training models	Possible country-to-country connections and lessons
15:25–16:10	Part 2 — Design recruitment pathways and employer-based training pilots	Draft pilot concepts, employers and academy partners
16:10–16:40	Group sharing and cross-sector feedback	Priority opportunities and gaps
16:40–16:55	Shortlist cross-border recruitment and on-the-job training pilots	3–5 opportunities, potential partners and next steps
16:55–17:00	Wrap-up and next steps	Follow-up owners to be confirmed

Times and working-group arrangements are indicative and may be adapted by the facilitators to the final number of participants.

The four pillars

01 RECRUIT

Create recruitment pathways between Mediterranean countries: identify employer demand, candidate pools, ethical recruitment partners, transparent selection and matching, and potential cross-border placements.

02 INTEGRATE

Prepare people for successful placements: pre-departure orientation, arrival assistance, suitable housing, language and cultural support, and practical employer–training provider coordination.

03 DEVELOP

Develop joint Mediterranean training and on-the-job opportunities: employer-hosted placements, internships, apprenticeships, skills exchanges, shared curricula, mentoring, certification and progression between partner institutions and businesses.

04 RETAIN

Make opportunities sustainable: fair employment, ongoing workplace coaching, recognition of skills, clear career pathways, employer support and repeatable partnerships that encourage retention.

Cross-cutting questions

Which Mediterranean countries and organisations could partner first? Which hotels, restaurants and other tourism businesses can host recruits or trainees? How could institutions coordinate training before departure and on the job? What practical conditions are needed for legal, ethical and successful mobility? How might a small pilot grow into a regional programme?

Discussion prompts

Learn from experience

• Which Mediterranean destinations have hospitality vacancies, and which have interested candidates or training capacity?

• Which employers, academies or recruitment organisations already offer cross-border placements or work-based training?

• What barriers have limited Mediterranean recruitment or joint training — and what has worked?

Design something practical

• Could two or more Mediterranean countries pilot a shared recruitment and on-the-job training pathway?

• What would a joint programme between a hospitality employer and a Mediterranean vocational academy look like?

• How would trainees, workers, employers and participating destinations benefit?

Make it actionable

• Which employers could offer jobs, apprenticeships or training placements, and which institutions could prepare candidates?

• Which Mediterranean partners can participants introduce for a first recruitment and training pilot?

• What initial agreement, matching exercise or follow-up meeting is needed to launch a pilot?

What we want to leave with

A shortlist of 3–5 concrete Mediterranean recruitment and joint training opportunities, identifying possible origin and destination partners, employers willing to explore vacancies or placements, educational partners for on-the-job training, and first steps towards a cross-border pilot. These are exploratory proposals, not confirmed placements or commitments.

Frequently asked questions

Is participation restricted to the people listed?

No. The initial names are provisional. Anyone interested in Mediterranean recruitment, joint vocational training or work-based opportunities is welcome to contribute, and the list may change or grow.

Do I need a presentation?

No. Bring experiences, examples, questions and potential contacts. Short notes or examples are welcome.

Do I need expertise in all four pillars?

No. The value of BRAIN is the combination of different backgrounds and perspectives.

Are we agreeing policy or budgets?

No. The purpose is to identify possible recruitment and training collaborations, pilot partners and follow-up steps, without making binding commitments.

Will the group allocations change?

They may. Facilitators will adapt the discussion format to attendance and the mix of participants.

APPENDIX A — INITIAL PARTICIPANTS & FACILITATORS

Indicative list only. Additional participants are welcome, and names, titles and attendance may be updated. Titles below reflect information supplied for this working guide and should be checked before external publication.

Norbert Grixti | Malta

Co-facilitator — General Manager, Grand Hotel Excelsior; MHRA Council Member. Brings hotel operations and employer perspectives.

Alma Harasic Bremec | Croatia

Co-facilitator — Academy Manager, ŠKMER Culinary Academy. Brings vocational training and hospitality skills-development perspectives.

Prof. Adele Ladkin | United Kingdom

Participant — Professor of Tourism Employment; Deputy Director, International Centre for Tourism and Hospitality Research, Bournemouth University. Research perspective on tourism workforces.

Hishaam Zaazou | Egypt

Participant — Former Minister of Tourism, Egypt. Public policy and destination-development perspective.

Asma Jerbi Abouda | Tunisia

Participant — Architect. Brings a built-environment and community-living perspective, relevant to housing and integration.

Abdel Ghafar Ismail Farag | Egypt

Participant — President, Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport. Brings higher education and institutional collaboration perspectives.

Potential partners include hospitality employers across the Mediterranean, tourism and culinary academies, universities, recruitment organisations, public employment services and authorities responsible for legal mobility. Additional participants are encouraged, especially organisations able to offer vacancies, apprenticeships or on-the-job placements.

The initial mix includes hospitality leadership, tourism employment research, culinary training, government, architecture and higher education. Further representation from recruiters, employees, local authorities, housing and community services, and other interested parties is encouraged. No final table assignments are implied by this list.

APPENDIX B — GROUP WORKSHEETS

Use the worksheets to capture real Mediterranean recruitment opportunities, joint training ideas, potential employers and educational partners. Duplicate pages as needed. All proposals are exploratory.

Worksheet 1 — Mediterranean recruitment and training opportunities

Country / employer / training institution / existing example:

_____

Recruitment needs, candidate availability or existing work-based training:

_____

Potential origin and destination countries:

_____

Opportunity for joint recruitment or on-the-job learning:

_____

Relevant employers, academies, recruiters or public partners:

_____

Worksheet 2 — Cross-border recruitment and training pilot

Working title:

_____

Vacancies or skills gap / opportunities for candidates:

_____

Proposed countries and partners (origin / destination):

_____

Recruitment pathway and on-the-job training arrangement:

_____

Employer hosts / training providers / support organisations:

_____

First pilot step, prospective lead and possible placements:

_____

How would skills, employment outcomes and retention be assessed?

_____

Worksheet 3 — Five-minute group summary

Priority recruitment or joint training proposal:

_____

Mediterranean countries and participants who would benefit:

_____

Potential employers, academies and recruitment partners:

_____

Main practical barriers (including legal mobility and housing):

_____

Proposed pilot and first next step:

_____

Facilitator consolidation — priorities

Idea / initiative	Lead or partner to approach	Next step

Proposed follow-up meeting / action owner: _____

Note: Ideas and participation are exploratory. Listing a person or organisation does not imply endorsement, commitment or formal partnership.