

BUNDESVERBAND DER GÄSTEFÜHRER  
IN DEUTSCHLAND E.V.

GERMAN NATIONAL  
TOURIST GUIDE ASSOCIATION



# The BVGD at a glance



*The art of guiding*

## SCOPE AND GOALS OF THE BVGD

**T**he BVGD is the umbrella organization for local and regional tourist guide organizations in Germany. It was founded in 1994 in Cologne and represents more than 230 cities and regions with over 7500 tourist guides.

The BVGD represents the professional interests of tourist guides in tourism policy at both a national and a European level. It is a member of all organizations relevant to the profession.

The BVGD supports regional cooperation between tourist guides and serves as a hub for numerous contacts in the tourism industry. It ensures European quality standards in Germany through its extensive quality management and training concepts.

The BVGD promotes tourism within its own country as an outstanding and future-oriented sector of the economy. It is committed to sustainable tourism and promotes the responsible handling of Germany's cultural and natural heritage.



## OUR OFFER

- Information and advice in matters of professional practice
- Representing the interests of tourist guides and ensuring their professional recognition
- Ensuring the quality of guided tours through a nationwide standardized training and continuing professional development concept
- Certificate of training according to the highest quality standard DIN EN 15565
- BVGD qualification card
- Automatic professional liability insurance and optional accident insurance
- Contract templates regulating the relationship between tourist guides and tourism institutions
- Regular communications on topics relevant to the profession in the BVGD magazine CICERONE
- BVGD membership and qualification card offers free or reduced admission to numerous museums and cultural institutions

# NETWORKS AND COMMUNICATION

## HOMEPAGE

The BVGD homepage [www.bvgd.org](http://www.bvgd.org) provides detailed and up-to-date information on all the association's services, content, goals and offerings.

## GUIDE SEARCH

You can find a professional tourist guide for the German cities and regions you require via the website's Guide Search function and via the BVGD service portal „diegästeführer“. Here, you will also find links to all local guide associations and their offers. The list of BVGD-certified guides provides direct email addresses for these specially qualified tourist guides. The BVGD certificate DIN EN 15565 and the BVGD advanced training certificate guarantee that a tourist guide is qualified to a particularly high standard.



[www.die-gaestefuehrer.de](http://www.die-gaestefuehrer.de)



## CICERONE

The BVGD magazine CICERONE is published twice a year. It contains news and useful information about the association, presents members' and partner museums' campaigns and events, and introduces relevant new book publications. As a professional journal, the print and online issues of CICERONE reach tourist guides, agencies, organizers and tourism institutions.

## PARTNERMUSEEN

More than 400 museums and institutions are partners of the BVGD and offer tourist guides free or reduced admission for study purposes. In return, our partners have the opportunity to publish a detailed profile in the BVGD magazine CICERONE. A growing number of institutions in neighboring European countries and worldwide now also accept and offer discounts for the BVGD membership and qualification card.

## A NATIONWIDE NETWORK

The German Tourist Guide Convention (Deutsche Gästeführertagung, DGFT) including the nationwide Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the BVGD gives tourist guides from all over Germany the opportunity to meet and swap ideas with their colleagues. The agenda features current topics in tourism policy, specialized lectures, and tourism events, as well as the elections to the BVGD Board. Active networking with decision-makers from politics and the tourism industry also plays an important role in the public part of the Convention.

In 2016, the BVGD established the German Tourist Guide Convention as a new forum where qualified tourist guides and other service providers in incoming tourism can meet in an informal environment and share their expert knowledge.

The event is held every year in a different location or region that is “home” to a BVGD member association. The BVGD’s Executive Committee is responsible for preparing and running the Convention, while the host association is in charge of the social programme and evening events. From formal to fun, the Convention thus offers BVGD members a whole range of ways to get together, enhancing the strong network we offer the approximately 7500 tourist guides organized in our association.

## REGIONAL NETWORKS

Supporting the exchange between and sharing of experience by tourist guides is one of the BVGD’s core concerns. The BVGD thus supports all initiatives that pursue this goal and is happy to establish contacts. Particularly active BVGD member associations regularly organize highly successful meetings to which experts from the fields of politics and business as well as specialist speakers are invited.

# TOURIST GUIDE QUALIFICATION

## THE BVGD ACADEMY

Having gathered more than 25 years of experience and expertise in the qualification of tour guides, in 2022 the BVGD launched a new project – the BVGD Academy! The Academy seeks to meet the undiminished demand for further training, building on the past two years’ advances in digital technology and platforms.

The Academy’s aim is to support tourist guides, especially in smaller associations, to gain the BVGD DIN EN Certificate.

However, the events are expressly open to all interested parties, regardless of whether they have acquired the BVGD DIN EN certificate and regardless of whether they are members of the BVGD. The seminars are offered partly in person, partly online – with an initial trial phase in 2022.

In terms of their themes, the seminars are tailored to the content required for the BVGD DIN EN Certificate (see Tourist Guide Qualification Manual. The BVGD Qualification in Accordance with European Quality Standard DIN EN 15565).

The plan is for associations, seminar leaders/trainers, the BVGD itself or even other educational institutions (from 2023 onwards) to organize seminars and offer places in them via the BVGD Academy. These seminars are reviewed in advance by the Professional Training Commission to determine whether they can be counted towards the certificate.

Please send questions about the Academy to [akademie@bvgd.org](mailto:akademie@bvgd.org)

**W**ell-trained tourist guides provide a professional service in the tourism industry and serve as ambassadors for their cities and regions.

As the tourist guide profession is not regulated by the state in Germany, the BVGD as a professional association has established a uniformly high standard documented with a certificate and seal of quality. Throughout Germany, a significant number of the tour guides organized in the BVGD wear a badge and card that signal to clients: "This is a particularly well-qualified tourist guide!"

The BVGD also took part in developing an EU-wide standard for tourist guide training to ensure a high level of quality and comply with the European regulations on freedom of movement in the exercise of the profession.

The BVGD training guidelines comply with this standard (EN 15565) and training concludes with a qualification by examination:

**BVGD-Zertifikat DIN EN 15565.**

The implementation of the EN 15565 standard on a national level made the BVGD a pioneer of tourist guide training in Germany. The BVGD model and training were endorsed by DINCertCo/TÜV Rheinland in 2012.

The training for the BVGD Certificate includes:

- Practical training
- Guiding techniques training
- Speech training and communication
- Expert and specialist knowledge
- Legal and tax information
- Sustainable tourism
- Quality assurance
- Qualification by examination:  
BVGD Certificate DIN EN 15565

The BVGD certificate DIN EN 15565 has now become the foundation of tourist guide training and continued professional development for many decision-makers in the tourism industry and in adult education. It is a valid proof of professional qualification in the EU.



## LEGAL ISSUES AND INSURANCE

### CONTRACT TEMPLATES

Tourist guides' most frequent contractors include tourist information offices and incoming tourism agencies. The BVGD has developed templates for written contracts that establish a foundation of trust and cooperation between the parties involved. This provides legal security for the contracting partners and protects the tourist guides' self-employed status. These templates also define the types of contracts and contractors and differentiate the services provided by tourist guides and those provided by tourist offices and agencies. Payment processes and liability issues are regulated too. This service is available to all the BVGD's partners in tourism..

### INSURANCES

The BVGD has put together a comprehensive insurance package to cover its members. The core of the protection offered is a comprehensive professional liability insurance, which automatically covers all tour guides organized in the BVGD and includes not only personal injury and damage to property, but also environmental damage. Financial damage cover and key insurance are also included.

BVGD members also have the option of taking out 24-hour accident cover for themselves and their dependents.

### TAXES

Tourist guides are usually self-employed and freelance. To make it easier for members to find their way through the jungle of rules and regulations when filing their tax returns, the BVGD has produced the brochure "Kleiner Steuerführer für Gästeführer/-innen" ("Little Tax Guide for Tourist Guides"). Since tax law is subject to constant change, the brochure is updated on a regular basis.

### SEMINARS

As part of its quality assurance, the BVGD has developed a special seminar about law, tax and insurance. This training has been organized and completed by BVGD members across almost all of Germany.



## POINTS OF CONTACT IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

**T**he BVGD represents the interests of its members on a national and international level, as attested by its membership of the two international tourist guide organizations, the European Federation of Tourist Guide Associations (FEG) and the World Federation of Tourist Guide Associations (WFTGA).

The BVGD's membership of the FEG allows it to share and exchange views and experience on the various political and social conditions affecting tourist guiding in the EU with other national associations. Regular meetings set the course for close cooperation on the European market. The FEG supports the implementation of the European standard DIN EN 15565 for the training of qualified guides.

The BVGD marks International Tourist Guide Day (ITGD), first initiated by the WFTGA, as the Weltgästeführertag®. Held under the motto "Get to know Germany for free!", the event invites the public to find out more about guiding and the work of well-qualified tourist guides in their home region. Run jointly by the BVGD members, ITGD has now become a successful institution. Since 1999, more than 200,000 people have taken part in ITGD events in Germany.

The BVGD is a member of four strong tourism associations:

- The DZT (German National Tourism Board)
- The DTV (German Tourism Association)
- The DRV (German Travel Association)
- The RDA (International Bus Tourism Federation)

This means that the BVGD is involved in intense exchange with the institutions and persons politically and economically important to the German tourism industry.



[www.germany.travel](http://www.germany.travel)



Deutscher  
Tourismusverband e.V.

[www.deutschertourismusverband.de](http://www.deutschertourismusverband.de)



[www.driv.de](http://www.driv.de)



[www.rda.de](http://www.rda.de)



[www.feg-touristguides.org](http://www.feg-touristguides.org)



[www.wftga.org](http://www.wftga.org)

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