O2 - GUIDELINES FOR COMMUNITIES & INDIVIDUALS
AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

Developed for the Erasmus+ project MIRVA: Making Informal Recognition Visible and Actionable
This publication was produced within the framework of MIRVA: Making Informal Recognition Visible and Actionable, an Erasmus+ KA2 project (2017-2020).

The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.
Guidelines for the use of Open badges in the service of open recognition in agricultural education

Open Badges: an opportunity for agricultural education!

In agricultural education, we are all (learners, educational teams) confronted with a great diversity of informal learning situations and contexts.

- Delegate, eco-responsible, member of the ALESA office, elected teacher & trainer or referent (EPA, Coop-inter), third-party & project manager, volunteer or association manager;
- On the occasion of company visits and internships, study trips, extracurricular activities, artistic and cultural projects, association or union commitments, participation in events, representation in bodies, etc. ..

Everyone agrees that these experiences and multiple affiliations are a wealth for us and for agricultural education. So many roles, functions or experiences that enrich our training course, facilitate our integration, increase our employability, and which paradoxically are neither (or poorly) recognised nor valued for lack of adequate tools.

We are convinced that Open Badges are a great opportunity to promote agricultural education because they make it possible to make visible the experiences, projects, commitments and recognition of each of its actors. We have been able to experience that they are a means of recognising informal learning in addition to those that we recognise with our diplomas or certificates, but also a means of empowering learners.

At a time when transferable (or transversal) skills are valued by employers, as the lifelong training policy encourages the recognition of all learning, we encourage all agricultural education establishments to take up of this innovation. This document was built with the reference framework for open recognition proposed by the ERASMUS +project MIRVA.

Three years of experimentation with Open badges within Norman agricultural education have made it possible to identify relevant uses for the educational community to achieve the following goals:
● Promote **informal learning** for learners and educational teams **linked to transitions**;

● **Map** innovations, projects and educational experiments;

● **Provide** support for **the personal and professional project** of learners to **make them actors** in their training throughout life;

● Recognise the **commitment and spirit of initiative** of young people at the time or Parcours Sup assesses them in its Avenir files;

● Act for **digital inclusion** by training people in difficulty with digital technology to use these tools;

● Help **build self-esteem** and fight against dropping out of school;

● Participate in improving the **school climate** by implementing a **culture of recognition that** integrates the entire educational community;

● Innovate in work-study teaching;

● Obtain indicators for system **observatories** (eg: [digital education action plan](#)) or educational policies (eg: teaching how to produce differently, mobility)
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What are Open Badges?

From a technical point of view

From a technical point of view, an Open Badge is a digital image in which are recorded a number of information, or metadata that recognises the badge, the main ones:

- the identity of the receiver of the badge
- that of the transmitter
- the criteria for awarding the badge
- the evidence produced by the beneficiary which meet the criteria
A secure architecture, respectful of data
Open badges are not only images and metadata, but also a architecture described in open source standard([https://www.imsglobal.org/spec/ob/v2p1](https://www.imsglobal.org/spec/ob/v2p1)) which ensures that its content cannot be falsified, with a guarantee of protection of personal data: the identity of the beneficiary is encrypted and its receiver has full control (share, view or delete).

Transferable and shareable, a badge does not depend on any platform or software to continue to exist. It can be reused (displayed) in any platform or digital service that accepts the Open Badges standard.
A simple and rich in information tool

What makes the badge particularly attractive is the combination of the **simplicity** of the medium (an image) with the informational wealth that it conveys (the metadata).

Badges are used to **link a lot of information**, for example a practice with people, educational resources, knowledge, places, etc.

It is a simple technical object that can be easily **implemented at the individual level, of a teacher, of a training course, of an establishment, of a network of people or of a territory.**
A dynamic object
An Open badge is also a **dynamic object** that can be enriched as you go. Once issued, it can continue to be fed with new evidence or information (individual or collective story, endorsements) in order to enhance it over time.
To recognise who or what in our establishments?
An Open badge is a digital medium that allows a person or a community to promote their learning, their practices, their participations, their achievements or their roles.
Recognition can be formal (certification or accreditation) or informal (endorsement) and a collection of badges allows a person to build profiles, an institution to establish learning paths and a territory to establish a mapping of skills or talents that composes it.
Badges for mapping

These innovative tools have, in addition to the function of recognising, properties that make it possible to make visible learning, projects, actors or achievements. By deciding to geolocate their badges, everyone can therefore contribute to mapping skills of his organisation or its territory.
Discover learning opportunities

Open badges also make it possible to make visible opportunities to learn new things and to be recognised for it. A badge is used to display and geolocate a training offer (formal or informal). This property allows you to build informal routes by nesting badges to illustrate possible routes.

For our learners and staff, it is an opportunity to enhance their informal learning and to enroll in lifelong learning.
Open badges as indicators

Open badges can also be **indicators** useful for an **observatory of agricultural education** in the field of educational innovation, of the Teaching to Produce Otherwise program or of digital uses (see the Acoustice program).
Endorsement, an essential function of the Open badges standard

To endorse is indicating its confidence in an organisation or community that create badges, or approve the individual badge of a beneficiary.

There are three forms of endorsement in the standard. You can:

- endorse a badge issuer
- endorse the class (mold) of a badge (its description, criteria for obtaining it and its validation process)
- endorse the badge of a beneficiary (individual or organisation)

Endorsement makes it possible to make visible the trust and increase the value of a badge, an issuer or a collective within a recognition ecosystem.

It also makes possible the implementation of several scenarios where the badge can be a starting point, such as the engagement in an exploration process or in a project.
Endorsement allows individuals or groups to initiate the creation of a badge and build recognition, and therefore value, through the endorsement received from their peers, partners or from institutions.
Who recognises?

What's interesting about Open badges is not only that they can recognise many different things, but the recognition processes that can be associated with them.

Indeed, Open Badges are a disruptive technology because they invite a change of posture: badges can be created and endorsed by peers ... to then also be recognised (endorsed) by the institution if it considers that the criteria are met. This is an issue that must be properly measured if we want to develop the potential of Open badges in an educational establishment, a formal learning space by nature. As presented in the previous chapter on endorsement, the entity that issues, validates or creates the badge for a learner is not necessarily the teacher or the institution, but it can be another learner or a collective.

**We therefore recommend that the uses of Open badges do not follow the methods of academic evaluation, but they are at the service of an identified and shared goal or of a problem to be solved.**

Our experience with Open badges (badges acceptance rate) in agricultural education in Normandy and Loire has shown us that we must favor an approach where it is individuals or groups (ALESA, groups of teachers, etc.) who are actors and co-creators of the badges intended for them.

Indeed, when the beneficiary takes part in the design and / or validation of a badge, the acceptance rate (the fact of accepting the badge and sharing it) increases significantly.

The risks of rejection are even very strong when an institution creates badges in a very top-down fashion: [https://www.vousnousils.fr/2020/07/10/pourquoi-les-open-badges-font-ils-tant-reagir -633551](https://www.vousnousils.fr/2020/07/10/pourquoi-les-open-badges-font-ils-tant-reagir -633551)

Otherwise the risk is that they will be seen as good marks or marks in the form of pictures, and that they will obscure the formal assessment across the diploma. **Recognising is not validating**, but making it visible, in order to then build the value of what is recognised within an ecosystem in which it is part.

The contexts conducive to Open badges that we have identified are:

- projects (multi or interdisciplinary, artistic and cultural, TNLA, regional animation projects)
- school life (ALESA activities, school climate)
- networks (eco-leaders, delegates)
- support for personal and professional projects
- mobility

The uses of these tools concern the entire educational community and not just the students. **Open badges invite everyone to be an actor in the recognition of others.**

*To explore this question in more depth, we invite you to consult the Open Recognition Charter proposed by the ERASMUS + MIRVA project*

- > [The open recognition charter - for an ethics of Open badges](https://www.vousnousils.fr/2020/07/10/pourquoi-les-open-badges-font-ils-tant-reagir -633551)
Below is an example of objectives shared by the **eco-responsibles network** in which badges have a role to play.
Peer Validation
To assign a badge to a person, a process can be set up in which the person first applies for a badge, receives a form that requests certain information and required evidence, and then the request is sent to $x$ people who already have the same badge or a badge giving them the right to validate a request for this badge. Thus, an association like ALESA can organise itself to issue badges to its members to recognise their commitment or contributions without having to go through a constituted authority.
Collective badges

One can also create collective badges, such a badge would be given to all those who contributed to an artistic project and cultural or organised an animation on the territory. These badges, which should also be designed collectively, do not say anything about the skills specific to the people who receive them, but once put in relation with other badges corresponding to other achievements, participations but also skills, it is possible to infer useful information such as interests, attendance, participation or contributions to a community.

Thus, to fully measure the value of a badge, it is necessary to locate it within a collection of other badges, received and issued, to account for the relationships it establishes with other people, ideas, skills, communities, institutions or organisations.
Creating your own badges

Finally, you should also encourage people to **create their own badges** and ask others to **endorse them** (approve them, attest to their value). So you can create your badge, add proof of your achievements, your commitment (testimonials for example), then ask stakeholders to endorse it.

In fact, this use is rarely done alone and requires support. As part of the personal and professional project of our young people or adults in training, Open badges seem promising to us because they help to raise awareness of skills.
The functions of Open badges

Here is a summary of the many functions of Open badges. Far from being satisfied with being simple digital certificates, they are genuine multi-function recognition instruments that can be used by everyone, to build recognition ecosystems useful for individuals and communities to achieve shared goals.

Empower learners

The strength of these tools for our educational communities of agricultural education, is that they develop the power to act of our learners.

Open badges allow individuals and communities to equip themselves and organise themselves. This may involve making their commitments, learning and skills acquired informally visible and structuring collective action.

Thanks to the endorsement functions, Open badges give everyone the ability to be recognised and participate in the recognition of others.
Antoine, 17 years old, in Bac STAV

**Presentation**

Antoine is 17 years old and follows a BAC STAV in a Normandy agricultural school. He volunteered to be eco-responsible. Emmanuel, his referent, offered him from the outset the **eco-responsible badge** issued by agricultural education, in order to recognise his commitment to this voluntary mission.

Antoine is very involved in the subject of sustainable development and wishes to launch an animation project in his establishment with Open badges with the support of his referent teacher and his fellow eco-responsible colleagues.

**What should Antoine consider?**

**What are the objectives ?**

Antoine’s objectives are first of all to acculturate the educational community of his establishment to the objectives of sustainable development, then to get as many people as possible to get involved in concrete actions.

**Who will have access?**

The whole educational community and the partners in the territory

**Who will be able to request recognition?**

The learners of his school, the teaching teams, all those who are committed to the subject of sustainable development may be required to create or endorse the badges of eco-responsible.

**What will be recognised?**

Contributions to projects, workshop activities, individual and collective commitment.

**Antoine's journey**

**Begin**

To begin, Antoine can encourage his schoolmates to request the **eco-responsible badge** created by the regional network, to share it and make it visible on a map of Normandy. This makes it possible to identify peers who have the same role.
Everyone can then **feed their badge** with content that reflects actions in favor of eco-responsibility. Antoine and his comrades can request an endorsement from their secondary school teacher.

Antoine proposes to create a badge on the operation zero-waste with the help of the supervising adults. The badge enables them to describe the knowledge, skills and attitudes mobilised by this project. They then create a badge to identify **mediators**, who intervene to improve relations between students when a problem is detected.

Badges can then be endorsed by the school, DRAAF or stakeholders. The badge **makes the reciprocal recognition visible** around the project.
Develop

The badges created in the high school and at the regional level have been appreciated for their quality by the national network of eco-responsible persons, and it decides to share some of them with other regional networks.

More broadly still, the General Directorate of Education and Research of the Ministry of Agriculture decides to endorse the network's badges to increase recognition at the national level.

It also creates a website which allows each member of agricultural education to publish badges on the theme of sustainable development. This site offers visibility of what is done in all agricultural educational establishments.