The guide for

TRAINING AND CERTIFYING YOUTH WORKERS ON BADGE RECOGNITION

using the example of cities of learning

Co-funded by
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Welcome to...

"A Guide for Training and Certifying Youth Workers on Badge Recognition," a resource designed to address the growing need for standardised recognition of digital Open Badges in youth work. As youth work increasingly spans European and international contexts, this guide aims to provide clarity and structure for implementing the **Quality Label for Badge Recognition** as a solution to achieve wider badge recognition. It focuses on enhancing competence in using digital badges to certify skills and achievements, thereby supporting youth work organisations, formal education, and other fields.

This guide offers a practical solution to achieve broader badge recognition, using the example of the Quality Label system employed by the **Cities of Learning platform**. Additionally, this document provides guidance on developing local or contributing to the European strategy on badge recognition by offering examples of strategies from six countries and a European strategy.

The guide provides a comprehensive approach to badge recognition and Quality Label (QL), covering various aspects such as understanding badges, strategies for implementation, practical application on platforms like Cities of Learning, and envisioning future scenarios. This ensures that participants gain a holistic understanding of badge systems and the Quality Label.

The guide offers practical tools throughout its modules, such as action plan templates, learning materials, playlists for learning about badges and quality labels, etc. These resources are valuable as they provide tangible tools that can be adapted and utilised by other youth work organisations, formal education institutions, and various fields interested in implementing badge recognition.
The guide can be implemented in several forms such as in-person or online workshops, training sessions, consultations tailored to specific organisational needs, pilot project implementation, and collaboration between (youth) organisations or/and educational institutions and other sectors. Structured in one-day modules with 3-4 sessions each, the guide offers both a learning path and the flexibility to use individual modules as needed.

The guide can be used by:

- Learning providers who use the Cities of Learning platform and Open Badges in education, training, and youth fields and want to train experienced badge issuers.
- Youth workers or educators in non-formal or formal education committed to establishing a quality standard for digital Open Badges.
- Other fields interested in employing the Cities of Learning platform and Open Badges to bring better quality in their work.

Goals of the guide:

The Quality label is a trusted mark that shows organisations issuing badges are experts and committed to high standards. This guide helps users to gain a deeper understanding of the Quality Label and it supports them in:

- Learning how to effectively use digital badges for recognition.
- Developing the skills to implement the Quality Label within their organisation.
- Promoting wider recognition of badges both at national and European levels.

Flexibility is key to this guide. It encourages adaptation to diverse contexts, needs, and target groups within youth work. By allowing for customisation, the guide supports users in tailoring badge recognition strategies to local, national, or international settings. This adaptability ensures relevance and effectiveness across different youth work realities and supports continuous improvement in badge recognition practices.

This guide was developed after the suggested training modules were tested in practice by the project partners during an international training course held in Serbia in May 2024, which gathered 23 learning providers from 6 countries. For more details, visit the related platform activity here.

About the Quality Label Project:

This guide was developed in the framework of the Quality Label for Badge Recognition Erasmus+ project, an initiative that aimed at establishing a recognized standard for digital badge recognition. It sets shared quality standards and procedures for badge issuers, ensuring that the badges they issue are reliable and trustworthy for certifying skills. By promoting transparency, clarity, and trust, the Quality Label enhances the recognition of learning achievements and supports career development across various sectors.

The Quality Label project is part of the The Cities of Learning Network initiative implemented by Breakthrough from The Netherlands, Assonur Association (NUR) from Sardinia, Italy, Awero from Lithuania, BINS from Serbia, TiPovej! from Slovenia and Nexes Interculturals from Spain.

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MODULE 1

INTRODUCTION TO BADGE RECOGNITION

OBJECTIVES

- Understand the concept and significance of digital Open Badges in youth work.
- Introduce the Quality Label and its role in standardising badge recognition.
- Familiarise participants with the basic terminology and principles related to badge recognition.

DURATION

approx. 4 hours 30 mins (270 mins)

SESSIONS

Session 1. Welcome and Introduction	90 mins
Session 2. Quality in Learning and Recognition	90 mins
Session 3. Exchanging on Our Professional Work	60 mins
Session 4. Reflection through badges	30 mins

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

- Computers for trainers and coaches (if needed for presentation preparation or notes).
- Projector and screen for digital presentations that include the following:
  - Agenda of the training;
  - **What is City or Region of learning;**
  - **Values guiding of Cities of Learning;**
  - **Get to know Open Badges;**
  - **Quality Label for Badge Recognition.**
- Printouts of the training program agenda for participants (one per participant).
- QR code posters to access relevant resources:
  - **Quality Label for badge issuing playlist;**
  - **Visible value - Recognition of youth work** (access the article **here**);
  - **T-Kit 10: Educational evaluation in youth work** (access the publication **here**).
- White A4 papers (for various activities such as note-taking).
- Pencils, pens or markers for participants.
- Flip chart posters and post-it notes.
- Small plates with items to taste.
- **Quality Assessment sheet.**
- **Quality key terms** & **Quality posters info.**
- **Quality Label for badge issuing playlist.**
- Various creative, craft materials: sets of stickers, magazines, scissors, markers, glue, adhesive tape, …
- **Open Badge Canvas.**
- **Qualified youth workers for Europe: A manual for the recognition of competences.**
- **Recognition levels.**
- **Quality in non-formal education and training in the field of European youth work.**
- **Definition of word "recognition."**

session 1

BADGE RECOGNITION EXAMPLE AND PRACTICES

This session aims to establish a welcoming environment where participants can familiarise themselves with trainers and each other. Through activities, participants engage in ice-breaking interactions and discussions centred around badge-related topics. Additionally, the agenda overview ensures clarity on the training program's structure and opportunities for participants to contribute their badge system practices, enhancing collaboration and learning throughout the session.

activity 1.1. Welcome the participants

25 mins

Participants will be introduced to the trainers and coaches, establishing a welcoming atmosphere and facilitating familiarity. One recommended activity is the Circle of Names, where each participant shares their name along with the most useless skill or knowledge they possess. This interactive introduction aims to build rapport among participants and create an inclusive environment conducive to learning and collaboration from the outset of the session.

❗ Note: As a trainer or coach, you are encouraged to employ various **name games** to break the ice and support interaction among participants.

❗ ❗ Note: As a trainer or coach, you are encouraged to use a variety of ice-breaking activities at the beginning of each module and between activities within the module, tailored to the needs of your audience. To find the right tool for your sessions you may find inspiration on the **library of facilitation techniques**.

activity 1.2. Getting to know each other

25 mins

Participants will engage in a creative ice-breaking activity where each person draws an analog clock with 12 numbers. For each number, they identify a "date" (another participant) and write their names accordingly. When prompted by the trainer, participants pair up based on the hour indicated on their clocks and discuss one of several badge-related topics, such as the first badge they received, the badge they are most proud of, the last badge obtained, their desired badge, a badge they believe everyone should earn, or their ideal recipient for presenting the Quality Label initiative. The trainer can decide how many “dates” to call, and for which hours, depending on the size of the group and allocated time for the activity; each date should last 3-4 minutes and the trainer will keep the time. This structured yet dynamic exercise aims to deepen engagement and encourage meaningful conversations among participants about their badge experiences and aspirations.

activity 1.3. Agenda Overview

20 mins

During this activity, participants will receive a comprehensive overview of the training program agenda, ensuring clarity on the schedule and objectives. Additionally, participants will get insight about the Cities of Learning, its values and Open Badges. Logistics, managed by an organiser, will be addressed to streamline the participant experience. Throughout the training, encourage participants to contribute by presenting their best practices related to badge systems, supporting a collaborative learning environment and encouraging sharing of innovative approaches among peers.

activity 1.4. Cities of Learning and Quality Label background

20 mins

In this activity, participants will gain insights into the Cities of Learning and the significance of the Quality Label initiative. The session will begin with a brief introduction to the three key words of the training: **learning, quality, and recognition**, prompting a quick brainstorming session to set the stage for deeper discussions. A trainer presents details about the Quality Label, emphasising its role in maintaining standards and promoting excellence in badge recognition practices. This activity aims to inform and inspire participants about the broader goals and operational aspects of the Cities of Learning and QL initiatives.

session 2

Quality in Learning and Recognition

In the session, participants are invited to delve into defining and applying quality standards in digital badge recognition. Through interactive activities and discussing their own professional practices, they will gain practical insights into ensuring high standards in educational contexts. The session aims to support participants to develop expertise and acquire comprehensive knowledge in utilising digital Open Badges for recognition, providing participants a space to explore key topics around quality and recognition.

activity 2.1. Defining Quality and Quality Criteria

20 mins

- Engage participants in understanding what constitutes quality. Begin with a discussion on buzz words related to Quality, Quality Criteria, and Indicators (use the **posters**). Use a tactile and sensory approach by setting up "islands" around the venue with different types of sweets and fruits (e.g. berry stripes, apples/pears, some chocolate sweets, nuts, raisins).
- Task: Ask each team to choose one type of sweet/fruit and describe its quality criteria. **What attributes define the quality of this item?** Encourage participants to identify indicators that demonstrate these criteria are met by answering the question: **What proves that this item matches defined quality criteria?**
- Participants can assess the quality based on taste and other sensory evaluations, using a **template** to document their findings.

activity 2.2. Quality in My Work Context

20 mins

- Provide participants with post-it notes. Ask each person to write their name and list 2-3 aspects that make their work a high-quality endeavour. Once everyone has written their contributions, facilitate a discussion where members share their inputs and collectively build a "quality work" poster.
- Goal: This activity aims to foster a collaborative environment where participants can learn from each other's perspectives and share best practices.

activity 2.3. Exploring Recognition

20 mins

- Facilitate brainstorming on the flip chart about the concept of recognition. Ask participants to share their initial thoughts on what they seek to recognize within their contexts. This can be guided by asking what aspects they try to recognize and what qualities they value in recognition.
- Participants contribute to the brainstorming session with their responses, helping to identify key elements of quality recognition.

activity 2.4. Identifying Organisational Qualities for Recognition

15 mins

- Encourage participants to discuss and identify unique qualities of their organisations that they would like to be recognized for. This can be a group discussion or a series of short presentations where each group or individual shares their insights.
- Outcome: This activity aims to help participants articulate the distinct strengths of their organisations and understand how these can be used for effective recognition.

activity 2.5. Understanding the Value of Quality Recognition

15 mins

- Lead a discussion on why quality recognition is important amidst various demands. Discuss the added value of quality recognition in enhancing educational and professional development.
- Connect this discussion to the activities from the **Quality Label for badge issuing playlist**, illustrating the broader impact of quality recognition practices.

session 3

Exchanging on Our Professional Work

This session focuses on supporting professional exchange and networking among participants across education, training, and youth fields. It aims to create opportunities for participants to share insights, challenges, and best practices related to recognition of learning and quality in their work.

activity 3.1. Exchanging on our professional work

60 mins

Introduction to the activity

05 mins

Begin with a brief verbal introduction and presentation outlining the purpose of the session. Emphasise the objective to connect and network with like-minded professionals and experts. Highlight the importance of exchanging ideas and experiences to enhance collective knowledge and practices.

Icebreaker: One-Word Sharing

05 mins

Facilitate a quick icebreaker where each participant shares one word that describes their current work. This activity helps set a positive tone and encourages participants to briefly reflect on their professional roles and interests.

Networking Time

40 mins

- Participants will be divided into small groups of 3-6 people to facilitate diverse perspectives and discussions.
- Trainers will support each group to ensure facilitated discussions on recognition of learning, quality in work, and challenges related to recognition.
- Each group will receive clear instructions and discussion topics to guide their conversation, which will be recorded on flip charts.

Group Discussion Topics:

1) Introduction and Professional Background:

- Briefly introduce yourself, your organisation, and your role.

2) Recognition of Learning:

- How does your organisation support learning?
- What practices or tools do you use to recognize learning achievements?

3) Quality in Work:

- What quality standards or best practices does your organisation follow to ensure high-quality work?

3) Challenges:

- Discuss challenges your organisation faces regarding recognition of learning.
- Identify common challenges and discuss potential benefits or strengths.

Closing

10 mins

Conclude the session with a brief recap of key insights and discussions from the group activities. Encourage participants to consider the value of networking and knowledge-sharing in advancing their professional practices.

Facilitation Tips:

- Use flip charts to record discussions and highlight key points. Ensure all participants have an opportunity to contribute and that discussions remain focused on the designated topics.
- Division by Interest: Identify specific topics for discussion based on participants' expertise and interests, allowing for deeper exploration of relevant themes.

session 4

Reflection through badges

This session focuses on setting learning expectations through a creative and reflective activity where participants create physical badges that symbolise their goals and expectations for the training.

! Note: The session "Reflection through badges" is a regular session at the end of each module. The reflection sessions will be like the process of combining creativity, collaboration and learning. As a result, participants will create a tangible and digital representation of their achievements.

activity 4.1. Reflection

30 mins

Introduction to the activity

15 mins

Start with a brief introduction explaining the purpose of the badge reflection activity. Emphasise that participants will have the opportunity to visually express their learning expectations for the training using physical badges.

Creating Physical Badges:

- Participants will be provided with materials (creative and craft materials such as stickers, magazines, scissors, markers, glue, etc.).
- Each participant designs and creates a physical badge that represents their personal learning expectations for the training program. This can include symbols, words, or images that reflect their goals and aspirations.

Facilitation Tips:

- Encourage participants to be creative and expressive in designing their badges.
- Provide guidance and support as needed, ensuring everyone has the necessary materials, **Open Badge Canvas** and space to create their badges.

Reflection and Sharing

10 mins

- After creating their badges, participants will have an opportunity to share their designs with the group.
- Encourage each participant to briefly explain the meaning behind their badge and what they hope to achieve or learn during the training.

Closing

05 mins

- Conclude the session by thanking participants for their participation and creativity.
- Emphasise that these badges will serve as a visual reminder of their learning expectations throughout the training program.

MODULE 2

SHARING PRACTICES AND ALIGNING STRATEGIES

OBJECTIVES

- Participants will investigate various badge systems designed to recognize achievements across different sectors such as education, youth centres, universities, and professional internships.
- Engage in interactive sessions where participants share and learn about effective practices in badge-based recognition, fostering collaborative learning and idea exchange.
- Discuss the integration of Quality Label standards with national strategies for badge recognition, aiming to identify synergies and contribute insights for effective implementation.

DURATION

approx. 4 hours 30 mins
(270 mins)

SESSIONS

Session 1. Badge recognition example and practices	90 mins
Session 2. Badge recognition strategies and Quality Label	90 mins
Session 3. How to support badge recognition within organisation	90 mins
Session 4. Reflection through badges	30 mins

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

- QR code posters to access relevant resources.
- Printed **national strategies** (A3).
- **National strategies bingo sheets**.
- Information stands for **national** and **European strategies** (printed strategies).
- Post-it notes.
- Pencils and markers.
- Pencils, pens or markers for participants.
- 10 Tips for **playlist creation**.
- Flip Chart posters.
- **Quality Label for Badge Issuing playlist**.

session 1

Badge recognition example and practices

This session aims to prepare participants for an in-depth exploration of various badge-based recognition systems by providing an engaging and interactive platform to share and learn from each other's practices. Participants will be guided to formulate or receive exploratory questions to enhance their understanding and focus during the exploration.

activity 1.1. **Energizer** of your choice

15 mins

activity 1.2. Exploratory Pathways of Badge-Based Recognition

75 mins

Facilitate the exploration of various badge-based recognition systems through interactive sessions and discussions.

Exploration Process

60 mins

- Set up several "islands" or stations showcasing different badge-based recognition systems. If there are participants with existing systems, you can ask them in advance to prepare a short presentation. They can then lead each station, showcasing their recognition systems.
- Arrange a few tables for each station where participants can share examples from their organisations on how they use badges to recognize specific achievements.
- The rest of the participants go around and explore the badge-based recognition system.
- Provide tables with materials related to badge-based recognition systems for participants to explore at any time.
- Encourage focused and self-directed exploration.
- At the beginning, you may distribute exploratory questions or encourage participants to formulate their own questions to guide their exploration.

Group Discussion

15 mins

- Gather back in the plenary.
- Applaud those who shared their practices.
- Discuss to what extent participants got their questions answered.
- Ask participants to name questions that are not answered yet and address them.

session 2

Badge recognition strategies and Quality Label

This session aims to provide participants with a comprehensive understanding of national badge recognition strategies and their implementation. Participants will explore the interrelation between Quality Labels and national strategies, identify synergies, and check the European badge recognition strategy developed within the QL project.

activity 2.1. National Strategies Bingo

30 mins

Encourage participants to learn about other national strategies through an interactive bingo game.

Going around the room

20 mins

- Set up stands showcasing different national badge recognition strategies.
- Provide participants with a **National Strategies Bingo sheet**, which includes information to be filled out based on the strategies they explore.
- Participants visit different stands, learn about various strategies, and complete their bingo sheets.
- One stand is dedicated to the European badge recognition strategy where participants can learn about it.

Group Reflection

10 mins

- Gather back in the plenary.
- Discuss insights gained from the bingo activity.

activity 2.2. National Strategies in Country Teams

90 mins

Facilitate discussion to encourage participants to think about their own national badge recognition strategies by examining examples and envisioning future implementation.

Discussion Process

45 mins

- Provide participants with printed examples of **national** and **European** badge recognition strategies.
- Participants gather in country teams and are encouraged to discuss their national strategies.
- Key discussion points for participants after studying the examples of strategies:

  -What resonates with participants about the examples?
  -What are the current gaps or opportunities they identify in their own contexts?
  -Where do they envision their country's strategy being in 3 years?
  -What specific actions or changes do they suggest to ensure successful strategy implementation?
  -How are the Quality Label and national strategy interrelated, and how can they create synergies?
  -What key insights or suggestions do they want to communicate to other teams?

- Each team prepares a summary of their discussion to share with others.

Group Sharing

15 mins

- Gather back in the plenary.
- Each team briefly presents their summary.
- Collect and organise feedback.

session 3

How to support badge recognition within organisation

This session aims to help participants understand the characteristics of an ideal badge issuer, gain foundational knowledge about digital badges, and learn practical strategies for supporting badge recognition. Participants will also reflect on their organisational strengths and needs for improving badge recognition.

activity 3.1. Characteristics of an Ideal Badge Issuer — 15 mins

Individual Task — 5 mins

Ask participants to imagine their organisation as a badge issuer represented by an animal. They should focus on quality aspects.

Small Group Discussion — 10 mins

- Form small groups and have participants share their chosen animals and their characteristics.
- Discuss commonalities and differences among the characteristics of their organisations.

activity 3.2. Digital Badges 101 — 45 mins

Step 1: Forming Groups — 05 mins

Divide participants into two groups: (1) Participants with badge creation and issuing experiences & (2) Participants who are new-to-badges.

Step 2: Group Work — 40 mins

- Group 1: Experienced participants are asked to form recommendations on what to do when starting with badges "Top 5 DO's & Top 5 DON'Ts."
- Group 2: New-to-badges participants are asked to go through the playlist "**Creating quality Open Badges and badge systems**" and earn a badge for the first activity: **What is an Open Badge?**.

activity 3.3. Supporting Badge Recognition in Practice — 45 mins

Share new knowledge and practical tips within the whole group.

Group Sharing:

- Group 2 reflects briefly on their new knowledge.
- Group 1 presents their top 5 DO's and DON'Ts on a typed poster.

activity 3.4. Final Reflection — 15 mins

Reflect on organisational strengths and needs for enhancing badge recognition.

Individual Reflection — 05 mins

- Ask participants to reflect on the organisational animal shared earlier. Consider its strengths and weaknesses concerning the tips and dilemmas discussed.
- Think broadly about the organisation and reflect on what is needed to bring badge recognition to a higher level.

Small Group Exploration — 10 mins

- Reform the same small teams from Activity 3.1.
- Discuss what is needed in an expert peer support system.
- Ask teams to share insights on flip-chart paper.

! Note: Each activity is designed to build upon the previous one, ensuring a coherent flow and a comprehensive understanding of badge recognition and issuance.

session 4

Reflection through badges

This session focuses on refining descriptions for physical badges that participants created in the previous reflection session.

activity 4.1. Reflection

30 mins

Introduction to the activity

15 mins

- Remind participants about the previous reflection session where they visually express their learning expectations for the training using physical badges.
- In this session, participants are asked to focus on refining badge descriptions and requirements.

Reflection and Sharing

10 mins

- Invite participants to share their work with the whole group.

Closing

05 mins

- Conclude the session by thanking participants for their participation and creativity.

MODULE 3

Exploring the Quality Label System and Practical Application

OBJECTIVES

This module aims to comprehensively explore and enhance participants' understanding and application of the Quality Label system by engaging them to go deeply into the procedural aspects of QL application, criteria, **steps** to receive QL and technical solutions on the Cities of Learning Platform.

DURATION

approx. 3 hours (180 mins)

SESSIONS

Session 1. Quality Label in practice	90 mins
Session 2. Steps to receive the Quality Label & technical solution	90 mins
Session 3. Reflection through badges	30 mins

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

- **Quality Label for Badge Issuing playlist**.
- **Creating quality Open Badges and badge systems playlist**.
- Presentation of the steps to receive **Quality Label for Badge Recognition**.
- Presentation of the QL technical solution on the Cities of Learning platform.
- **Quality Label Summary Guide**
- **Application for the Quality label for badge recognition template**.

session 1

Quality Label in practice

The objective of this activity is to engage participants in practical exercises aimed at familiarising them with the Quality Label system and gathering feedback on its implementation. Participants will work in groups to explore and evaluate QL badges and playlists, providing insights on their content, user experience, and relrelevance. Additionally, more experienced participants will focus on brainstorming solutions for challenges in QL adoption, aiming to generate ideas and strategies to overcome obstacles that organisations may encounter when implementing or integrating the QL. This activity sets the stage for a whole group discussion to summarise feedback, discuss proposed solutions, and derive key insights for further improvement and implementation of the QL system.

activity 1.1. Quality Label in Practice

90 mins

Welcome participants and provide an overview of the session's objectives. Give an opportunity for participants to ask questions about the session or any related topics.

Part 1: Work in 3 Groups

45 mins

Present the group assignments:

Group 1: Claiming Badges from the **Quality Label for Badge Issuing playlist** (dedicate 1 facilitator)
- Participants explore and claim badges from the **Quality Label for badge issuing playlist**.
- Participants discuss and collect feedback on the badge content and user experience.

Group 2: New-to-badges participants go through **Creating quality Open Badges and badge systems playlist** (dedicate 1 facilitator)
- Participants explore the playlist.
- Discuss and provide feedback on the relevance and usefulness of the content.

Group 3: Solutions for challenges in QL adoption (dedicate 1 facilitator)
- Participants brainstorm solutions for challenges in QL adoption, generate and discuss potential ideas, strategies, or approaches to overcome difficulties or obstacles that may arise when organisations try to implement or integrate the QL.

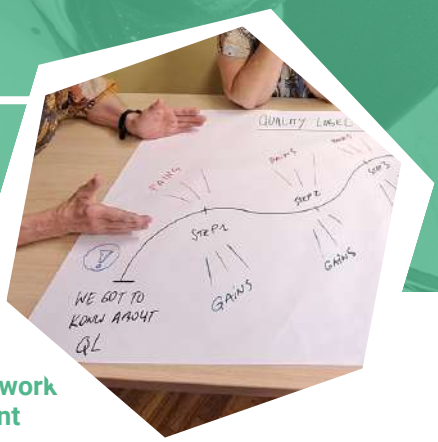
Part 2: Whole Group Discussion

45 mins

Facilitate the whole group discussion:
- Summarise key feedback points from each group.
- Discuss the solutions for challenges in QL adoption.
- Encourage participants to share their reflections and additional insights.
- Summarise the main takeaways from the session.

session 2

Steps to receive the Quality Label & technical solution



This session focuses on evaluating Quality Label applications, providing constructive feedback, and generating suggestions for improving the QL package. Participants will work in groups to assess applications and then participate in focused discussions at different stations to refine the QL criteria, indicators, evidence requirements, and stakeholder engagement.

activity 2.1. Steps to receive the Quality Label & technical solution

30 mins

Present to participants the QL system:

- Short overview of each steps to receive the QL;
- The technical solution on the Cities of Learning Platform;
- Q&A for concerns of the participants.

activity 2.2. Evaluation of QL Applications

60 mins

- Participants work in smaller groups, each receiving two examples of applications to review.
- Participants use a compliance checklist to assess and score the applications in order to closely familiarise themself with the application form for the QL.
- Encourage participants to share their experience of evaluating the applications.

❗ Note: Due to the unique nature of this activity that was tested during the training, it is unlikely that you as a trainer will have ready examples of applications to use for groups. Therefore, it is recommended to adapt it into a "practice session."

Alternative session:

activity 2.2. Preparation of QL Application

60 mins

In this practice session, participants can:

- Work in small teams from the same organisation or form support teams.
- Go through the application form and fill it in as much as possible.
- Focus on specific sections as prioritised by trainers, such as the indicators related to badge issuing skills.
- Participants can start gathering evidence from their own organisation to assess their readiness to apply for the QL.

❗ Note: Additionally, this activity can be done over two sessions:

1. First Session: Participants complete at least one chosen part of the application.
2. Second Session: Participants are divided into small evaluation teams and given two random applications from the previous session to assess.

For a smooth training experience, it is advisable not to schedule these sessions back to back. Instead, trainers can consider splitting them over different days to allow participants to thoroughly engage with and reflect on each part of the process.

session 3

Reflection through badges

This session focuses on translation of the physical badge created by participants into digital format.

activity 3.1. Reflection

30 mins

Introduction to the activity

15 mins

- Remind participants about the previous reflection session where they visually express their learning expectations for the training using physical badges & adding badge description and requirements.
- In this session, participants are asked to use computers or tablets to translate their physical designs into digital formats on a designated platform, receiving guidance and technical support from trainers as needed.

Reflection and Sharing

10 mins

Invite participants to share their work with the whole group.

Closing

05 mins

Conclude the session by thanking participants for their participation and creativity.

MODULE 4

Future-Forward Quality Label and Recognition

OBJECTIVES

- Develop action plans tailored to local contexts for implementing badge recognition initiatives.
- Envision future scenarios for Quality Label considering current trends and challenges across various domains.
- Reflect on the training program, review learning outcomes, and introduce certification options such as Youthpass.

DURATION

approx. 4 hours 30 mins
(270 mins)

SESSIONS

Session 1. How to support badge recognition within and beyond organisation	90 mins
Session 2. Envisioning the future and how to get there	45 mins
Session 3. Evaluation	60 mins

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

- Prepared electronic or printed evaluation questionnaire.
- **Action plan template**.
- Post-it notes.
- Pencils and markers.
- **Future scenario from the perspective of the characters**.
- **Poster** depicting a large open window and a window shelf at the bottom.
- Poster with **7 cards** displayed (Collaboration Champion, Beacon of Hope, Empathy Ambassador, Evidence Master, Critical Thinker, Creative Futurist, Smile Sparkler)
- 1 dice per team.
- Printouts of character scenarios.
- Information about Youthpass certificates and the process to obtain them.
- Posters displaying outputs created by participants throughout the training program.

session 1

How to support badge recognition within and beyond organisation

This session aims to plan and coordinate follow-up actions for implementing badge recognition initiatives across diverse local contexts. Participants will discuss and develop action plans in teams. The session concludes with a whole-group discussion on local or international cooperation opportunities.

activity 1.1. Action plan

90 mins

Facilitate teams in developing action plans tailored to their local realities.

Group Work

60 mins

- Participants gather in teams.
- Each country discusses their next steps and plans for badge recognition implementation.
- Utilise an **action plan template** to structure discussions and document plans.

Closing in Whole Group

30 mins

Teams report back on their action plans.

- Collect ideas for potential local and international collaborations and cooperation among teams.
- Remind participants of existing opportunities and resources for further collaboration and learning, e.g.:
  - The Cities of Learning online Community Calls;
  - The Cities of Learning newsletter;
  - International or local training opportunities;
  - Access to additional playlists about relevant topics.

Conclusion

- Summarise key action points and agreements.
- Discuss the next steps for implementing the action plans and utilising local and international cooperation opportunities effectively.

session 2

Envisioning the future and how to get there

This session aims to collectively envision future scenarios for Quality Label while considering current trends and challenges in various domains of quality and recognition in a game scenario. Participants will collaborate to explore both optimistic and cautious perspectives, aiming to collect symbolic "future role" cards as a team.

activity 2.1. Envisioning the future — 45 mins

Step 1: Group Formation — 05 mins

- Participants form into small groups of up to 5 members each.

Step 2: Today's View — 10 mins

- Participants identify current trends and challenges influencing quality and recognition.
- Each participant writes 2 trends, challenges, or opportunities on post-it notes.
- Share and discuss within groups to identify common themes.

Step 3: 5 Years Ahead — 12 mins

- Participants envision future scenarios in key areas.
- Each participant selects one area card (Technology and Innovation, Economy and Employment, Governance and Policy, Education and Learning, Society and Demographics).
- Write or draw a scenario for that area 5 years into the future (1-3 sentences).
- Share scenarios within groups and discuss implications.

Step 4: Living the Future — 15 mins

- Participants role-play future scenarios and assess QL alignment.
- Each participant rolls a die to assume a **future role perspective**.
- Discuss as a team:
  - Alignment of envisioned scenarios with current QL framework.
  - Identify enhancements or adjustments needed based on future trends.

Step 5: Game Cards Collecting — 03 mins

- Participants evaluate the team's progress in collecting symbolic cards.
- Decide as a team how many of the **7 cards** have been "collected" based on contributions and insights shared.
- Emphasise collective achievement rather than individual collection.

Finalisation of Badges:

- Participants finalise badge details based on insights gained during the session. Participants showcase their digital badges to each other, explaining their significance and criteria for earning. They engage in activities where they earn badges from peers by meeting set criteria and practice approving evidence for each other's achievements.
- Begin earning badges by validating achievements aligned with the envisioned future scenarios.

Conclusion: Recap key insights and scenarios discussed. Encourage participants to apply their vision to innovate and adapt QL initiatives effectively.

*The activity was inspired by the game "**Window to the Future**," an educational tool designed for the Third European Academy Event in May 2024 (**European Academy on Youth Work**).

session 3

Evaluation

This session aims to reflect on the training program, review learning outcomes, introduce certification options including Youthpass, and gather participant feedback through an evaluation questionnaire.

! Note: In the final session, it is recommended to issue a badge for participants as certification for participating in the training.

activity 3.1. Evaluation

60 mins

Step 1: Reviewing Outputs

10 mins

- Display posters that participants produced throughout the training.
- Select a peer learner to summarise key takeaways and highlights from each day.

Step 2: Reflecting through Badges/ Reflection on Learning Outcomes

10 mins

- Present learning outcomes of the training program using flip chart posters or a digital presentation.
- Discuss how these outcomes align with participants' expectations and personal development goals.

Step 3: Introduction to certification tools

10 mins

- Remind participants about Youthpass as an additional certification option, if applicable to the training.
- Briefly explain the process of obtaining a Youthpass certificate, emphasising its benefits for personal and professional development.
- Mention any additional or alternative certification tools you may use for this training activity, e.g. Open Badges.

Step 4: Evaluation Questionnaire

20 mins

- Provide participants with the link to the evaluation questionnaire or a printed form.
- Encourage participants to complete the questionnaire honestly and thoroughly to provide valuable feedback.

Closing

10 mins

- Summarise key points discussed during the session.
- Thank participants for their participation and insights.
- Encourage continued engagement with Youthpass (if applicable) and future learning opportunities.

Local Workshops Guides

Local workshops in The Netherlands

Between May and August 2024, we conducted three in-person workshops in the Netherlands. Two of these took place during the Onderwijsfestival, each lasting 45 minutes and designed for small groups of festival participants with limited or no prior experience with Open Badges. The objective was to engage with the formal education sector, gather their perspectives on badges, and explore ways to align non-formal recognition practices with the use of badges in formal education settings.

The third workshop, conducted with Marlijn Academie, was a more extensive 4-hour session. Participants included individuals with limited or no prior experience with Open Badges, as well as someone involved in developing the Quality Label. As a formal education institution operating in a more non-formal manner, the aim of this workshop was to learn from Marlijn Academie's methods of recognising learning.

DUTCH cities of learning

QUALITY LABEL for badge recognition

Target groups and profile of participants

Our first two workshops engaged 10 participants from various Dutch regions within the formal education sector. These individuals shared a common trait: an innovative mindset and a willingness to explore improvements in learning recognition.

The third workshop included 13 participants from Breda and The Hague, all affiliated with Praktijkleren Loont and actively involved with their designated Cities of Learning Platforms. This group primarily comprised social entrepreneurs, municipal employees, and a representative from a sports club. While some participants had a basic understanding of Open Badges, they sought to deepen their knowledge of developing and implementing badges effectively. Their familiarity with the Quality Label was limited or non-existent. One participant, possessing more experience, assumed the role of co-facilitator to gain insights into the questions and concerns of other attendees and assist in addressing them.

Objectives of the workshops

Our objectives for the first 2 workshops were:

- Introduce Open Badges
- Explore the value proposition
- Gather stakeholder perspectives
- Explore alignment strategies
- Build awareness and interest

For the 3rd workshop, our goals were:

- Deepen understanding of Open Badges
- Explore the Quality Label
- Develop practical skills
- Learn from Marlijn Academy
- Address participants questions
- Foster collaboration and networking

How the playlists were used

In our first two workshops, we did not extensively utilise the playlists as they were still under development. Our primary focus was on gathering input from participants on how to effectively use badges and align them with user needs, ensuring that badge earners could derive maximum benefit.

During the third workshop, we began to incorporate the playlist on creating Quality Badges. However, instead of systematically working through the entire playlist, we used the "Open Badge Essentials" badge as an introductory badge. This encouraged participants to continue their learning independently at their own pace. We believe that in-person learning activities should offer a distinct approach to complement the content presented in the playlists.

Most recommended session

We highly value the "Roll the Dice" activity as an effective way to encourage participants to reflect on their informal learning experiences. This game features 36 questions that explore how, with whom, what, and why individuals learned outside of formal educational settings, and how this learning has been recognised. Participants play the game in pairs, followed by a group discussion.

We have found this activity to be particularly beneficial for groups from formal education and the business sector. It helps participants realise that learning can occur in diverse settings and that informal learning is equally valuable to formal recognition. Additionally, it encourages participants to discover a broader range of learning experiences than they may have initially considered.

Tips & tricks

The Quality Label holds significant appeal for organisations. Many express a strong desire to achieve it upon learning about its existence. This recognition serves as a powerful motivator for learners. Even if you believe your current efforts may not immediately qualify for the label, it's highly recommended to inform participants that the course they are undertaking contributes towards achieving this distinction.

While numerous other indicators are necessary to obtain the Quality Label, making it an attainable goal for a wider range of organisations, rather than an exclusive privilege, fosters diverse approaches to motivating learning about recognition through Open Badges across various settings.

Co-funded by the European Union

Local workshops in Barcelona

In November and December we conducted three workshops. They aimed at introducing the benefits of integrating Open Badges as good organizational practice, possibility of applying for Quality Label, as well as encouraging learners to get involved in crafting their own digital portfolio, based on quality skills.

The objective was to engage within the non-profit sector and organisations and and young people seeking valuable opportunities in the benefits that are presented by Open Badges and platforms like Cities of Learning. In total attended a total of 39 people from local organizations around Catalonia region.

BARCELONA city of learning

QUALITY LABEL for badge recognition

Target groups and profile of participants

Two of the workshops engaged 20 people from local non-profit organisations, that work with young people and focus on personal and professional development of competences, intercultural learning and active citizenship. They often look for ways to improve learning methods for the youth they work with, so this was a great learning opportunity for them to reflect on recognition of learning within their activities and non-formal methods used. What the participants share in common is a drive to make meaningful changes in their communities, especially as it pertains to youth and vulnerable groups.
The third workshop engaged 19 participants who are involved in work within European Solidarity Corps projects from multiple organisations around Catalonia are. Thus, their commonalities pertained to their interest in developing new skills in the non-profit and youth sectors.

Objectives of the workshops

Our objectives for the first workshops were:

- Introduce Open Badges and Quality Label
- Present unique opportunities for the organizations
- Explore strategies for collaboration
- Consolidate trust and interest

For the final workshop, our goals were:

- Introduce Open Badges
- Present unique opportunities for learners/users
- Build interest
- Foster networking opportunities

How the playlists were used

Two of the workshops facilitated focused also on presentations, as it was important to garner interest in the platfrom, Quality Label and CoL as a whole. For this we used best practice examples so the participants would exprience different ways in which playlists can be used and how the reflection and recognition can be facilitated.

The final one focused on deeper use of the playlists, as it was meant to focus on building learners' interest in crafting a badge-based portfolios.

We presented both playlists Creating quality Open Badges and Quality Label for Badge Recognition , but focused on the first in order to not overwhealm the audience as they were new to the concept of Open Badges and even newer to the Cities of Learning platform.

Most recommended session

What we can highlight here is the session on "Quality Label for Badge Recognition", as especially the organizations struggle to find ways beyond simple paper-based certification on how to showcase achievements. This session gave them an insight into the ways they could ensure that the same quality that goes into their work can be visibilised to the outside world and can grant a higher level of recognition with stakeholders and third-parties.

Tips & tricks

Provide a presentation that is clear, well organized and engaging overviewing Open Badges and the Quality Label for Badge recognition topics. Adapt it if needed to the knowledge, interests and needs of the participants and time availability.

Present quality examples of badge systems to inspire participants and motivated them to implement it in their organizations.

Make sure to dedicate sufficient time for doubts and questions. Participants struggled with the technical aspect and navigating the different levels of a playlist.

Co-funded by the European Union

Local workshops in Ljubljana, Slovenia

The local workshops, organized by TiPovej!, were held in Ljubljana with the aim of promoting quality recognition in non-formal learning through digital Open Badges. Each workshop was a standalone, in-person event, featuring a mix of presentations, hands-on badge creation, group discussions, and networking opportunities. Participants, including youth workers and educators, explored badge recognition strategies, quality criteria, and best practices for implementing Open Badges. The workshops also provided opportunities for feedback, reflection, and collaboration on integrating Open Badges into participants' organizations. In addition to these workshops, TiPovej! presented the Quality Label initiative at the Slovene National Youth Work Conference, which gathered over 150 youth workers from across Slovenia.

LJUBLJANA mesto učenja

QUALITY LABEL for badge recognition

Target groups and profile of participants

The target groups for the workshops included youth workers, educators, and professionals involved in non-formal learning (NFL) across Slovenia. These participants were primarily from organizations focused on youth work, volunteering, youth entrepreneurship, and education. The workshops attracted representatives from various institutions, such as Zavod Volontariat, Zavod Skupna Rast, Zavod Misss, Zavod ODTIZ, and others, all working to support youth development, educational initiatives, and community-building projects. Participants had a range of experience with digital Open Badges and badge recognition, from those with limited knowledge to more experienced individuals looking to deepen their understanding and practical application of quality recognition in learning through digital credentials.

Objectives of the workshops

Our objectives for the two workshop were:

- to build participants' expertise & in-depth knowledge of using digital Open Badges, enabling them to integrate these tools into their work. Develop participants' capacity to implement the Quality Label standard and its procedures within their organizations, supporting the adoption of quality recognition in non-formal learning. Connect and network with like-minded professionals and experts from the education, training, and youth sectors.

For the presentation during the Slovene National Youth Work Conference, our goals were:

- to raise participants' awareness and deepen their understanding of digital Open Badges, while also introducing the Quality Label standard and procedures and demonstrating how organizations can implement it within their own practices. Network with youth workers from across Slovenia, aiming to promote broader recognition of Open Badges at the national level and encourage collaboration on badge implementation in the youth sector.

How the playlists were used

Both playlists, Creating Quality Open Badges and Badge systems & Quality Label for Badge issuing, were translated into Slovene without any changes or adaptations as the content is aligned with the local reality, the original playlists were directly applicable and valuable for the participants in Slovenia. The playlists provided additional resources and tools, further supporting the workshops' objectives of educating participants about quality recognition processes and digital badges.

Most recommended session

The most recommended session across the workshops was the "Badge Recognition Strategies & Quality Label" session, as participants found the discussions on quality recognition and badge implementation particularly valuable. Attendees highlighted the importance of clear badge assessments and feedback mechanisms to ensure trust in the system, emphasizing the need for effective strategies to integrate Open Badges into their organizations.

Tips & tricks

To enhance engagement with Open Badges, start with hands-on activities like crafting physical badges to help participants visualize their value. Ensure each badge has a clear description and assessment criteria to build trust, and encourage participants to incorporate feedback loops to improve the badge system's effectiveness.

Co-funded by the European Union

Local workshops in Novi Sad

Local multiplying workshops took place in Novi Sad and Belgrade. These workshops were organized within the context of the Cities of Learning initiative, focusing on introducing participants to the "Novi Sad City of Learning" platform and its key components and hands-on work on creating digital badges and getting familiar with the Quality label.
Also, workshops provided space for the conversation about the integration of badges in the work of an organization, as well as space for networking.
BalkanIDEA Novi Sad did a presentation and a small workshop at the National Youth Work Conference, about the Quality label initiative, where we had participants from different sectors.
Workshops were done in person format.

NOVI SAD city of learning

QUALITY LABEL for badge recognition

Target groups and profile of participants

The workshops were designed for, youth workers, youth leaders, and representatives of youth work organizations, overly for those that provide learning and competence-building programs/ activities for young people in the context of nonformal education, mainly working on the local level. The main requirement was that those entities are also interested in digital learning, Cities of Learning, and Open Badges.
During these workshops, we mostly had local organizations from different local communities, two national networks, the Youth Council of Serbia and the National Youth Work Association, and a representative of the Ministry of Tourism and Youth, and Youth Center of Novi Sad.
Most of the participants were inexperienced with Open Badges and badge recognition and for them this was the first time learning about Cities of Learning and Open Badges.

Objectives of the workshops

Our objectives for the workshops were:

- The general goal in our context was to empower individuals and organizations to understand the concept of Cities of Learning, acquire practical skills in using the "Novi Sad City of Learning" platform, and recognize the importance of digital badges as a tool for identifying and validating skills through non-formal education.
- Workshops had several specific objectives, participants were introduced to the purpose of their involvement, while also being provided with context for the “Cities of Learning”. The session created a space for participants to connect and network, fostering collaboration.
- They were familiarized with the “Novi Sad City of Learning” platform, exploring key components such as organizational profiles, playlists, and digital badges. Through hands-on activities, participants gained practical skills in creating digital badges using the platform’s tools.
- The workshop also covered the concept of the “Quality Label for Badge Recognition,” explaining its benefits and the requirements for obtaining it. Finally, a debriefing session allowed participants to reflect on their experiences and share valuable feedback.

How the playlists were used

Playlists were localized (translated into Serbian) for better understanding and inclusivity. They served as an additional resource to support participants' learning during the workshops. Moreover, the playlists were provided for future reference, offering participants valuable materials for continued learning and the opportunity for follow-up consultations.

Most recommended session

Practical session focused on creating digital badges. It offers practical and creative experience with the platform, allowing participants to apply what they’ve learned or heard during presentation of the platform features. This type of interactive learning helps deepen understanding of how badges can be used and also an opportunity to reflect on possible integration of Open Badges in your context of work.

Tips & tricks

- Have visual presentations for the workshops
- Try to make it interactive as much as it allows in order to spark creativity and to allow participants to be imaginative
- Prepare good examples and practices to showcase in order to build trust by successful cases
- Make sure to have enough space for Q&A and if possible offer them potential consultations for future.

Co-funded by the European Union

Local workshops in Italy

SARDINIA island of learning

QUALITY LABEL for badge recognition

In Italy we held 2 workshops in person, one in Cagliari (Sardinia) and one in Catania (Sicily), between the end of September and the end of November 2024. The first one was a 3h long workshop delivered to a small group of participants with previous experience in using Open Badges, or who had been involved in the process of developing the Quality Label up until that point, while the second workshop was shorter, since it took place during the annual assembly of NINFEA, the Italian youth workers' association, and it had the goal to discuss Open Badges as a valid tool for formal recognition of competences and to introduce the Quality Label to youth workers who are new to badges.

Target groups and profile of participants

Our first workshop involved 10 participants coming from diverse backgrounds (public sector, municipalities, NGOs, non-formal education) and different Italian regions, but with one thing in common: all had previously used Open Badges in educational activities and most had already been involved in the development of the Quality Label.
Our second workshop involved 10 participants also coming from all over Italy but with a much more similar profile, all being members of NINFEA and thus mostly coming from youth work, NGOs, non-formal and sometimes also formal education. In this case, some participants knew a bit about Open Badges, but didn't necessarily had first-hand experience with them, and had very little or no knowledge about the Quality Label.

Objectives of the workshops

Our objectives for the first workshop were:

- to develop participants' competences in creating quality badges and badge systems;
- for participants to learn more about the Quality Label, how to apply for it and reflect on its benefits;
- to create an opportunity for networking across sectors and regions;
- to collect feedback about the Quality Label and the resources created to support applicants.

For the second workshop, our goals were:

- to gain more visibility for Open Badges and introduce them as a tool for recognition of competences in youth work;
- to introduce the Quality Label and collect feedback about the resources created to support applicants;
- to spark reflection about quality in learning and in recognition of learning, and discuss how Open Badges can be applied in youth work.

How the playlists were used

In our first workshop, we structured the activities around the playlists: the workshop was split in two modules, the first one about Open Badges and the second one about the Quality Label, and participants were invited to work in small groups using the resources available online through the playlists to complete the tasks assigned by the facilitator.
In our second workshop, the playlists were used mostly as an additional resource that participants were invited to browse through at their own pace later.

Most recommended session

Try a badge or badge system design challenge!
We split participants in small groups according to their skill level with badges, and we gave them the task to create either a badge or a badge system based on given scenarios selected at random, in a limited amount of time.
Participants were invited to use the resources in the playlists for guidance, while the facilitator was available for extra support and to solve any doubts.
It worked very well and participants were proud of the results.

Tips & tricks

Embedding the playlists and the resources featured there in the activities worked very well for us: participants "learned by doing" when it came to badges, and they had the opportunity to explore some of the learning material at their own pace.
Dividing participants in teams and giving them different tasks based on their skill level was also very successful: all participants felt included and capable, the more experienced didn't get bored and the less experienced never felt overwhelmed.

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Local workshops in Lithuania

The Quality Label event in September 2024 focused on presenting and discussing the Quality Label for Badge recognition. It featured presentations on the importance of quality in recognition systems, a session showcasing organisations using Open Badges, and a panel discussion on strengthening ecosystems for learning recognition. Networking opportunities facilitated exchanges among diverse stakeholders.
The event attracted over 30 participants from diverse sectors, including higher education, public organisations, and private companies, reflecting a multidisciplinary interest in badge-based recognition systems.

VILNIUS city of learning

QUALITY LABEL for badge recognition

Target groups and profile of participants

The conference attracted a diverse group of participants, predominantly from Lithuania. The participant pool included representatives from academic institutions such as VILNIUS TECH, Mykolas Romeris University, and Kaunas University of Technology, showcasing strong interest from the higher education sector. Public organisations like the Youth Affairs Agency and various youth centres reflected the involvement of youth-focused and civic engagement institutions. Additionally, private sector participation was represented by companies such as AB Grigeo Group, AB Lietuvos Geležinkeliai, and UAB Bosanova. This blend of academia, youth organisations, and private companies highlights a multidisciplinary interest in badge-based recognition systems, ensuring a broad perspective on the development and application of the Quality Label.

Objectives of the workshops

The event aimed to introduce and discuss the Quality Label for Badge recognition, highlighting its importance in ensuring robust systems for acknowledging achievements. It also focused on fostering collaboration and sharing best practices among organisations from various sectors using or planning to use digital badges and micro-credentials in formal and non-formal education.

How the playlists were used

Participants explored two Lithuanian-translated playlists: “Quality Label Introduction” and “Design of Quality Badges and Systems.” These resources supported understanding of Open Badge use in various contexts. Six organisations from NGO, public, and higher education sectors shared practical examples. Universities demonstrated badge use for formal and non-formal learning, while other organisations showcased badges to recognise volunteering, motivate engagement, and introduce the basics of badges.

Most recommended session

The most recommended session of the event was likely the exploration of diverse badge systems. This session showcased various examples of how badges are used across different contexts and how organisations ensure quality in their initiatives. Participants gained valuable insights and inspiration, enabling them to apply these ideas to their own badging systems and improve their practices.

Tips & tricks

- Start with a visual presentation: Provide a clear, engaging overview of the Quality Label for Badge recognition to set the context.
- Share real experiences: Include a testimony from someone who applied for the Quality Label, detailing the process, time investment, and benefits.
- Interactive exploration: Allow participants to review and analyse the Quality Label, with a dedicated Q&A session for clarity.
- Showcase quality examples: Present high-quality badge systems to inspire participants and demonstrate best practices.

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The guide for training and certifying Youth Workers on Badge recognition using the example of cities of learning

2025

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