Badge Recognition Strategy Breakthrough
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In the Netherlands and internationally there is growing recognition of the importance of non-formal learning. Open badges offer an excellent way to make this knowledge and skills visible and valued. With the help of Open Badges, Breakthrough wants to increase the impact of its activities and recognize individuals for their efforts. By taking into account the national and international context and the points mentioned, Breakthrough is able to implement successful Open Badges.

National context (Netherlands)

- Recognition of non-formal learning: The Dutch government is increasingly recognizing the importance of non-formal learning. The use of open badges fits in seamlessly with this, because it offers a concrete way to make the knowledge and skills acquired outside formal education visible.
- Lifelong development: The Dutch government encourages lifelong learning. Open badges can contribute to this by motivating individuals to continuously develop and update their knowledge and skills.
- Digitization: Dutch society is digitising at a rapid pace. The use of open badges fits within this trend and can contribute to the development of digital skills.
- Collaboration between youth work, education, business, government and social organisations: The Dutch government encourages cooperation between different sectors. Open badges can fulfil a bridging function between these sectors by enabling knowledge and skills to be exchanged in a standardised way.

Internationale context

- UNESCO: UNESCO recognizes the importance of non-formal learning and has developed several guidelines for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning. Open badges can play an important role in the implementation of these guidelines.
- European Union: The European Union has several initiatives in the field of lifelong learning and the recognition of qualifications. Open badges and micro-credentials can contribute to achieving the objectives of these initiatives.
- Global Goals: The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) emphasise the importance of education, equal opportunities and sustainable development. Open badges can contribute to achieving these goals.

Various Sectors

- Education: Open badges can be used to ease the transition from formal to working life and to increase the relevance of education to the labour market.
- Business: Companies can use open badges to map and develop the competencies of their employees and to increase the attractiveness of their employer brand.
- Volunteer work: Open badges can motivate and appreciate volunteers for their efforts and contributions to society.
- Civil society organisations: Civil society organisations can use open badges to measure the impact of their projects and to increase the involvement of volunteers and participants.

Policy Considerations for Breakthrough

- Transparency: It is important that the criteria for obtaining a badge are transparent and that badges are awarded in a fair and objective manner.
- Interoperability: Breakthrough must ensure that the issued badges are interoperable so that they can be used in different systems and environments.
- Inclusivity: Inclusivity is an essential aspect when designing and implementing an open badge system. We are thinking of multilingual badges, cultural sensitivity, inclusive language use, visual accessibility, digital accessibility, different learning paths, diversity in badges, data protection, transparency about data use.
- Cooperation: Breakthrough should collaborate with other organisations active in the field of open badges to promote the development of standards and best practices. Our work in open badges has been recognized by several organisations in the Netherlands, including some leading authorities in the field of non-formal learning. Their approval underlines the potential of our approach to empower individuals and organisations.

VISION

Breakthrough uses open badges to value individuals and partner organisations, increase motivation, encourage collaboration and build a strong identity, while at the same time contributing to the development of new learning methods.

The use of open badges within Breakthrough is our innovative way to value and connect both individuals and partner organisations. Goals that we as a foundation pursue with this approach:

Goals aimed at individual recognition:

- Increasing visibility and impact: By awarding badges, individuals can present their acquired knowledge and skills in a visually appealing and easy-to-share manner, making their efforts more visible to potential employers, clients or other stakeholders.
- Increase motivation and involvement: Receiving a badge can serve as recognition for the efforts someone has made, which can lead to increased motivation and involvement in Breakthrough's activities.
- Promoting lifelong learning: Through the use of badges, Breakthrough can foster a culture of lifelong learning, encouraging individuals to continually develop their knowledge and skills.
- Support in professionalisation: Awarding badges can contribute to the professionalisation of individuals by mapping and validating their competencies in a structured manner.

Goals aimed at strengthening collaborations:

- Improving communication: By using a common language (badges), different partner organisations can work together better and coordinate their activities.
- Strengthening networks: Badges can serve as a means to make new connections and deepen existing relationships, creating a stronger network of partner organisations.
- Promoting knowledge sharing: By exchanging badges, partner organisations can share each other's expertise and experiences, which can lead to innovative solutions to common challenges.
- Creating a common identity: By using its own badge system, Breakthrough can build a strong and recognizable identity, making partner organisations feel more committed to Breakthrough's objectives.

Other goals:

- Demonstrating expertise: By developing its own badge system, Breakthrough can underline its expertise in the field of non-formal learning and recognition.
- Contributing to the development of open standards: By actively participating in the development of open standards for badges, Breakthrough can contribute to the further professionalisation of this field.
- Our vision of a future where open badges are widely recognized and used is further validated by the support of various partner organisations. Their approval reinforces our commitment to badge recognition and validation.

Specific examples of badges that Breakthrough will award:

- Badges for completing training, workshops or events
- Badges for volunteer work
- Badges for developing new projects
- Badges for achieving certain goals within a project
- Badges for sharing knowledge and experiences
- Badges for reliable partners

OBJECTIVES AND OBJECTIVES

Aim #1 Better use of the badge system [Breakthrough in Partnership](#) to all Breakthrough projects and initiatives, both nationally and internationally. This increases the visibility and impact of all participants. (3-6 years)	Objective #1.1 **Implementation of the badge system in all national and international projects:** - **Goal:** Within 12 months, the badge system has been integrated into all current and new Breakthrough projects in the Netherlands. - **Measurable indicators:** number of issued badges from the badge system.

	● **Activities:** Breakthrough's badge manager is responsible for issuing badges to the people who earn a badge. (1-2 years)
	Objective #1.2 **Pilot in 3 national projects:** ● **Goal:** Within 18 months, the badge system has been successfully piloted in 3 national projects with different cultural contexts. ● **Measurable indicators:** Number of participants who earned a badge, feedback from national partners, adaptation of the system to the specific needs of the projects. ● **Activities:** Selection by badge administrator Breakthrough of suitable pilot projects, adaptation of the badge system to the local context, evaluation of the pilot phase. (1-2 years)
Aim #2 Running a pilot in which a general rubric is practised that can help assess badges within non-formal learning with the aim of assessing equally submitted tasks using different badge tasks. (3-6 years)	Objective #2.1 Development of a rubric for non-formal learning, generally applicable: ● **Goal:** Within 6 months, a flexible rubric was developed that can be used flexibly when assessing badge evidence ● **Measurable indicators:** 5 different assessors used this rubric and provided feedback on the rubric ● **Activities:** Developing a flexible rubric, receiving feedback from 5 different assessor badges. (1-2 years)
Aim #3 Collect and analyse data on badge usage to measure and continuously improve the effectiveness of the system. (3-6 years)	Objective #3.1 **Defining key performance indicators (KPIs)** ● **Goal:** Within 9 months, clear KPIs have been defined that

CITIES OF LEARNING
by Badgecraft

QUALITY LABEL
for badge recognition

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	measure the effectiveness of the badge system, such as the number of badges issued, the time needed to earn a badge, participant satisfaction and the impact of badges on participant behaviour. ● **Measurable indicators:** Number of KPIs defined, relevance of the KPIs to Breakthrough's strategic goals. ● **Activities:** Workshops with stakeholders, literature research, development of a dashboard. (1-2 years)
	Goal #3.2 Implement data-driven improvements ● **Goal:** Within 18 months, concrete improvements were made to the badge system based on the collected data, such as adjustments to the badge design, optimization of the issuing processes and improvement of communication about badges. ● **Measurable indicators:** Number of improvements implemented, impact of the improvements on the KPIs. ● **Activities:** Regular data analyses, prioritisation of improvements, implementation of improvements, evaluation of results. (1-2 years)
	Goal #3.3 Collect endorsements ● Collect endorsements from at least 5 key stakeholders in the field of education and labor market development by August 1, 2025.
Aim #4 Position people working at Breakthrough as leading professionals in the field of open badges, with recognition at an international level and participation in relevant networks and initiatives.	Objective #4.1 **Participation in international conferences and workshops**

(3-6 years)	● **Goal:** Within 12 months, at least 5 employees have participated in international conferences and workshops in the field of open badges. ● **Measurable indicators:** Number of participations, presentations given, network contacts made. ● **Activities:** Selection of relevant events, support in submitting proposals, facilitating participation. (1-2 years)
	Goal #4.2 **Publication of knowledge and experience** ● **Goal:** Within 18 months, at least 3 articles have been published about Breakthrough's experiences with open badges on relevant platforms. ● **Measurable indicators:** Number of publications, range of publications, citations. ● **Activities:** Supporting employees in writing articles, promoting publications (1-2 years)

AREAS OF ACTION

Promotion #1 (0-12 months) Implementation of the badge system in pilot projects	Action #2 (0-12 months) Developing a clear communication strategy (to stakeholders about the system, collecting feedback and generating enthusiasm)	Action #3 (0-12 months) Drawing up a plan for collecting endorsements
Action #4 (0-12 months) Developing a first version of the rubric for	Action #5 (12-24 months) Expansion of the badge system to all projects	Promotion #6 (12-24 months) Collection of extensive user feedback (both

assessing badges		quantitative and qualitative)
Promotion #7 (12-24 months) Publication of the first results from pilot projects	Action #8 (12-24 months) Further development of the rubric	Promotion #9 (24+ months) Integration of badge system in the organisation
Promotion #9 (24+ months) Evaluation of the impact of endorsements	Promotion #10 (24+ months) Continuous improvement, continuing to evaluate and adjust the badge system based on new insights and developments.	

TARGET GROUPS AND EXECUTIVE ACTORS

Target group #1 learners	Implementerende actor #1 Breakthrough Foundation
Target group #2 Organisations in non-formal learning	
Target group #3 Formal education	
Target group #4 Municipalities	
Target group #5 Business	

INSTRUMENTS AND GOVERNANCE

Instruments:	Management:

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND RESEARCH

List indicators for monitoring the strategy:

- **User satisfaction:** Collect regular feedback from badge recipients and stakeholders on the perceived value and usefulness of the badges.
  - Twice a year, ask stakeholders (e.g. employers, partners, training institutions) for their opinion about the badge system and its impact on their organisation.
  - After badge issuance, ask at least 20 badge earners about the experience of earning a badge, the value they attach to it and suggestions for improvement.
  - Number of endorsements received and online visibility through these endorsements

How evaluate the strategy implementation:	How research the impact of the strategy:

- Collect feedback from learners and partners on the effectiveness of the badge system in achieving its goals and objectives.

- **Case studies:** Analysis of specific examples of how badges have influenced individual and organisational outcomes.