

Badge+ application (Odznaka+)

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE

 POLAND

Timeline

2020 Design

2021 Pilot

2022 Pilot

2023 Pilot

2024 Pilot

2025 Pilot

ID number 45048

Background

Within Europe, a growing number of people need to update and improve their knowledge, skills and competences to fill the gap between their formal education and training and the needs of a fast-changing society and labour market. New ways of confirming knowledge, skills and competences are a response to the challenges of the modern world; it requires us constantly to develop and expand our skills, which can then be confirmed in a reliable and official way. A solution that is gaining increasing importance is micro-credentials that could help certify the outcomes of small, tailored learning experiences. In the face of the increasingly clear dominance of new technologies, the functioning of micro-credentials in the digital space grows in importance. The Educational Research Institute is working on a project aimed at popularising digital micro-credentials in Poland.

Digital badges have been created to enable micro-credentials to meet all the important challenges of modern times, not only to certify specific skills or achievements, but also to take an electronic form. One of the world's most recognised and widely used standards for issuing them is Open Badges. The first Polish application, *Odznaka+*, is to be created using this standard.

Objectives

The main objectives of this initiative are:

- (a) improving and modernising the system of credentials for learners and people who improve their skills, competences and qualifications;
- (b) implementing the idea of micro-credentials;
- (c) supporting participation in lifelong learning and motivating to confirm achievements.

Description

A tool for issuing and collecting digital credentials, the *Odznaka+* (Badge+) application, was created in 2021 as part of the project. Its purpose is the inclusion of innovative and socially needed qualifications in the integrated qualifications system (IQS), as well as reducing barriers to the development of IQS by providing support to its national and regional stakeholders'. It was created by the Educational Research Institute and commissioned by the Ministry of Education and Science. The application allows institutions

to create digital badges in the Open Badges standard and issue them to their clients, pupils, students, employees and contractors. It allows individuals to collect and store these badges and their equivalent PDF certificates, as well as to share them, for example, in social media. Thanks to the application, users can digitally confirm various types of achievements (obtaining qualifications, participating in an educational or sports event, obtaining single or entire sets of learning outcomes), skills or competences.

The project's main goal is to design, pilot and make available to the public an innovative application to support and motivate different groups of people to participate in lifelong learning, by providing them with a tool that can be used to issue and collect micro-credentials. The implementation of micro-credential systems is aligned with the proposal for a Council recommendation of 22 June 2022 on a European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability.

2020 Design

The first phase of the project included qualitative research and analysis of current initiatives and applications used for issuing digital credentials. The concept of the application was created.

2021 Pilot

In 2021, development (programming) work began and a test version of the application was created.

2022 Pilot

A pilot phase was launched in January 2022, to continue in 2023, during which selected entities started using the application *Odznaka+*. In this phase, the application was used by different institutions and organisations representing formal and non-formal education and operating in the field of informal learning: high schools, universities, certifying institutions, course and training providers, sports unions and clubs, private entities, non-governmental organisations. The project team also supported pilot participants through consultations, workshops and information and instruction materials. The application was developed based on feedback from pilot participants who issued over 4 000 digital badges.

Application tests were also carried out.

2023 Pilot

The *Odznaka+* application's piloting continued in 2023. The IBE improved it based on feedback from pilot participants.

In October, the Educational Research Institute launched a new project: 'Microcredentials—piloting a new solution to support lifelong learning.' The overarching goal is to test the usefulness of micro-certifications for developing skills in line with the idea of lifelong learning.

As part of this project, the IBE also intends to develop a digital process for issuing and collecting microcredentials using the *Odznaka+* application.

An analysis of the determinants of digital microcredentials using the *Odznaka+* tool for the ICT industry was conducted in 2023. IBE began work on the first standards for describing microcredentials, to be tested in this pilot. At the same time, programming work was carried out to prepare an application to apply the standards in these microcredentials area. The first entities in the ICT area were selected and piloted them using the *Odznaka+* application. A strategy for the dissemination of microcredentials was developed.

Since the project began, about 13 000 badges have been issued. 32 entities participated in the first pilot phase of the application, which ended in 2023.

2024 Pilot

The application continued in the pilot phase. Functional tests were conducted and UX solutions were adapted, considering users' experiences and expectations. The application was continuously improved, with the gradual and controlled inclusion of subsequent software functionalities and their systematic correction.

2025 Pilot

The application implemented a standard microcredentials description form, which was piloted by the participating publishers. Substantial work was also underway to develop quality assurance standards and implement the IBE PIB data model in the application.

Between 2024 and 2025, 28 entities participated in the pilot programme, 48 microcredentials were developed, and 2 320 microcredentials were issued. Universities, training companies, employer representatives, industry and non-governmental organisations, and employment offices were participating in the pilot programme for microcredentials issued through the Odznaka+ application.

Bodies responsible

- Ministry of Education and Science (from 2021 until 2024)
- Ministry of National Education
- Educational Research Institute (IBE) (until 2025)
- Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy
- Educational Research Institute – National Research Institute (IBE PIB) (from 2025)

Target group

Learners

Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices

Entities providing VET

VET providers (all kinds)

Thematic categories

Transparency and portability of VET skills and qualifications

Learners' possibilities of accumulation, validation and recognition of learning outcomes acquired non-formally and informally

European priorities in VET

VET Recommendation

Flexibility and progression opportunities at the core of VET

Osnabrück Declaration

Establishing a new lifelong learning culture - relevance of continuing VET and digitalisation

Subsystem

IVET CVET

Further reading

[Badge + \(Odznaka+\) System](#)

Related policy developments

2025 Implementation

Vocational education and training action plan for 2022-25

The action plan includes the following five specific measures:

 POLAND

Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2019 Approved/Agreed

Reviewing accreditation for out-of-school CVET

The Law of 22 November 2018 further developed the accreditation system for institutions providing continuing education outside of schools aimed at greater quality control.

 POLAND

Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

CVET

2025 Implementation

Polish qualifications framework (PQF) and Integrated Qualifications System (IQS)

The PQF can be considered to have reached an operational stage: it was formally adopted by parliament on 22 December 2015 together with the establishment of the Integrated Qualifications System (IQS) and Integrated Qualifications Register (IQR) and came into force in January 2016.

 POLAND

Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

IVET CVET

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