

**PROJECT CODE: 2018-1-FI-KA204-047243**  
**CALL: ERASMUS+ KA204 CALL 2019**  
**PERIOD: 24 MONTHS**  
**BUDGET: 241,430.00 €**  
**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: FRANCISCO JOSÉ SACO DE LARRIVA**



From the time a person opens their eyes for the first time until they are elderly, they never stop learning. Nevertheless, it seems that the education system has focused on only one kind of learning: that of acquiring knowledge. This is certainly very important. For a person to know who they are and their place in the world, they have to learn history, geography and literature. They must know their rights and duties, everything they need to function in society and be aware of what the world around them is like. But it is also essential that they learn other things, such as how to treat others, socialize, manage and resolve problems and communicate in public. These are what are known as soft skills.

Businesses and organizations are increasingly requiring a set of skills and competences that can actually be difficult to demonstrate, since they are not acquired in the same way as knowledge and the same standards cannot be used to assess them. Knowledge tends to be acquired through study, whereas skills are developed with practice.

In order to advance in new ways of recognizing skills and competences, the Sostra Project came about, and several entities in Finland, Spain Italy, Romania and Poland are participating in the project. The aim of the initiative is to create an open digital learning process based on badges, a kind of accreditation to demonstrate the development of competences, targeted at professionals in adult education.

“Currently, the badges or digital credentials are being incorporated into curriculums as

another training distinction and they have the advantage of being able to be acquired online with similar guarantees to those of classroom learning”, explains Francisco Saco, researcher in charge of the University of Cordoba team participating in the project and member of the Business Management and Applied Economics research group.

The project set up an online platform at [sostra.eu](http://sostra.eu) where anyone interested in getting a qualification for their skills can enter and follow the established procedure. When registering in the system, users must first do a self-assessment of their current level of development of the soft skills identified as key ones for educators. The international team identified fifteen key competences among which we can find empathy, respect, attention to diversity, critical thinking, creativity and active listening, among others.

Once the self-assessment is done, the system suggests skills that should be improved and offers a series of learning tools and digital content drawn up by the partners on the project. When a person does the proposed exercises, the system requests a series of proofs to demonstrate learning. The user has to send the requested material, justifying the acquisition of a particular skill, and a member of the project team in each country will assess whether they have actually reached the necessary level for accreditation.

If so, they will obtain a badge that, thanks to the Open Factory system, can be shared on their résumé and on social networks such as LinkedIn.

**The SOSTRA Project created a digital learning process based on badges that accredit the skills that those working in adult education should have**

Soft skills are very important in practically every kind of job in which the worker interacts with other people. The results of completed work depend a great deal on these skills, that allow people to achieve synergies within a work team, complement their skills with those of other workmates and understand each other. In the working world, there is no place for “lone wolves”; work is complex and always requires support from others. “In a world in which education is necessary throughout a person’s entire working life and where job mobility is increasingly regarded as normal, it is necessary to be able to acquire other skills, apart from traditional academic diplomas, and be able to demonstrate this” says researcher Francisco Saco.

