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**Open University of
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UOC**

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OER up!

Regional Analysis Report
Open University of Catalonia, Spain

Open Educational Resources uptake in adult education

THE OERup! CONSORTIUM

MFG Innovation Agency
Media and Creative Industries

UOC Universitat Oberta de Catalunya

NIACE The National Voice for Lifelong Learning

SOPHIA
R & I

iREA
Institutul Român de Educaţie a Adulţilor
Romanian Institute for Adult Education Timisoara

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INTRODUCTION

This country report presents the data collected during the need analysis carried out by the Open University of Catalonia (UOC), the Spanish partner, on the use of OER in adult education.

The UOC is a fully online university: the UOC student does not attend university classes but they learn through the internet. The average profile of the UOC student is an adult, between the ages of 25 and 40, who works more than 30 hours a week.

As an online university, the UOC is interested and linked to the open movement. From the very beginning, teaching resources have been created in a digital format, licensed by Copy Right. The trend in recent years is to open these materials under a Creative Commons license. In this regard, the UOC has an open institutional repository, The Oberta in Open access, and an Open CourseWare.

The need analysis conducted within the OERup! project illustrates the status quo on the current use and development of OER in adult education. Also, the purpose of the need analysis was to map existing policies on OER at a national and regional level, as well as to identify training needs of adult education staff in relation to the use of OER in their teaching and educational practice.

All statements are based on the results of qualitative research. Whilst making no pretence to being an extensive scientific study, this report provides a useful overview of the current situation.

1. Methodology

Need analysis was performed by the application of three data collection tools: desk research; interviews; and a round table discussion. These tools defined the methodology in three phases:
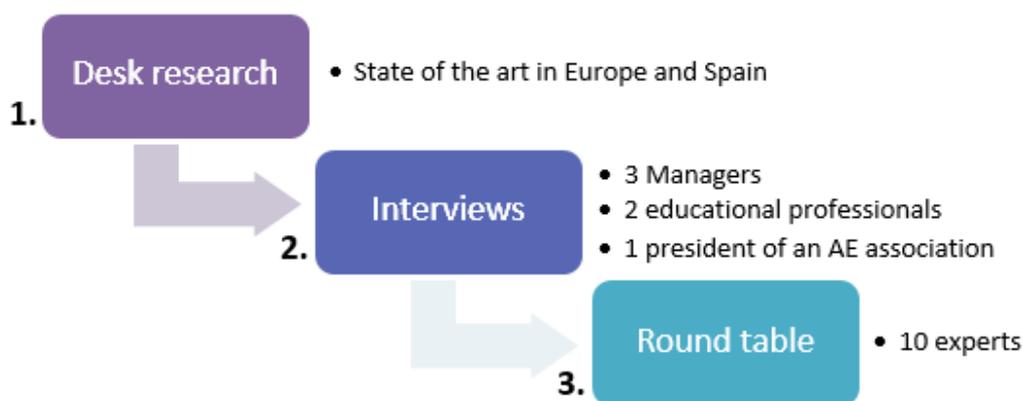
Stage 1: desk research
The first step consisted on a revision of the bibliography about OER in Spain in order to develop an initial framework about the use of OERs and OEPs[1] in adult education in Spain and Catalonia. To do this, several reports, academic papers and books were consulted.

Stage 2: interviews
The second phase consisted on several interviews oriented to three different professional profiles: Managers or administrators of AE institutions, AE teachers and presidents of AE associations. The interview grid was designed in the OERup! project's framework, and was reviewed by all project partners.

A total of 6 interviews were conducted, most of them by e-mail and one of them by telephone.

Stage 3: round table
The results of the analysis of the information gathered during the interviews became the first step to informing the third phase of the need analysis: a roundtable with policy makers, experts in OER (mostly university lecturers, and from AE).

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[1] Open Educational Practices

The roundtable was developed online, and was divided in two parts:
A presentation of the draft results of the need analysis process (based on the desk research and the interviews); and the response of the following questions by each expert:

- Do you know OER and OEP initiatives that are setting trends about this issue at a national and European level?
- From your point of view, what are the needs of adult education institutions and teachers regarding OER on a European and National level?
- In what ways do you think AE teachers need support in order to include OER in their educational practices?
- Do you have any suggestions about what an OER and OEP training package should look like (content, format, methodology …)?

10 experts participated in this phase which was developed fully online.

2. OER for adult education in the regional/national context

The introduction of Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) in education has started to change the context for adult learning considerably however this is still in the early stages and the future could be shaped in different ways (Falconer *et al.*, 2013).

In particular, the opportunities offered by **OER** to extend knowledge and promote a global level (formal, non-formal and informal) learning throughout life (OECD, 2008) are particularly **interesting** in the case of adult education given that "adult learners have different time constraints (e.g. due to job and family responsibilities) and their expectations and ambitions differ from those of traditional learners" (Castaño *et al.,* 2013).

The open education movement has started strongly, although lately it seems to be slowing down according to one round table participant who argued: "*Currently, although OpenCourseWare still active, **have lost steam** on the movement of the MOOC[2], which are perceived as the new format of OER. And although the information can be read in many ways, OpenDOAR[3] shows that learning objects' repositories have recently stuck*".

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[2] Massive Open Online Course (MOOC)
[3] See http://www.opendoar.org/

In the national context, according to the experts there are "*many initiatives*" on OER. These initiatives are often "*projects*" or "*individual [teachers] or institutional*". Few initiatives are promoted by the government. Some highlighted initiatives target diverse audiences such as: teachers in primary and secondary schools, young students, families and lifelong learners. They are primarily intended to provide resources in repositories[4]. A selection of these initiatives is gathered within the Annex.

However, the panorama is more diverse. An analysis of the OpenCourseWare (OCW) consortium partners, one of the most widespread Open education initiatives in Higher Education, reveals that in relation to EU27 member States there is a strong presence of **Spanish universities**. Here are some examples[5]:

- Universia**.** The network is made up of 1,1000 Universities located in 15 countries (Spanish-speaking). The initiative consists of 12 websites, one for each country, and another global site which offers information and contents from across the network. Universia reach out to 10.1 million students, 8 million users and 850,000 university teaching staff.
- The OCW from UOC (Universitat Oberta de Catalunya) was launched in 2008 and offers over 100 courses licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 3.0.
- The OCW from the EHU (Universidad del País Vasco) was also launched in 2008 and its contents are licensed under CC BY NC SA 2.5 ES.
- The OCW from the UPM (Universidad Politecnica de Madrid) offers over 80 courses under a various range of Creative Commons license.

These are the most remarkable ones, but almost all universities have their own OCW.

There is also in Spain a strong component to a Spanish-speaking international context, mainly Latin America. This is the case of the OportUnidad project, which aimed to help strengthen and sustain the common area of higher education in Latin America and the European Union, through the increased use of open educational practices and resources (OER & OEP).

As some of the experts stated, Spain is increasing the presence of MOOCs which universities see, for the most part as a marketing strategy for their own programmes. There are different Spanish-speaking MOOCs on offer, some of which are included in the most known international MOOCs platforms (Coursera and Miriadax) and others offered by the

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[4] See: http://poerup.referata.com/wiki/Spain#International.2Fnational_OER_initiatives
[5] See http://poerup.referata.com/wiki/Spain#International.2Fnational_OER_initiatives

universities themselves: COMA from UNED, AbiertaUGR from the University of Granada, Crypt4u from the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid, to cite some examples.

The initiatives and projects that are taking place in the Spanish area are primarily aimed at young people and college students, something that is remarked by the OECD latest survey entitled "Open Educational Resources: Analysis of Responses to the OECD Country Questionnaire".

At the same time, the potential of open education and OER to support adult learning **has not yet been exploited** widely (Castaño *et al.,* 2013:173). As Castaño *et al.* (2013) evidences, compared with other educational sectors, the adult learning sector has the lowest level of OER development (Minguillón, Rodriguez, & Conesa, 2010). This research concludes that one of the reasons for this is the novelty of the concept of OER in the field of adult learning and the lack of cultural recognition that learning can have outside formal structures (Falconer *et al.,* 2013).

A report by the OECD (2007: 20) states that "to take advantage of the opportunities offered by OER, institutions should create **incentives** for their faculty members to participate in this initiative, as carrying out the development of curricular material with at least one OER element as part of the process of consolidating its teaching position. The use of OER in education should be encouraged and **training** must be offered. "

Another key aspect is the lack of leadership at a **policy level**. Indeed, despite the number of initiatives at different educational levels and across the different autonomous communities, there is currently no legislation that covers this area or provides a common definition. In that sense, a PIAAC publication states that "While countries cannot change the past, policies designed to provide high-quality lifelong opportunities for learning can help to ensure that the adults of the future maintain their skills" (OECD, 2013, p.13).

Despite this there is a long way to go; experts stated that there is general agreement that adult learning by **2030** will be able to take advantage of an abundance of learning materials including OER, produced in multiple and collaborative ways, offered by many different providers and players, and used/reused by learners, enabling strong personalization of the learning processes (Castaño *et al.,* 2013, p.183).

3. Current implementation of OER in adult education in the regional context

3.1. Perception and attitudes

In general, educators and institutions agree with the concept of open movement. According to the interviewees, teachers "*feel comfortable*" with OER. OERs are considered as "*interesting"* and, specially, "***useful***", as stated by one of the teachers interviewed: "*when I found OER I attempt to take advantage of them*".

Institutions' managers considered OER as an important part of an educational public service: "*If one institution is public (not privately founded) it provides services to a vast and different number of people, so its resources need to remain open*".

Both teachers and managers value specifically the **availability** of resources in order to adopt contents. As stated by an interviewee: "*The availability of OER as well as materials created by teachers are crucial in order to provide content to online courses"*.

Another interviewee shows how OERs can become a resource to supply the lack of materials in adult education: "*because there are not specific materials for adult education, teachers have to look for other resources", "for example, web material developed for schools are very useful to carry out literacy activities for adult learners"*.

In addition to **providing content**, OERs are considered as a good choice in order to "*facilitate materials for teachers, collaborators...*"

3.2. OER usage and practice

The major part of the available **OER** is created **by teachers**. Educational institutions and associations contribute by providing platforms or promoting specific initiatives. In some cases, OERs are institutionally created, for example, the Catalan Government provides materials for secondary education.

When choosing the OER, teachers try to use **different formats**: "*images, videos, animations, tutorials, interactive activities, interactive maps, multimedia presentations, etc."*

The most common action with OER is "*to search for materials"* for its direct use; sometimes, teachers adapt OERs based on their specific needs. In some cases, they create resources but they frequently miss the last step: they don't publish what they create on the Internet. As an interviewee stated: "*I use the three options* [use, adapt, create]. *I search for open*

resources and I share them with my colleagues. At the same time, within the subjects I teach, I create materials that are available only in my classroom. However, they are not published".

Regarding the types of practices with OER, the most common situation is its use as a **complement or support**. As a teacher states*: "In general, OER are more used as a complement, taking advantage from digital whiteboards, than as a core material".* The *"official resources are used as a basis"* or as a starting point for the work in the classroom: *"A general example: materials "graduate school" created by the Government are oriented courses in Bachelor of Secondary Education. In this case, an offer that was "official" can serve as a basis for other learning and teaching activities".*

3.3. Availability and quality of OER

Regarding the access to OERs, most interviewees and experts agree that *"they are difficult to find: it takes a long time and you need to be pretty sure about what you are looking for".* They highlight that *"there is not a specific database or standard keywords to find them".*

The most common strategies to search for OERs are, according to participants involved in the need analysis process:

- Search engines as the first option. And, among them, *"Google is the most used".*
- Repositories, whether they will be offered by *"different governmental websites where you can find enough materials for Adult Education"* or by some associations or initiatives like *"educational websites where OER are clearly grouped by content, levels, etc. This is the case of "Tiching[6]". These websites are a great help for teachers as the previous classification of resources facilitates its localization".*
- In some cases, they seek OER through social bookmarks; *"for example, Mister Wong".*

Some criteria used by teachers in order to select OERs are:

- Language, i.e. *"they are in a language that students understand: Spanish or preferably Catalan").*
- *"Clarity".*
- *"Specificity".*
- *"Utility",* i.e., *"that fit the content to be transmitted and the educational level".*
- Format, prioritizing "*visual resources, containing many images".*

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[6] http://es.tiching.com/

- "*Adaptability*", that is, that they could edit or adapt them.

3.4. Barriers and drivers for the use of OER

The following barriers for the use of OER are identified:

- **Quantity**. Overall, respondents show a lack of OERs for AE. As one teacher pointed out: "*good materials designed for adult education are not very common*". Although some resources are available, in general terms, the amount of OERs is not enough. This fact may be related to the **lack of interest** in adult education. Indeed, "*Adult education is not attractive for editors because it is reduced in terms of quantity; that is why materials are not frequent. This causes that, traditionally, teachers of adult education had to create their own resources from various materials*".

- **Quality**. As an interviewee states: "*The quality of OER, especially when using general search engines instead of specialized ones, is irregular. You can find acceptable materials together with very low quality resources, especially videos and multimedia presentations*". Other interviewee explains that "*OER are improvable and not enough. Sometimes, you find many similar materials and no one about a specific topic*".

- **Language**, taking into account that "*OERs are often in English". So*, many times "*the problem is not to find resources, but to adapt them. Sometimes we just have to translate them because many resources are available in English*".

- **Approach.** All interviewees agreed about the OER audience. They affirm that "*it is difficult to find materials for adults*"; most of them "*are addressed to young people*".

- **Format**. Interviewees and experts agreed on the lack of variety of the format of OERs available for AE: "*we are still in the PowerPoint stage; we are not fully digital yet*".

- **Economic**, as the creation of OERs requires "*economic resources from educational institutions*".

There was only one driver of the use of OERs in AE identified during the need analysis: some teachers' attitudes and efforts to promote the use OER: the use of the OER depends on the teacher, there are some of them that has an open vision and search and uses and creates open materials if necessary. As most of the teachers interviewed stated: "*In order to*

perform my classes, I have to search materials in the Internet that have a lot of images [for adults' literacy], then I adapt it and add some basic text in order to teach my students to read", "It's very difficult to me to find materials to use with my students, so I have to invest an important part of my time and effort to create new ones according their needs".

In addition, some areas for improvement regarding the usages of OER were identified:

- **Licenses**, considering that there is "*ignorance about licenses, how to combine some resources with different licenses, etc.*"

- **Openness culture.** There is not enough open culture yet. OERs are primarily used "*as a complement*" of teaching, not as a basis. Furthermore, most practices are carried out in closed and controlled environments: *"There are institutions that have a "campus" for its participants, but they are not open but specifically for particular groups".*

  Methodology. Open education requires a *"transformation from the bottom in relation to the ways of working; the materials generated within each centre should intended to be OER, which in turn will be the focus of the training sessions. But this is not a technical training issue but a pedagogical reflection as well as educational policies from the institutions".*

- **Publication**. Although it is a key aspect for OER, *"sharing OER through the appropriate repositories"* is a complex practice for teachers. This happens because *"they are not sure if what they are doing is the final version".*

- **Attitude**. The attitude adopted by teachers regarding OER is diverse. Some teachers have *"no interest"* and make "*low use of training activities designed by the centre".* Other teachers are highly motivated and interested about OER, as previously explained.

- **Training**. The lack of teacher training is seen as one of the key areas of improvement. One interviewee commented that *"Many teachers cannot use these resources in the classroom because they don't know how to use ICT in the classroom".*

- **Infrastructures**, both technological ("*to have resources (computers, tablets…) for participants is difficult sometimes"*, as well as "*apps that work, updated, good connectivity")* and space ("*some specific spaces which guarantee the access to these*

resources must be provided for students"). The lack of infrastructure affects both educational practices and face-to-face teacher training sessions.

- **Institutional policies.** In general, there is awareness about the need of changing the current practices but it is not usual to consider and create specific institutional policies in order to formalize, systematize and support processes. As one interviewee states: "*There are not policies or strategies clear enough. Some teachers are still using the traditional textbooks while others use OER or create them if they don't find what they are looking for".* A participant within the round table pointed out that "*institutions should analyze if they can assume OER practices within the existing course models (registration requirements, teaching model, the course requirements, expected results, payment methods and certification). In thi case, procedures would be reused. Otherwise, you have to establish a new training model from scratch. I think it may be ideal".*

- A participant within the round table affirmed that it is necessary to provide a *"**clear legal framework**".*

3.5. Impact of OER use in adult education institutions

Gathered data shows that the vast majority of teachers **use** or reuse OERs created by school teachers or university lecturers. One interviewee stated that "*The use of open resources is a standard practice for most of teachers of the centre*". The usual action on the OER is the adaptation of open materials to suit them in to specific needs (content, level courses, etc.). Occasionally, **teachers** are creators or publishers of OER.

In most cases, this use does not specifically imply a change in methodology, while in other cases it has taken this step further. One respondent added *"(…) the way of transmitting knowledge has changed aside traditional models, this fact implies an autonomy of the students, a reflection on their own learning processes, attention to diversity, etc. This is critical in a centre with a teaching-learning method like ours, based on the self-made intensive use of ICT, to the extent that is currently experiencing new forms of learning, such as Flipped Classroom and new methodologies, such as Project Based Learning".* The incorporation of new methodologies involve a natural process of adoption of open education. As one interviewee stated *"With the introduction of the Flipped Classroom, I had to increase my production of OER, combined with a search of materials to cover the needs of the course and in consequence it can be reused. In general, most of the materials produced are shared across the Internet, remaining available for other teachers".*

4. Recommendations for the development of the training package to support the use of OER for adult education stakeholders

4.1. Need for training and recommendations for training content

Considering the data gathered, it is concluded that teacher training should address two key aspects:

- Digital teacher training for the use of OER available, so that teachers "*can know and use all the resources available*".
- Integration into the culture of openness, which implies the need to rethink the methodology of learning and support the creation of open materials.

4.2. Content of the training

The key content to develop in the course is:

- **Raising awareness** in order to know the open movement and appreciate its benefits and challenges. An important consideration is to understand "*the utility: Why OER? Why is it so important in adult education?: specificities of adult learners. Examples of good practice. What does it contribute to my development as a teacher to make it worth changing?* "

- *"**Digital Competences**", in order to develop teaching practices in a digital environment.*

- **OER Searching strategies** beyond general search engines, ie consider "*which resources already exist?*" Strategies to identify OER are also needed. One interviewee raised in this sense "*The most important issue is the lack of a single standard of OER labelling in order to make them more easy to find. How can anyone differentiate an educational resource from other that is not educational? Any object can be a learning object or only the ones that were developed for this purpose?*"

- **Adaptation** of OER, ie "*Are OER adapted to the needs of adult learners?*" Considering that most teachers do not use the resources directly (since they only use them partially, the educational level of the resources does not meet their needs, etc).

- **Creation** of OERs**,** addressing both key elements of content (e.g. OER quality criteria) as technicians, especially linked to the formats (which should facilitate subsequent adaptation). Metadata for easy search and publication will be also important.

- **Licenses**, to use, adapt and/or create an OER.

- **Open and innovative methodologies** oriented to an appropriate use of OER and OEP. Including *"alternatives to the evaluation (badges ...)"* of learning performed through OER that are *"sufficiently flexible to the needs of adult learners, perhaps less interested in traditional certificates"*.

- Raising awareness of the need to create **policies or initiatives** that support open education.

4.3. Format of the training and ways of organizing learning

The priority is blended format, combining online training (70-80%) and face to face (30-20%).

4.4. Ways of organizing learning

Some ideas that emerge about the ways of organizing learning are:

- **Learner centred,** more than content centred.

- **Active, open and varied methodology;** i.e. not lectures but an own approach of open pedagogies. In this respect, the importance of peer interaction and conduct collaborative activities are highlighted.

- **Practical.** With a clear and practical application, including examples of good practice, visits to other institutions, MOOCs use, etc**.**

- **Flexible approach,** so it can be adapted to the needs of each participant.

- **Adapted to the needs of teachers (supporters and detractors),** i.e. their actual needs. It must also take into account the attitudes of teachers: some are very

interested while others are reluctant to use ICT or include open pedagogies in their practices.

- **Trigger,** promoting lifelong learning strategies. An important aspect is *"building a community that once the course finished, demonstrates spearhead in the use / creation of OER for adult education (and ensure that it doesn't end with the project)".*

5. Conclusions and further recommendations

This need analysis is reinforced by the results obtained by PIAAC, which clearly demonstrates that **Europe needs to invest in adult education** – it is a loud wake-up call to Europe and the member states to start acting NOW. (…) "a strong positive relationship between participation in adult education and skills proficiency". We need a 'Learning Europe' where everyone can and wants to participate in learning (PIAAC; EAEA statements).

In that sense, we highlight the following conclusions:

- There is still a long way to go in educating adults to adopt open education.
- There are few OERs for AE and the resources available need to improve their quality.
- It is necessary to raise awareness and encourage the use (as a basis for educational, not as supplemental material), adaptation and creation of OER.
- Training in open education is identified as essential to carry out these objectives. This training must be openly developed to help teachers to delve into the movement and open culture.
- Considering the changes and innovations that are constantly happening, training must be consistent and progressive.
- It is necessary to work on mechanisms to "*recognize the work in creating and adapting OER*" and "*ensure the quality of OER in adult education*".
- It is necessary to analyze the "*financing/sustainability*" of OER.

For further information on OERup!, please check out our website: www.oerup.eu

and join our google+ community to exchange experience as well as information on relevant initiatives, studies, or platforms: plus.google.com/u/0/communities/109090515452084003343

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Legal Notice

A selection of relevant initiatives

- INTEF (National Institute of Educational Technology and Teacher Education): it offers over one thousand educational resources aimed at teachers, children, young adults and parents. All its resources are licensed under Creative Commons BY – NC – SA 3.0. They are organized according to aims and in some cases around specific projects. For instance, WikiDidacTICa is a repository of best educational practices developed by teachers through collaborative processes.

- CEDEC (National Centre for Curriculum Development in Non-Proprietary Systems): it was founded in 2009 as an agency of the Ministry of Education managed by INTEF and the Junta of Extremadura. Its aim is to design, promote and develop digital educational materials through the use of free software and make them available to the entire educational community. The Virtual School for Parents is a web portal for parents. The portal includes a specific session called "Escuela Virtual", where materials can be downloaded and a forum is available.

- Agrega: The Agrega project is a federation of learning Digital repositories used by 19 educational authorities in Spain. Each one of them has its own repository loaded with curricular learning objects with a clear focus towards integration and interoperability between Agrega learning repositories and other repositories located worldwide thanks to the use of generic GPL licensing. Regarding the curricular contents, those are being developed under Creative Commons licensing schemes, and can be used directly from a website, offline or through a Learning Management System. Contents and applications are available in Spanish, Euskera, Catalan, Valencian, Gallego and English.

- Educared: offers resources and methodologies to introduce the use of ICT and Internet inside educational organisations. EducaRed was launched between 2008 and 2012 by the Telefonica Foundation and aimed at offering resources and methodologies to introduce the use of ICT and the Internet inside educational organizations.

- Marsupial Project: based on Moodle to facilitate access to the Agora repository. It is developed within de Catalan region.

- Book camping: Bookcamping is a collaborative digital library review and uses open licensed resources that are mostly aimed at graduates. It is also a tool, a place, a community, a device where you can enter unfinished documents, as well as download, upload, group and label documents that contribute to a common fund open to help us rethink the world. Its resources are licensed under Creative Commons CC-BY-SA.

- **Consorci de biblioteques universitàries de Catalunya** (CBUC): The first activity of the CBUC was to create the Collective Catalogue of the Universities of Catalonia (CCUC). Shortly afterwards the Consortium considered that it would be feasible and beneficial to organize an interlibrary loan programme. The positive results of these two initial programmes led the Consortium to venture into new activities (joint purchases of equipment, training, benchmarking...), and to draw up of the project for the Digital Library of Catalonia. Some of its resources are licensed under Creative Commons.

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and join our google+ community to exchange experience as well as information on relevant initiatives, studies, or platforms: plus.google.com/u/0/communities/109090515452084003343