Project Overview

VUK is a European Active and Assisted Living Programme project made up of a consortium of 9 partners located in Hungary, Austria, Spain, Portugal and the United Kingdom. The project focuses on elderly blind and visually impaired individuals and their caregivers, with a basic (or above) ability to use technology, a population currently lacking a suitable navigational aid for everyday urban mobility. **Visionless sUpporting frameworK (VUK)** is a new urban mobility solution enabling visually impaired individuals to be more independent and active, while decreasing caregivers' workloads and increasing comfort on both sides. It also aims to assist people in establishing relationships with others facing a similar situation and offers users the opportunity to be support their surrounding community.

Project Objective

The project goal is to support blind and visually impaired individuals in the challenging task of urban mobility through providing a simple, effective and affordable indoor navigation and mobility assistance solution. This system will guide the user on journeys through unfamiliar indoor environments such as subway systems and through complex buildings like shopping malls and business centers. The envisioned service would also be suitable for companies and public organizations in which blind and visually impaired individuals work or visit, assisting to integrate said individuals in an open community.

Project Progress

The VUK project is now approaching the end of its second year. Below you can find an overview of the partners' progress.

INFOALAP

Infoalap together with the end user partners has been working on the additional qualitative analysis and reopened use cases to explore the social context of the end users.

The first sprint tests have been carried out of the web UI and of the mobile UI. End user partners have been working on the preparation of the field trials to be ready for the start in the coming months.

VIDEBIS

Transdanubia has since the distribution of the last newsletter merged with Baum Retec GmbH to form VIDEBIS GmbH, and continues to be the largest visual aid firm in Austria. VIDEBIS has spent the last several months testing the VUK Web User Interface and consulting the technical partners on usability and accessibility requirements. Additionally, VIDEBIS has disseminated the VUK project in public medical operations such as the Linz General Hospital and the Barmerzigen Brüder Linz. The next few months bring more testing and assisting with an in-depth marketing analysis.

INOVA+

As a technical partner and responsible for the Privacy and Data Security Analysis, INOVA+ has been developing a trustful and secure VUK platform. By ensuring that privacy and security best-practices will be followed, a robust security infrastructure featuring protocols and mechanisms is being refined to fulfil the end-users' needs and requirements.

INOVA+ is focusing efforts on ensuring that the VUK system will not interfere with end-users' private data, not allowing unwanted privacy intrusions in the system and also enabling the end-users to have control on the services which will be offered to them, as on their private data.

ESL

The VUK framework (Deliverable 3.1) is currently deployed at a development environment and publicly available at "http://inf.dev.vuk-project.eu".

We continued our work on deliverable 4.2, corresponding to the "Infostructure" database for storing and searching 'location data'. We now run a continuous integration (CI) system to perform daily integration tests across the VUK framework and the Infostructure database.

As of Dec 2017 ESL is engaging with relevant technical partners in order to identify rough edges - if any - with the integration of other services that are part of the overall project.

HI-Iberia

As a technical partner, HI-Iberia has developed the first iteration of the VUK Web User Interface, paying special attention to satisfy the usability and accessibility requirements for a correct use by the end-users, and has continued the development of the Social-based Assistance/Guidance Service by carrying out the integration with the Authentication Service and the implementation of the "Help request" feature. Furthermore, HI-Iberia has a relevant role in the business part and, thereby, it has continued defining the best method to

launch the VUK project to the market, what will give as a result the final exploitation plan and the final business model plan in mid 2018.

BME

BME-TMIT has developed the mock-up of the VUK Mobile User Interface. During the design, the accessibility requirements of the end-users were taken into account, and an Android application was developed with preliminary functionalities. Besides, BME-TMIT continued the improvement of speech technologies for Hungarian, i.e. text-to-speech and automatic speech recognition solutions for Android.

BZN

First Mid-term Review on the 21st of June 2017

After the first year of every AAL project a mid-term review (MTR) takes place. MTRs should clearly aim at checking the performance of the project and to address obstacles that block the progress. Scientific, technological, financial and organizational issues need to be discussed and solutions should be proposed. VUK's first MTR happened to be on the 21st of June in Brussels at the premises of the AAL CMU. The reviewers were satisfied with VUK's progress and were very impressed with the high-involvement of end-users in the consortium. In order to ensure that the solution will be fully completed by the end of the project a 6-months project extension was recommended to the consortium.

VUK consortium meeting (11-12th of December, 2017)

The fourth VUK consortium meeting was held in Vienna on 11th and 12th December, 2017. With the active participation of the nine partners the consortium reviewed all fulfilled, ongoing and upcoming tasks and results achieved during the past period of project implementation. These were the visual anchor point mapping and building layout creation, Infostructure description databases (map, visual), UI, authentication, STT/TTS solutions, localization, navigation, social-based assistance/guidance service, testing of core technologies. Particular attention was paid to testing, agile evaluation and the upcoming field trial activities.

Following these discussions the international consortium placed a special emphasis on the continuation of the development and improvement of the business model and exploitation strategy on the basis of the continuously performed market analysis.

As a closing, they agreed on the location and approximate time of the next physical VUK consortium meeting to be held in Spain, Madrid, late May or June, 2018.

VUK consortium meeting in Vienna, 12th December, 2017

Dissemination activities:

VUK solution at the AAL Forum 2017

The AAL Forum is the annual event for presenting the innovative technological product ideas and services for active and healthy ageing, promoted by the Active and Assisted Living Programme. As one of the largest European events of its kind, the Forum supports these ideas and developments until they launch on the market. This year, the AAL Forum took place at the Centro Region of Portugal in Coimbra, between the 2nd and the 4th of October.

VUK was presented by one of our end-user partner, HGB on the 3rd of October. The session at the AAL Forum 2017 provided an opportunity to present our latest results, ongoing activities and innovative work in progress. Posters presented gave authors and participants the chance to connect with each other and to engage in discussions about their work. Our poster belongs to Theme 3: INCREASING THE ADOPTION OF AAL SOLUTIONS**.** This theme aims to understand ways to achieve the adoption of AAL Solutions by focusing on the identification of the gap between user needs and AAL Solutions. It is important that AAL projects follow and understand the processes and activities that add value to the product and services, in order to meet the customers' needs and expectations.

Carpathian Control Conference (28th to 31st of May, 2018)

The 19th International Carpathian Control Conference will be held in Szilvásvárad, Hungary from 28th to 31st May, 2018, where Mr. László Árvai - Head of Department of Info-communication Technologies, Bay Zoltán Nonprofit Ltd. for Applied Research (BZN) - will present the realization of the VUK project, the results achieved and the experiences gained during project implementation. Moreover an article on the VUK project is going to be issued in the printed ICCC brochure as well.

Beside reading this Newsletter we encourage everyone to visit our website or follow us our VUK Facebook to see the latest news about VUK.

Partner Contacts

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Contact

If you are interested in knowing more about our project or even participating in it as an end-user, or know anyone who would be interested, please contact the coordinator of the applicable country:

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Further information

In order to be informed regarding the VUK community and its activities, please visit our site (http://www.vuk-project.com) or join us on Facebook (VUK - Visionless Supporting Framework).