

# **Progress report**

**Progress planning phase**

**PMoC**

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## T-76.115 Progress report – Project planning phase PMoC

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## 1. Project status

The project planning phase has progressed as planned. The project group now has a good understanding of what the planned project that they are about to start implementing is going to be used for. The project planning phase has brought a Project plan as well as a Requirements document, documenting what is to be done during the following phases.

The project group's members have during the planning phase gotten to know each other and the individuals' strong as well as weaker sides, which will ease the later parts of the project by not bringing any unwanted surprises. The group as a whole now wants to start the first iteration of the second phase, and is eager to get to the "real work".

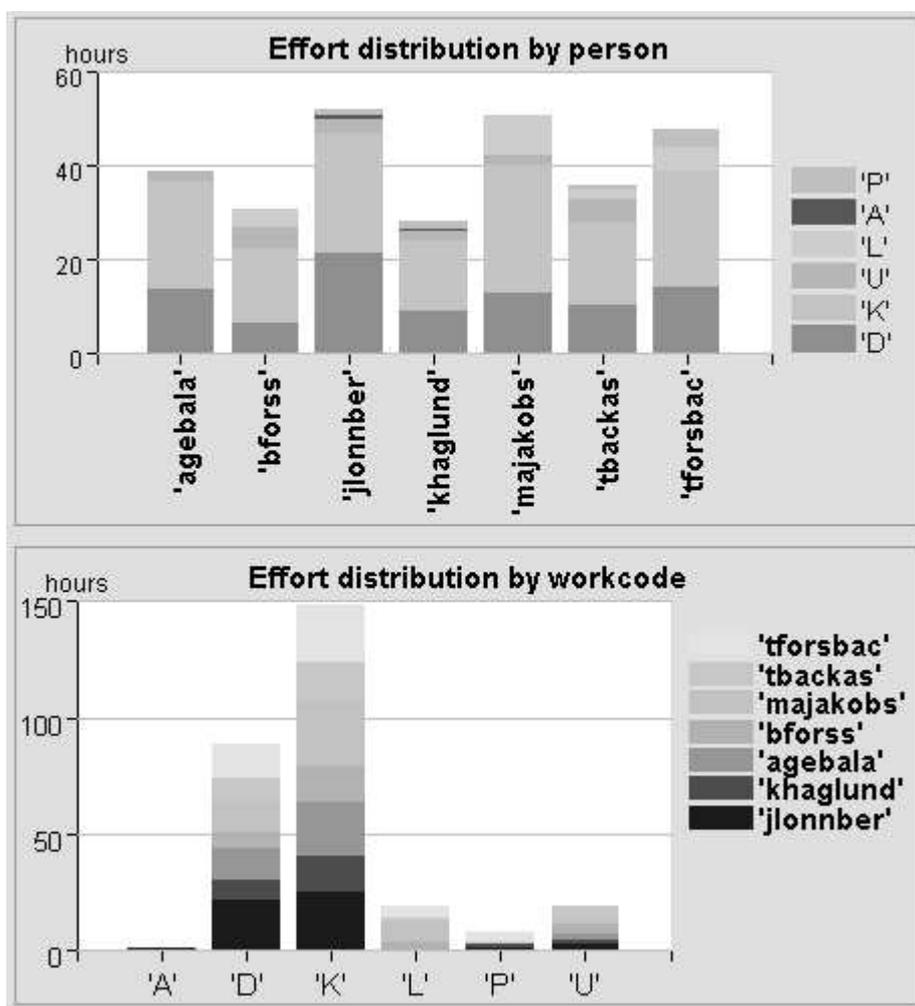


Figure 1. Effort distribution.

## 2. Work performed

The group has during the project planning phase concentrated on two main things; conducting enough detailed meetings and interviews with the customer to find out what the project is all about, and investigating as well as discussing what kind of environment and tools should be used for the project. The former part started out a little hesitantly, but towards the end of the project planning phase things started to feel

clear enough. During the discussions with the customer, the project did seem to change a little, however, as what was understood at first about what the customer wanted, changed character later on as more details emerged.

Investigation and decision of programming environments and components needed for the project was a bit tricky; the project group members had personal opinions on the matter, and when the customer at first seemed to accept only two programming environments for the project, the project group used too much time on investigating these. Too much time was also used for testing components to be used for the SVG-part of the program, which turned out to be a waste of time since the programming environment and therefore SVG-component changed later in the planning phase.

### **2.1. Project plan and requirements documentation**

During the planning phase were the first versions of the Project Plan and Requirements documentation written. The group has had three meetings with the customer to get to know the customer's requirements and expectations. The customer seems to have very good technical skills. The customer also seems to have a clear picture of what they want from the project. The project group now has a clearer picture of the project goals.

*Ref: Project Plan, Requirements Documentation.*

### **2.2. Additional documents**

Additional documents describing the different methods and practices used during the project were also written. These documents act as support for the group and they describe how different issues are handled.

*Ref: Version management document, Communication and meeting practices. More?*

### **2.3. Additional tasks performed**

Some testing using different competing tools and development environments was done. Simple programs using MS Visual C++ were done. This was required due to the lack of Visual C++ experience in the group. Also was the Adobe SVG plugin tested and alternatives to it were investigated. These investigations, which were quite extensive, turned out to be both essential and unneeded for the rest of the project. The two or three major programming environments that were preliminary candidates caused much investigation of their suitability for the project, and as the question marks regarding which SVG-component should be used remained unanswered, the later change of plans for developing environment to Java was taken as a relief.

## **3. Applied process**

### **3.1. Document evaluation**

The project plan and requirements document were developed in iterations. The first and second versions were sent to the customer to be commented, which helped much to identify the parts of the project plan and the requirements of the system that were unclear or too vague for the project group.

### **3.2. Use-cases**

For the requirements documentation were use-cases made. The use-cases made it easier to make sure that the project group and the customer have the same picture of

the outcome of the project, and also naturally help the project group later in the programming phases.

### **3.3. Project management**

The management was from the very beginning concentrated on dividing the planning phase into relevant parts, so that the work could be done in even parts by all of the group members. Responsibility was very well shared among the members, and the result was eventually quite good, when e.g. produced material was expected to be delivered during internal deadlines in the planning phase.

The biggest challenge was to keep everything running constantly during the phase, and to *manage* all parts of the project, and have a clear picture of what had to be done. Off course as a first project to manage of this size can be expected to feel more difficult as the experience isn't that heavy yet.

### **3.4. Communication and meetings**

The communication within the group works fine when the group is gathered, but the expected problems with communication via the web were also noticed. The communication needs to be improved for the next phases, especially to get the different subparts of the programming part of the project coordinated in a working manner. The obstacles noticed with the difficulty of arranging meetings at suitable times were handled with a special web-based calendar system, but the meetings themselves need to be made more efficient in the future, probably entailing a more deciding role of the chairman. Some meetings were found slightly nonproductive, which caused later meetings to be divided into smaller subgroups, causing more productivity as well as fewer endless loops of thinking and wondering without getting anywhere. This practice will be continued in the later phases.

### **3.5. Customer and mentor relations**

As the group has had many parts to learn and test, the initial contacts to the customer has mainly been connected to a few customer meetings that have focused on learning the concepts to be used, and to agree on requirements for the project. A positive surprise has been that also the customer has showed to be quite experienced in making software, and has thus been able to communicate the requests and goals rather well.

The contact to the mentor has been even more infrequent, but still very important. The guiding he has been able to give, and his willingness to do that has greatly supported to a better understanding of what such a project should contain, and which parts are important. The mentor has been easy to contact, and his positive attitude has increasingly encouraged asking for help when needed. Still he has also clearly shown how demanding such a project is, which gives the realistic picture needed.

## **4. Improvement**

### **4.1. Meeting practices**

As the project advances, also the practices that work for this group are iteratively found. As mentioned the meeting practices could have been even more efficient, and though this partly lies on the responsibility of the chairman (project manager in our case) it also depends on the individuals to learn to keep to the relevant parts of the discussion.