

D4.2. Pilot Operation Summary Report



Personalized platfOrm aSsisting senlors in healThy, fulfilled and active lifE

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Revision history

Revision	Date	Organization(s)	Changes
Draft 1	09-11-2020	AAIF	First draft of the deliverable
Draft 2	10-11-2020	REALL	Added description of pilot testing in Poland
Draft 3	13-11-2020	ESKT	Added description of pilot testing in Spain
Draft 4	16-11-2020	FSL	Pilot testing in Italy
Final	16-11-2020	Reall, MAGG	Internal review

Executive summary

This deliverable describes the field trials of the POSITIVE platform in the four end user organizations part of the POSITIVE consortium. It contains description of the stages during Pilot Operations Phase I i.e. recruitment of primary and tertiary end users, training and pilot testing.

Table of contents

Revision History	2
Executive Summary	3
List of Figures	5
List of Tables	5
Introduction	6
Pilot Operations Phase I	7
Annexes	

[1] **List of Tables**

Table 1. List of deliverables related to D 4.2 Pilot Operation Summary Report.

Page 6

1. Introduction

a. Role of the deliverable

This document is part of WP4 ‘Testing and Validation’ and it provides a detailed description of the pilot testing during **Pilot Operations Phase I**.

The objectives of this deliverable are to describe the pilot testing and consortium’s efforts to involve users in it.

b. Relationship to other project deliverables

Deliverable	Relation
D 3.5 Integrated POSITIVE System	The start of the pilot testing is dependent on the availability of the platform
D 4.1 Validation and Demonstration Planning	The pilot deployment plan, the pilot methodology as well as the tools which will be used for the analysis of the POSITIVE solution during the pilot testing are described in detail in this deliverable.

Table 1. List of deliverables related to D 4.2 Pilot Operation Summary Report

2. Pilot Operations Phase I

Field trials lasted one month from October 1st to October 31st 2020. **60 primary end users** and **11 tertiary end users** from **4 countries** took part in them. **Pilot Operations Phase I** consisted of **three stages** namely **recruitment of volunteers, training and testing of the platform**.

2.1. Recruitment of primary end users

Each end user organisation recruited primary end users according to its specific predefined approach.

Inclusion criteria for the volunteers were:

- Elderly people who are 55 to 75 years-old;
- Independent seniors who are healthy or have minor health issues/ disabilities;

In total, **60 primary end users** (hereafter called PEUs) were recruited in **four countries** as follows:

- **18 PEUs – AAIF, Romania**
- **18 PEUs – FSL, Italy,**
- **18 PEUs – ESKT, Spain**
- **6 PEUs – Reall, Poland**

Covid – 19 pandemic and the growing number of infected people especially among older adults aged 60+ hindered to some extent the work of end user organisations. AAIF and Reall decided to take a proactive approach in the recruitment process. Both organisations began recruiting volunteers in June i.e. 3 months in advance before the actual testing. Our biggest fear was that we would not be able to obtain the informed consent from primary end users due to a possible lockdown and quarantine in the fall. 24 volunteers were recruited in Romania and Poland. Eventually, 6 Romanian seniors dropped out and did not test the platform in October. Another 6 new volunteers were recruited by AAIF in their place in September.

2.2. **Recruitment of tertiary end users** – Tertiary end users (hereafter called TEUs) were identified and recruited. Here is their number and profile per country:

- **Romania** – Due to the Covid- 19 pandemic, most senior clubs in Bucharest have ceased or significantly reduced their activity. They do not organise face-to-face meetings at their premises. Therefore, they were not interested in POSITIVE. However, three TEUs agreed to take part in the testing. They were Association “Magic Seniors” <https://magicseniors.ro/>, The Citizenship, Education and Action Group (GEAC) <https://www.seniorul.ro/>, and Association Habilitas <https://www.habilitas.ro/index.php/en/>. All three of them are Romanian NGOs working with seniors in Bucharest. They have diverse initiatives, projects and activities aimed at improving the wellbeing of senior Romanians.

- **Italy** – Four TEUs were recruited and took part in the pilot testing:

Scuola del Verde: This is an organization established in 2015 of itinerant gardeners. They collaborate with the Botanical Garden of Rome. They organize various types of lessons and workshops in the Garden and guided visits in major green areas of Rome.

Giulia Natali: She is an expert yoga teacher. She organizes group and individual yoga lessons both face-to-face and in the online modalities.

Officina delle arti antiche: This is an organization established in 2012 that offers art courses and workshops of various types such as fresco painting, mosaic, panel painting, miniature and ceramic decoration strictly respecting original materials and traditional methods. Moreover, they organize guided tours in the main historical sites of Rome.

Parco Regionale dell’Appia Antica: The park was established in 1988 in order to protect the monuments and the archaeological, artistic and historical complexes existing in it and spread their knowledge; preserve and reconstruct the natural environment and enhance the hydrogeological, botanical and faunal resources for cultural, educational and scientific purposes; create and manage social facilities for cultural and recreational purposes compatible with the characteristics of the park. They organize numerous activities in the Park like workshops, walking tours, and guided visits.

- **Spain** – Three TEUs took part in the pilot testing. They are described below:

Gernika-Lumo City council: Gernika-Lumo is a town in the province of Biscay, in the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country, Spain. It has a population of nearly 17.000 people and it is one of the municipalities with the oldest population in the Basque Country (22,4%). There are several organizations of senior citizens in the municipality. The City Council offers different points such as the City Council itself or the House of Culture to obtain information about events, courses or trips that may be of interest to older people. In addition, it has a web page where they can make these queries electronically.

TORREZURI Gernika Residence: This is a building specifically designed for the elderly people. Spaces are wide which allows the easy and problem-free mobilization of all people, including people with disabilities and in wheelchairs. 25% of the Residence places are individual, with which they want to enhance privacy.

The entrances, the lighting, the signage, the floor materials, the paint, the furniture are designed to alleviate the physical and mental deficiencies that senior users may present and thus make life easier for them. The Residence has 17 rooms (10 double and 7 single). All of them have private bathrooms (two of which are "geriatric bathrooms"), telephone, TV socket, electric beds and all kinds of technical aids.

The main objective of the centre is to enable the elderly permanent and common residence, with integral and continuous care.

Torrezuri has a Healthcare Team specifically prepared for the Care of the Elderly:

- o Gerontologist - Geriatrician
- o Gerontologist Nurse
- o Gerontologist Psychologist
- o Physiotherapist
- o Chiropodist
- o Clinic Assistants – Geroculttoras

TORREZURI GEROVIDA CONSULTING: This is a socio-health consulting company belonging to the Torrezuri Group whose activities are focused on:

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- o Collaboration with the Dignified Care Foundation in the implementation of the Libera-Ger Standard and the Life and Person Model in care centres for dependent people.
 - o The implementation of Quality and Excellence Management Models in residences for dependent elderly people and social health centres, in alliance with other consulting firms.
 - o Advice on management of social and health centres.
 - o The training of health and social health professionals and informal caregivers.
 - o Research and creation of new forms of care and new management models.
- **Poland** - Due to the Covid-19 pandemic most of the senior clubs in Poland have either significantly reduced their activity level or switched to the online format. Some of them shifted the current efforts from entertainment/combating loneliness towards more essential needs such as:
 - o assisting seniors with shopping
 - o keeping them informed about flu vaccines and the pandemic development

The first organisations we reached out to were scientific entities, namely **SWPS University of Social Sciences and Humanities**. Dr. Edyta Bonk has been particularly helpful and willing to cooperate as she has been dedicating her life to ageing-related topics for years. During the difficult pandemic times we wanted to share materials that can improve the mental wellbeing of seniors and the memory training course created by the abovementioned doctor suited our requirements. SWPS University of Social Sciences and Humanities (SWPS University) is a leading higher education institution in Poland, excelling in Psychology, Law, Language Studies, Literature and Culture Studies, Media and Communication Studies, Management, and Design. The University was established in 1996 by three eminent professors of Psychology and now, after more than twenty years of a dynamic growth, they are proud to be a strong community of over 300 permanent faculty of researchers and experienced academics, who teach over 17,000 students enrolled in 35 undergraduate, graduate and doctoral programs, across five campuses located in major cities in Poland. Their broad education offer includes 15 programs taught entirely in English to over 1,300 international students from more than 60 countries.

2.3. **Pilot training** – Pilot training of primary and tertiary end users was done prior to the pilot testing in the end of September and beginning of October. They were trained separately using different approaches. Most of the volunteers were trained in face-to-face training sessions whereas Spanish seniors were trained online using WhatsApp and phone calls.

AAIF prepared 8 practical tasks which basically represent different actions performed by seniors on POSITIVE using all its features. These 8 tasks were: registration and creation of a user account, creation of an event, checking for new events, making an online post and adding an image to it, creation of a forum thread, messaging a friend on POSITIVE, and commenting on a forum thread. The purpose of the tasks was to train seniors and help them learn how to perform the usual actions needed for the utilization of the platform. One of these tasks can be seen in [Annex 1](#). Tasks contained step-by-step guidelines needed for their successful completion. After Scenario Questionnaires as described in D 4.1 Validation and Demonstration Planning were filled in by some volunteers after several tasks.

AAIF also designed a structure of the training sessions with primary end users that was shared with the other end user organisations. FSL prepared a presentation aimed at explaining the benefits of using POSITIVE for older adults. The objective of the presentation was to motivate, inspire and encourage our volunteers to be active and take part in our project. Several pre-tests such as WHOQOL - BREF, System Usability Scale, UCLA Loneliness Scale, KPIs, socio-demographic and technology usage surveys were done with PEUs during the training sessions.

- **Romania** – In total, 5 face-to-face training sessions for primary end users and 2 online training sessions for tertiary end users were conducted in Bucharest and Cluj-Napoca. On average, training seniors took 2 and a half hours. Training representatives of TEUs took half an hour. 2 researchers conducted the training for seniors in the spacious meeting room of AAIF's office.

All Covid – 19 safety measures were followed by volunteers and AAIF's researchers. That is, the meeting room was always aired with fresh air coming from 2 open windows, plastic transparent barriers that separated researchers from seniors were placed on the table. Everyone wore a mask all the time. Safe distance of 1.5m. was kept too. Prior to entering the room, the seniors'

temperature was measured. They were given disposable socks and kindly asked to wash their hands or clean them with the available disinfectant.

Training sessions began with some small talk, offering drinks and food to seniors. Since most of the Romanian volunteers have already been recruited in June and have already signed the informed consent then, we proceeded with the presentation of the platform by showing its different features/ sections on screen as well as the benefits of using it for older adults. Informed consent was signed before the training only by the 6 new volunteers that were recruited in September. Each volunteer completed the socio-demographic survey and technology usage survey. Several pre-tests were done during these sessions namely WHOQOL – BREF, UCLA Loneliness scale, KPIs. System Usability Scale and After Scenario Questionnaires were filled in by several seniors after the completion of tasks.

In general, Romanian seniors needed a lot of assistance and guidance from researchers to complete the tasks. Researchers showed them how to do each task and then seniors repeated the steps on their own. Volunteers had different levels of technology literacy as well as social media literacy. That is, every volunteer had different speed and training was done one-on-one. Some of them have never used neither apps nor tablets. Most of them have not heard of social media networks such as Facebook. Many additional explanations were needed to clarify terms and concepts that younger generations take for granted such as creating a profile, sending a message and writing a status. There were some difficulties with testing POSITIVE on tablets and smartphones. They were described and sent to technical partners right after the training.

Training seniors online was not an option for Romania because the majority of our volunteers did not have neither a PC/ tablet/ laptop nor Internet at home. Online training could not have been done only through their smartphones. 7 tablets with constant Internet connection were given to participants so that they could test POSITIVE at home because they had neither a device nor Internet. All in all, giving user's guidelines and or tutorials on how to use the platform will be of great help for seniors during the second testing i.e. Pilot Operations Phase II that is coming up next year.

- **Italy** – The training sessions took place at the premises of FSL in three specific appointments arranged with 18 primary end-users. All Covid- 2019 safety measures were followed.

Two appointments were set on the 1st of October 2020, one in the morning and the other in the afternoon, while the last appointment took place on the 5th of October 2020. Each session lasted approximately 3 hours and involved 6 primary end-users. Prior to the beginning of each session, all participants signed the written Informed Consent previously approved by the FSL Ethics Committee. Then, two persons with the role of facilitators i.e. a researcher and a trainer provided an overview of the POSITIVE project and gave participants the set of questionnaires detailed in D4.1. Validation and Demonstrating Planning. The researcher explained and showed to participants the components and functionalities of the POSITIVE platform on a computer screen. During the training session at FSL, all participants familiarized with the POSITIVE platform using their own smartphones or tablets and they created a personal account. Another practical task was chosen for each participant from the list of six tasks detailed in D4.1. Validation and Demonstrating Planning. Only 7 primary end-users completed the whole list of tasks during the training session (except for the Games section) and filled in the After Scenario Questionnaire afterwards. After the end of the training, food and drinks were offered to participants. In general, they had an interested and curious approach toward the platform. The main issue reported by users during the training was that the platform was difficult to use on smartphone and tablet and should be customized in an app. The complete set of difficulties were described and sent to technical partners right after the training.

- **Spain** – In the case of the Spanish pilot led by ESKILARA, and due to the critical situation with COVID-2019 in Spain, no physical meetings took place with PEUs and TEUs. Just one of the TEUs participated in a physical meeting at ESKILARA's premises in which all COVID-2019 safety protocols were followed according to the BOPV Nº 162 19/08/2020.

Spanish seniors were trained online using WhatsApp and via phone calls. Three different files with a Power Point Presentation of the Pilot and Project in Spanish, platform and questionnaires were sent through WhatsApp to all participants. Then, a phone call or WhatsApp call was done with each of the PEUs. ESKT's team members proceeded with the presentation of the platform by

taking them through POSITIVE's platform with different features/sections on screen as well as the benefits of using it for older adults. The duration of each training session varied depending on the expertise of the senior but all PEUs gave positive feedback afterwards.

Informed consent was delivered to each PEUs home and was signed before the testing. Each volunteer completed all pre-tests through an online questionnaire prepared by ESKT.

In general, Spanish seniors did not need a lot of assistance and guidance from researchers to complete the tasks. Researchers explained to them how to do each task, since the registration phase and going page by page and feature by feature with them. At the end, seniors were invited to contact the researchers back in case of any problems or doubt.

In any case most of them had used at some point either apps or tablets. There were some difficulties with testing POSITIVE on tablets and smartphones. They were described and sent to technical partners right after the training.

- **Poland** – One face-to-face meeting was held at the office of Reall with all the safety precautions being taken. The training lasted three hours. Seniors were offered hot drinks and refreshments.

The first 10-15 minutes were time to warm up. A casual conversation between the researchers and the participants was followed by a presentation outlining the benefits of POSITIVE.

(Volunteers had already signed the informed consent during the recruitment in June.) In the next part, seniors filled in some of the pre-test surveys and listened to a lecture supported by a presentation. After the lecture, everyone participated in the practical workshops where each participant could test the functionalities by himself/ herself with the assistance of one of the researchers. System Usability Scale and After Scenario Questionnaires were completed after the training. In the end, weekly calls with Polish volunteers were scheduled on Google Meets for the upcoming month.

Volunteers who used smartphones and tablets experienced frustration while testing the features. The platform is not suitable for these devices yet. Once they switched to computers, everything became simpler. The practical tasks involved enrolling to the platform and fulfilling a task for each module - usually participating and creating content in each section.

According to one volunteer, who is a life-long learner and an unusually active senior organising all kinds of activities including craftwork and knitting, the Polish seniors she deals with, on the contrary to what we younger people believe, are very patient-oriented. They do not want to create events, they want to attend events organised by others. This was especially frustrating to another volunteer, as after her workshops she has often been asked about the time and place of the next activity. She would like to see more engagement from the senior side instead of waiting for someone else to organise it. Such testimony made us come up with ways to encourage more grassroots activity. We are striving to reward content creators significantly more than the content users.

Another volunteer was happy about the fact that the platform was created for and by seniors. He hoped that it remains a place with valuable content, different from Facebook, which is full of meaningless viral videos. He confirmed Reall's findings from previous projects about the clear website layout. He asked us to limit the number of displayed tiles recommending the most popular teachers, random tags and leaving only the most popular events and courses fields needed to create the event as some of them create confusion, he preferred to have as few fields as possible.

Most of the users agreed that the platform was only comfortable to use through a computer at this stage, entering the website sometimes tends to be problematic on some devices as the buttons are not suitable for larger senior fingers. All the technical issues both from seniors and the POSITIVE team are stored in the file for communication with the technical team.

2.4. **Pilot testing** – Pilot testing began in 4 countries on October 1st and ended on October 31st. Seniors tested POSITIVE on their own. The following information presents the approaches that the consortium adopted during the field trials:

- **Feedback to technical partners** – End user organisations informed technical partners of all issues that were faced and reported by users. A shared Google Drive table for reporting technical issues and suggestions for improvement of the platform was created by Reall.

- **Weekly Skype meetings** – Weekly Skype meetings for end user organisations and Reall were held to ensure the smooth and successful running of the pilot testing.
- **Support during testing** - Throughout the testing PEUs and TEUs were assisted by staff of end user organisations in diverse ways.

7 tablets with Internet connection were given to Romanian volunteers by AAIF to ensure their participation in the project. In Poland, weekly Zoom meetings were held.

In Romania, researchers called seniors weekly to check whether they have any difficulties in using the platform and if they needed any help. 4 additional meetings with 3 participants were held in order to solve the issues they reported.

In Italy, PEUs were called weekly by the FSL team to find out if they had any troubles with the platform and to motivate them to be more active on POSITIVE. A candidate person was available and could be contacted at any time by volunteers in case of need.

In Spain, each volunteer had his or her own smartphone and tablet or PC at home with Wi-Fi or 4G connection. Pilot testing started right after the training which took place during the first week of October. Weekly phone calls were held between researchers and volunteers to check whether they had any difficulties or issues with the platform as well as to encourage them to use POSITIVE. Apart from the weekly phone calls, researchers could be contacted at any time by volunteers in case of need.

In Poland, the pilot testing began only a week after the training in Warsaw. The first step was to agree on a time and a platform where researchers and senior volunteers can meet on a weekly basis during the testing month. Together with seniors, Google Meets was chosen as our telco platform of choice. The main goal of our weekly meetings was to gradually introduce new functionalities of the platform so that the users learn how to use them step-by-step and at the same time it served as a catch-up meeting and motivation to be more active on POSITIVE.

In Romania, small rewards were given to PEUs. 5 of the most active on POSITIVE seniors received a reward a T-shirt promoting the project and food supplement. They were pleasantly surprised.

In Poland, all 6 participants received a T-shirt with the POSITIVE logo, a notebook with a pen and a charm cookie for their active participation in the project.

In Spain no rewards were given to participants due to the fact of not having physical interviews with participants and also in accordance to the safety protocols and normative for COVID-19 in Spain.

- **E-learning content and events** – In total ... videos were uploaded on the platform.

9 videos were uploaded for Romanian users, 13 for Polish users, 108 videos included in 10 different courses for Italian, 4 for Spanish users.

5 events were created by Romanian users namely Walk in Cismigiu Park, Walk in Herastrau Park, Visit to the National Village Museum in Bucharest, Visit to Snagov, Walk in Regina Maria Park.

6 events were created by seniors in Poland. They were Sensorial Light Spectacle, Two free events at the local museum, Gardening Lovers Gathering, Informational Meeting for seniors and carers, Knitting (and not only) Club Meeting, Positive Meeting.

6 events were created in Italy, specifically a yoga class, two guided tours, a charity event, a course of gardening and an open weekend consisting in various activities in the park.

3 events were created in Spain namely “Walk along the banks of Arga River”; “Walk along the greenway Castro Urdiales – Onton”; “TAICHI during COVID confinement”.

After the end of testing, post-test surveys were conducted with all PEUs as well as interviews with some of them, and with TEUs. Results and findings from pre- and post-tests, observations during the testing as well as analysis and evaluation of the Pilot Operation Phase I will be presented in D 4.3 Evaluation Report.

Annex 1



Task 1 for PEUS

Go to the POSITIVE website. Register as a user and create your account.

1. Go to **www.positive.maggiolicloud.it**
2. Change the language to **Romanian**
1. **Sign up** as user
2. Change your profile picture
3. Add cover
4. Fill in ***About me*** section
5. Check and update your ***Info***
6. **Log out** (Settings, Log out)