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SCOPING ONLINE PROJECTATHON 2020

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Inhalt:

1	Introduction	3
2	Challenges	3
3	Online Projectathon Concept	4
3.1	Reopen for No Peer Tests	4
3.2	Test description and data	4
3.3	Test prioritization	5
3.4	Test attendants	5
3.5	Online communication tools	6
3.6	Virtual Private Network.....	6
3.7	Communication activities	6

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1 Introduction

The Swiss EPR Projectathon organized by IHE Suisse, eHealth Suisse and IHE Services was held regularly since September 2017.

The aim of the event is to bring together vendors of primary systems and EPR platforms in a single room for one week to test their EPR specific implementations, as well as to prove the conformity with the law on the Swiss electronic patient record and the EPR specific profiles as published in the ordinances and amendments.

In alignment with the IHE connectathon, the events mission is

- Prove the applicability of the EPR profiles in real application scenarios;
- Discuss open issues directly on the floor;
- Verify the conformity of the products with the EPR profiles.

While the event character with physical attendance is crucial for the EPR Projectathon, we expect the COVID 19 situation to force us to sidestep to an online event, leaving us with the challenge to bring the EPR Projectathon spirit online.

In a series of meetings, IHE Suisse, eHealth Suisse and IHE Services discussed the challenge and the opportunities to bring the EPR Projectathon 2020 online, without losing too much. The outcome of the discussion is summarized in this document.

2 Challenges

To meet the event's mission, the following test activities are part of the projectathon:

- "No Peer Tests" performed by the vendors to test their applications against the simulators and validators of the Reference Environment (Gazelle tools) provided by IHE services;
- "Peer to Peer Tests" performed by two vendors to test specific transactions against each other. For these tests the Reference Environment is used as a proxy to track the transactions, and to validate the transactions' transport and content, using the Gazelle validators);
- "Group Tests" performed by two or more vendors to test sequences of transactions corresponding to the EPR use cases. For these tests, the Reference Environment is also used as a proxy to track the transactions, and to validate the transactions' transport and content, using the Gazelle validators);
- "Theme Track Tests" performed by two or more vendors focussing on testing of new and experimental features planned to be integrated to the future EPR. Again, for these tests the Reference Environment is also used as a proxy to track the transactions, and to validate the transactions' transport and content, using the Gazelle validators);

While the "No Peer Tests" should in general be performed online by the vendors in the weeks before the Projectathon, in reality many vendors perform the "No Peer Tests" during the Projectathon as well. In either case, the vendors register and perform "No Peer Tests" self-reliantly. Monitors may aid the tests in case of open questions, and verify the test results afterwards.

"Peer to Peer Tests" as well as "Group Tests" are also in general self-organized by the vendors. During a Projectathon, vendors with matching interests meet on the Projectathon floor to discuss and schedule the tests. Monitors aid the tests in case of open questions and verify the test results afterwards. In general, "Peer to Peer Tests" and "Group Tests" need more attention from the monitors, and a real time verification of the test is more important than in the "No Peer Tests".

«Theme Track Test» are a novelty at the EPR Projectathon 2020. There is therefore no experience to rely on so far. Since the underlying specifications define basically new features, we expect them not to mature in all details. We expect, that the assigned tests will need more coordination and questions from the vendors more time to discuss. Nevertheless our aim is to prepare the tests in such a way that the vendors are able to self-organize them, with the help of monitors on the Projectathon floor.

For all categories of tests, the quality of the test description and the test data is a critical issue. The test description must be very precise to avoid misunderstandings, and the test data must be defined in a way, which will ease their integration and production by the participating vendors¹.

The challenge of the EPR Projectathon 2020 is to bring it online, without losing the ability to meet quickly in order to efficiently perform the tests as described above.

3 Online Projectathon Concept

In order to ensure, that the online EPR Projectathon 2020 remains an attractive event for vendors, IHE Suisse, eHealth Suisse and IHE Services identified several key factors, which include communication tasks, an additional test maintenance, the evaluation of communication tools, which are to be used in parallel to the test organization and management tools of the Reference Environment (Gazelle tools).

3.1 Reopen for No Peer Tests

The “No Peer Tests” usually should be performed by the vendors, and reviewed by the monitors before the EPR Projectathon event. While the vendors could perform “No Peer Tests” during the last Projectathon, they were not verified during the event. The team decided to reopen the EPR Projectathon 2020 for the “No Peer Tests” including verification by the monitors during the event.

In the Reference Environment (Gazelle), the “No Peer Tests” are not implemented as required tests, which must be performed to claim conformity with the profiles. Only the “Peer to Peer Tests” are relevant for the conformity, and appear in the official test report. Thus, opening the online Projectathon for “No Peer Tests” requires to manually export the test results from the Reference Environment to generate a test report, which can then be handed out to the vendors.

Depending on the number of “No Peer Tests” performed by the vendors during the Projectathon, opening “No Peer Tests” may require additional effort for the monitors to verify the tests and delay the verification to one week after the Projectathon. This has to be taken into account in the Projectathon planning, and the monitors must be informed.

3.2 Test description and data

The team decided to take actions to increase the quality of the test descriptions and test data of the reference environment.

One aim of this task is making the descriptions easier to read and easier to understand in order to decrease the amount of communication required to perform the tests. This should be decreasing the expected efforts from the monitors and tests attendants during the EPR Projectathon.

¹ While the quality of test descriptions and test data has been improved a lot during the past years, the vendor feedback indicates that further improvement is required to accelerate the test preparation during the Projectathon.

Another aim of these tasks is to verify that the test data can be more easily imported or generated by the vendors in their productive system, so as to reduce their preparation time and related communication efforts.

3.3 Test prioritization

The team expects a slowdown of the test performance in an online EPR Projectathon resulting in a significantly reduced number of tests performed in total. Thus, the team decided to invest time before the event to prioritize the tests, which are to be performed by taking the following criteria into account:

1. Test priority set by the vendors – focusing more on those “Peer to Peer Tests”, which the vendors are required to perform, or which are prioritized by the vendors for other reasons (e.g. used to test new features);
2. Test priority set by the ordinances – focusing on the testing of recent changes or open issues of the ordinances;
3. Theme track – focusing on certain critical tests for the new and experimental features.

Each of the criteria above require individual actions:

1. Shortly after the registration, the vendors will be contacted to understand their priorities. The results will be evaluated by the team, and the test priority will be set in cooperation with the vendors;
2. eHealth Suisse will review the latest changes, open issues on the ordinances, and prioritize tests, which cover these topics;
3. The “Theme Track Tests” will be evaluated and prioritized in close cooperation with the vendors, partly by directly contacting them to discuss the challenges.

The test prioritization prior to the event will be taken into account in the planning.

3.4 Test attendants

A new role will be invented to support the coordination of the “Peer to Peer”, “Group” and “Theme Track Tests”. A “Test Attendant” will be assigned to each test to:

1. Aid the vendors to find test partners, if required;
2. Help coordinating the tests, if required;
3. Be the person of contact for open questions related to the test;
4. Setup and maintain the communication tool channels, if required²;
5. Synchronize and coordinate with the monitor.

The roles of the “Test Attendant” and the “Monitor” shall be separated for the tests. No single person shall be “Test Attendant” and “Monitor” for the same test.

Test Attendants will be assigned to the “Peer to Peer Tests”, “Group Tests” and “Theme Track Tests” with regard of the test prioritization (see section 3.3).

The assignment of the Attendants to the various tests and their effort to prepare (know the test details, prepare the support, etc.) will be taken into account prior to the event.

² At the time of writing of this document the communication tool evaluation is not finished. Ideally the communication tools are simple, and the vendors can setup the communication channel themselves.

3.5 Online communication tools

During the meetings, the team discussed the scope of the online communication tools to be used for the online Projectathon.

The team agreed upon to evaluate online communication tools for the following purposes:

1. Chat – online communication solution for the test partners during the Projectathon. The tool must support closed channels for direct communication, and open channels for general announcements, which are of interest to all participants.
2. Audio conferencing – synchronous communication tool for the test partners, the attendees and the monitors.
3. Screen sharing – synchronous exchange of screen content for debugging purposes.
4. File Sharing – exchange of files and documents related to the tests.
5. Dashboard – general announcements on events or other related activities.
6. Presentation – short online presentations on special topics accompanying the test activities (e.g. presentation of software tools, technologies, etc.).

A detailed analysis of the communication tools is still a work in progress, and will be presented in a separate document. Currently, established tools are being evaluated (Slack, Teams, etc.), as well as the tools currently available in the Gazelle platform or provided by IHE Services.

3.6 Virtual Private Network

To enable the tests to be performed online, a virtual private network must be setup. The vendors involved in the “Peer to Peer Tests”, “Group Tests” and “Theme Track Tests” must connect to that virtual private network. The vendors will be informed prior to the event on how to connect to the virtual private network.

The connection of the vendors to the virtual private network usually requires some support, which has to be taken into account in the planning of the online Projectathon.

3.7 Communication activities

The current situation is a challenge for all parties due to the risks posed by Covid-19. It is very difficult for all parties to plan their activities for a scope for the next few months. Thus, a continuous and clear communication with reliable information is assumed to be a major factor for a successful communication with the Projectathon participants.

The vendors will be continuously informed on the progress of the planning of the online event. If possible, the vendor management shall be addressed with specific information to make them aware of the identified risks and the subsequent actions taken, to minimize those risks and their importance for a successful event.