

I: So, what have been your main responsibilities in the Vogas project?

R: Well, I'm the coordinator. So I needed to make sure that everything happens in a concerted or in a coordinated manner. All deliverables should be delivered in time or submitted in time, and all tasks should be fulfilled one after the other to allow for the flow of the project. I must say that we have encountered the COVID-19 within the project. I guess this was an unexpected challenge, but I believe we were able to somehow overcome some of the challenge it imposed on us.

I: So, second question: what challenges have you faced during this project? For example, limits and ethical considerations?

R: Well, of course, we have the pandemic, the COVID-19 which really, really imposed major obstacles on, first of all, availability of electronic chips, second of all, movements [01:40], some of the institutions, the clinical sites, and a lot of the academia were closed for a considerable amount of time. And despite of that, we were able to fulfil all of our tasks with a little bit of delay, of course, we had an amendment of the project, we were able to extend it for nine months, but then, turn around and fulfil all of our obligations. So in this sense, we were pulling together as a team, and I'm totally proud of that. The other thing that we faced are challenges of shipment. We were manufacturing six units. One should've stayed in Ulm and the others were supposed to travel to different clinical sites around the world, South America and Europe, that means Ukraine, Latvia, and Chile, Brazil, Colombia, and so on. And unfortunately, the shipment of these units posed a major obstacle, first of all, administratively by issuing a kind of passports for these units. And second of all, those units were damaged as they were travelling in the journey. I mean, many times we were faced with broken parts of the units. Final challenge I want to mention is the war in Ukraine where we had clinical trials going on in Ukraine at the time of war. And many times, we were communicating with our colleagues in Ukraine while they were continuing the project in very, very severe conditions. And for that, I wanna totally thank and show my appreciation and admiration to our Ukrainian partners.

I: What are the main lessons you have learnt during this project?

R: I do think that breath analysis can go a long way. I think it has marvellous future. And I do think that, by using technological fusion, looking at the breath sample from a few angles, meaning employing different sensing techniques, that is gold particles, moc sensors, but also IR lasers techniques. We can come up with a personal signature of the breath and also detect various changes or aberrations in the breath. I'm very encouraged by the development and the manufacturing of these units, and I'm very, very encouraged and anticipating towards the future of the ability to advance this approach into working and reliable devices.

I: So, thinking of the present and looking to the future, how do you think that digital health tools and Vogas can improve health equality?

R: Well, I do believe that if we're able to supply breath analysis or diagnostic tools which are based on breath analysis, which have all the qualities of ease of use and flexibility, we can actually bring diagnosis to a different level where we can almost have a continuous and very inexpensive, dynamic diagnosis which can go a long way into the underserved population and allow for a very widespread implementation of this technology.