

Press Release

Cerqual digitizes its acoustic assessment process with Hardis Group

The certifying body experiments for the first time agile methods to develop and implement a solution dedicated to its building acoustic assessment process.

Grenoble, 4 January 2017 – Hardis Group, a digital services provider and independent software vendor, announces that it has been commissioned by Cerqual, certifying body of Qualitel's association, in charge of improving the housing quality, to assist them in the digitization of its acoustic assessment process. An opportunity for Cerqual to experiment the benefits of the agile methods to implement the first stages of its digital transformation's strategic plan.

Cerqual: towards a digitization of the housing quality certification

Cerqual Qualitel Certification is the certifying body of Qualitel's association, whose mission is to improve the housing quality along three strands: quality of life, respect for the environment and economic efficiency. They assist all housing stakeholders (property developers, social housing providers, local authorities, builders, syndic of co-owners, design consultants, etc.) in assessing the quality of collective housing and grouped single-family housing, properties under construction, renovation and operation. Since 2015, Cerqual delivers its certifications under the unique brand NF Habitat - NF Habitat HQE™. The group Qualitel has 180 collaborators, 110 of whom work for Cerqual certification organism.

In its strategic plan 2016-2020, Cerqual aims to become a major player in the housing digital transformation. As a result, at the end of 2015, Cerqual has set up a digital strategy department responsible for, among other features, the digitization of key processes to assess housing quality which were formerly processed through "paper and Excel". Thus, it has been decided to develop a tool to group and standardize building acoustic assessment methods, in order to improve productivity.

The agile methods supporting the project success

With its recognised and highly-specialized expertise in the acoustic area, Cerqual draws up a very precise set of specifications internally, and prioritises first a provider with expertise in its area. *"We were not satisfied with the layouts presented by our long standing partner. The ergonomics, the key to adopt the application, was totally missing"*, declared Bertrand Leclercq, Cerqual's digital strategy Director. Thus the certifying body decides to turn towards more generalist companies, able to offer a real methodology in the project management.

In December 2015, Cerqual consults three companies, two of which are ESN, with which other projects had already been conducted. The digital strategy Director has found in Hardis Group's offer the most compelling arguments to develop agile methods and assert the users' essential commitment, right from the scoping phase. A first sprint test in February 2016, has eventually convinced the certifying body to refer to Hardis Group for this project.

The commitment of all for an ergonomics adapted to the needs of businesses

Conscious of this new application's business challenges, particularly because of the business practices' major changes it implies, Hardis Group's teams require to involve a part-time acoustic expert, and the systematic consultation of three "super-users", throughout the project, to ensure ergonomics and features which respond to the daily needs. *"The frequency of meetings has allowed to create a real team spirit and a close relationship between Cerqual's employees and Hardis teams"*, said Bertrand Leclercq.

Acceptance phases start in September 2016. After a pilot phase, involving about ten key users until the end of December, Cerqual generalizes the solution in January 2017. In all, 550 days/employees (450 for Hardis Group, 100 for Cerqual) will have been required to develop and implement the application. The experience has convinced the digital strategy's management regarding the agility: *"If it implies a significant workload increase of the involved employees, it avoids the tunnelling we experimented on other projects. It results, better than other methodologies, in the user satisfaction, with a controlled budget"*, reckoned Bertrand Leclercq.

This very positive experience provides new opportunities to Cerqual, who is already considering to offer its assessors the solution in disconnected mode, and to digitize other business processes.

About Hardis Group

Hardis Group, a digital services company and independent software vendor, assists its customers in the transformation of their business model, Supply Chain and Information system. The company helps them become more competitive and increase their operational performance, creating and integrating business, technological and digital solutions tailored to their needs and issues.

With its dual positioning, Hardis Group has developed expertise in the areas of banking, insurance and e-health, distribution (CPG and luxury goods), industry and energy, logistics and transport services. This expertise now allows it to provide global responses, in an agile approach characterized by co-construction, innovation and continuous improvement.

Since the company began business in 1984, it has been building its growth on a pragmatic approach and the values of efficacy and strong commitment both to its 2500 customers and to its 730 employees (25% of employees are shareholders). In 2015, Hardis Group achieved sales of €68.8 million. The Group has five offices in France: The Group, whose headquarters are in Grenoble, has four other agencies in Lyon, Paris, Lille and Nantes.

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