Voice Controlled **Assist**ive Care and Communication Services for the Home

D1.1 – Project Handbook

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Coordinator	Manfred Tscheligi CURE – Center for Usability Research & Engineering, AT
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Abstract

This deliverable (D.1.1) is the project handbook for the vAssist project – **V**oice Controlled **Assist**ive Care and Communication Services for the Home. It describes the overall project organization, internal communication, deliverable templates, progress reporting, and all other project internal related procedures.

The project handbook comprises an overview on the most important internal project processes for vAssist. The audience of the project handbook is everyone working on vAssist. The project handbook has been reduced to the most essential information in order to serve its purpose as information source as efficiently as possible.

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1   Introduction

This deliverable is the project handbook for the vAssist project – **V**oice Controlled **Assist**ive Care and Communication Services for the Home. It describes the overall project organization, internal communication, deliverable templates, progress reporting, and all other project internal related procedures.

1.1   Background

The project handbook comprises an overview on the most important internal project processes for vAssist. The audience of the project handbook is everyone working on vAssist. The project handbook has been reduced to the most essential information in order to serve its purpose as information source as efficiently as possible.

1.2   Scope of the deliverable

The project handbook serves as a reference for information items such as important E-mail addresses, URLs and processes relevant for the project. The handbook will be updated if necessary in order to reflect an accurate and useful source of information.

2   Project Organisation

vAssist has a clear organisation structure in order to ensure that the project results in the expected outcomes according to its defined objectives and goals. The work to be done is divided into work packages and further into tasks. All involved organizations lead work packages or are involved in several tasks and have a designated responsible representative.

2.1   Project Board

The project board is the core organizational and decision making body. It will be responsible for the successful completion of the project and the exploitation and dissemination of project results. It will be chaired by the project coordinator (CURE) and consists of a representative of each vAssist partner. The voting members of the project board are the single representatives of each of the partner organizations. The AAL CMU (Central Management Unit of the AAL Joint Programme) may participate as an observer at meetings of the project board. Decisions regarding the project will be made by votes with each voting member having a single vote. In cases of a tie, the project coordinator (CURE) shall have a casting vote. The majorities needed for making decisions in the project board are defined in the consortium agreement (CA).

The project board will regularly meet in a six month interval. Depending on the issues that need to be discussed face-to-face meetings or remote sessions are possible (e.g. realized by telcos or skypes). In practical terms the project board represents the consortium in all affairs. The duties include, but are not limited to:

- Preparation of documents (financial, reporting, audit, etc.)
- Management of knowledge
- Communication between the consortium and governing organizations (AAL CMU, NCP) (through the project coordinator)
- Communication between the consortium and third parties (through the project coordinator)
- Publicity
- Overview of intellectual property procedures, regulated by the consortium agreement (CA)
- Preparation of a detailed work plan (before the start of the project)
- Coordinating activities covering more than one technical area
- Contributing to the overall technical affairs of the consortium

2.2   Conflict Resolution

Pragmatic negotiation will be the basis for the consortium conflict resolution approach. This will be the responsibility of all involved partners and the project coordinator – who is an international mediator in dispute resolutions – to identify these conflicts at an early stage and take steps to talk to the involved parties to quickly resolve the conflict. Negotiation and decisions taken by consensus will be the main tools to resolve conflicts. Should this approach and a majority decision not be achievable by the in-

volved parties and the rest of the consortium, an independent referee will be appointed by the project coordinator.

The voting procedures for the project board and procedures for conflict resolution are defined in the consortium agreement (CA), which has been signed by all project partners.

3 Internal Communication

A strongly integrated project like vAssist requires extensive communication between the collaborating organizations. As a basis, vAsisst uses standard communication techniques such as E-mail, phone, teleconferences, Skype and face-to-face meetings. The latter are restricted to a minimum in order to keep cost down.

3.1 E-Mail Communication and Mailing List

E-mail is one of the main means of communication within the vAssist project. For efficient communication the project has set up a vAssist mailing list including all organizations and participants. The mailing list is managed by the project coordinator (CURE). All members participating in the vAssist project are part of this list:

- vassist-all@lehar.cure-vienna.org

If necessary, the coordinator will establish additional mailing lists during the course of the project. This can be separate mailing lists for single work packages that include the involved organizations and participants working in the work packages.

Changes (e.g. new project member joins, project member leaves the organization) will have to be communicated to the project coordinator (CURE) as soon as the change has been acquainted.

3.1.1 Mail Structure

Project members are advised to mail all information to vassist-all@lehar.cure-vienna.org. The following E-mail structure shall be applied for a better filtering of the E-mail communication to support the overall collaboration of all project members:

- **Mail subject:**
  - WP + Number + specific topic
    - e.g. WP1: contact list
  - WP + Number + T.x.y + Taskname
    - e.g. WP1: T.1.4 Ethical Watch

3.1.2 Size of Attachments

Project members are advised to only attach files to E-mails that are < 10 MB. Files > 10 MB should be uploaded to the internal part of the vAssist project website and the link to the file should be included in the E-mail. This procedure shall be applied to reduce E-mail data transfer.

3.1.3 Administration of Mailing List

The mailing list will be managed by the project coordinator (CURE).

Changes (e.g. new project member joins, project member leaves the organization) will have to be communicated to the project coordinator (CURE) as soon as the change has been acquainted.

The project coordinator updates the mailing and contact list according to the changes. The contact list is available at the internal part of the vAssist project website (http://vassist.cure.at/project-info_/who-is-who.html). Any changes will have to be communicated to:

- vassist-all@lehar.cure-vienna.org

To guarantee a fluent and transparent communication, changes related to the mailing list have to be communicated by E-mail to the project coordinator (CURE). The project coordinator updates the mailing list as well as the contact list at the internal part of the vAssist website.

3.2 Telco and Skype Conferences

In the vAssist project telephone conferences and text chats are held via skype. From many computer-based communication applications skype is one of the most powerful tools in this arena and is currently available for all important platforms (Mac, Windows, and Linux) for free. Skype also allows instant messaging and enables project members to get in touch briefly and rapidly.

Telephone conferences and text chats via skype with representatives from all project partners have established right from the beginning of the project and are held at least once a month.

Additional (if needed) work package related telephone conferences and text chats via skype can be scheduled by the work package leader involving all organizations and participants that work on the according work package.

3.2.1 Organizing Telcos and Skypes

In general, the following steps have to be followed when organizing a telco or skype communication:

- **Announcement:** The organizer has to send an announcement mail at least **one week before the communication** starts. This should include a doodle www.doodle.com that will be used to agree on a specific date and time that is suitable for all involved project members.
- **Agenda:** The organizer has to set a clear agenda at least **one week before the communication**. This will guarantee that project members can prepare for the communication.
- **Meeting minutes:** The organizer has to create meeting minutes of the communication that include the participants, agenda, major discussion points, open questions, action items and (if needed) deadlines. A template for vAssist meeting minutes can be found at the internal part of the vAssist project website (http://vassist.cure.at/project-management_/templates.html).
- **Storage of meeting minutes:** The organizer has to send the meeting minutes to the project coordinator. The project coordinator uploads the file to the internal part of the vAssist project website (http://vassist.cure.at/meetings_.html).
- **Communication of meeting minutes:** The project coordinator has to send an E-mail including the link to the meeting minutes at least 3 days after the upload of the minutes.

3.3 Project Website

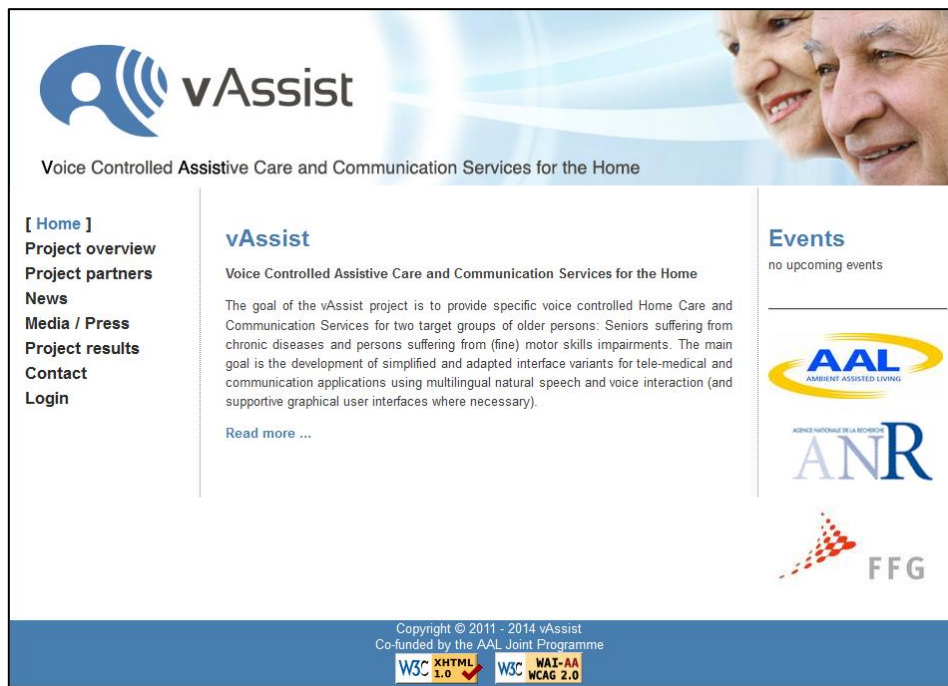The vAssist project website (Figure 1) is available at http://vassist.cure.at/

Figure 1   Screenshot from http://vassist.cure.at/: home screen

The website features an internal (restricted for vAssist partners) and external (public) part and will be provided by the project coordinator (CURE).

3.3.1   Internal Part (restricted)

The vAssist partners (Figure 2) have access to the internal part of the project website using their organizational accounts. The group of internal users is limited to project members only. The internal area has an up/download area for official documents such as deliverable and progress report templates, description of work (DoW), contact list and other important documents and needed information for the vAssist project. The internal area aims at supporting the collaboration of the project partners and can be seen as a place to share documents and information among partners. The internal part of the website allows all project members to get access, but not limited to:

- Description of Work (DOW)
- Deliverables
- Meeting minutes
- Progress reports
- Dissemination material
- Place to share documents for WPs and tasks

3.3.2   External Part (public)

The external (public) part of the website allows all interested persons to get an overview on the project goals, objectives and developments and its latest progress.

This part of the website will be permanently updated during the whole project duration and is designed to remain a permanent source of information for longer than the project end. All public materials –

including public deliverables, press releases, scientific and white papers as well as demonstration videos – will be available on the website.

Figure 2   Screenshot from http://vassist.cure.at/: List of project partners

3.4 Project Meetings

Consortium meetings will be scheduled and rotated between the partner`s home bases. The kick-off meeting will be organized within 14 days after the project start date and will be held at the site of the project coordinator (AT, Vienna). Regular technical meetings will be held to monitor the progress of the technical activities and to decide on issues involving multiple partners and work packages and are convened by the partners involved. These meetings will primarily be held virtually and can be called by any partner, however if the need arises can also take place as physical meetings (e.g. the need to discuss issues face-to-face to clear specific affairs).

3.4.1 Organizing Meetings

When organising a face-to-face meeting within vAssist, there are a number of issues to take care of in addition to the usual procedures. Find below a checklist of the most important issues when organizing a face-to-face meeting:

- **Objective:** Organize a meeting only if it is really required and there is a well-identified objective.

- **Announcement:** The organizer has to announce the meeting at least **three weeks before the meeting takes place**. This can be done during the monthly skype or per E-mail to the mailing list. Use the general mailing list to announce a meeting.
- **Finding dates:** The announcement shall be followed by a doodle (www.doodle.com) to find the most suitable date and time for all project members.
- **Unique title:** Give every meeting a unique title that everybody can refer to in progress reports (for AAL CMU, national funding organizations) and other communications (e.g. E-Mail, Telco, Skype).
- **Provide the following information:** Organizer (partner), date, location (how to get there) and accommodation (information about hotels), goals and clear agenda (draft).
- **Agenda:** The agenda has to be provided either by the work package leader – in case it is a work package related meeting – or by the project coordinator in accordance with all project partners at least **one week before the meeting**.
- **Preparation:** Relevant material (e.g. presentation slides, reports, deliverables, etc.) has to be provided at least **three days before the meeting** to allow all participants to prepare for the meeting accordingly.
- **Costs:** The partner that hosts the meeting will be responsible for the costs for e.g. meeting room and board. When possible, partners can also split up costs between each other. To reduce the costs for the project, consortium meetings can also be combined with WP meetings.

During meetings, there are a number of important points to keep in mind in addition to the meeting organization (see below). The project coordinator (or work package lead) is responsible to initiate that meeting minutes are taken.

- **Agenda:** Follow the agenda during the meeting.
- **Meeting minutes:** Keep meeting minutes of all sessions of the meeting.
  - Use the meeting minutes template available at the website (http://vassist.cure.at/project-management_/templates.html)
  - Include the participants of the meeting in the meeting minutes
  - (The list serves as proof of attendance and might be required in an audit)
  - Send the meeting minutes to the project coordinator.
  - The coordinator uploads the minutes to the website and sends the link to the general mailing list

After a meeting the following tasks have to be considered:

- **Action items:** agreed during a meeting must be followed up as agreed
- **Travel Budget:** Every partner has to make sure that enough travel budget is allocated in the project budget. This travel budget serves for two purposes:
  - *Participating in vAssist project meetings:* Such as consortium meetings (CM), work package meetings (WPM) or review meetings (RM). It must be ensured by

each partner that sufficient budget is available for attending these meetings as required.

- o *Other travel:* This comprises travel for the exploitation or dissemination of vAssist project results (e.g. presenting a vAssist publication at a conference) or other travel necessary for obtaining information required for performing agreed vAssist tasks.
- o Each partner is responsible for their travel budget and must make sure that there is sufficient budget available for performing its task and taking part in internal meetings as required.

3.5 Deliverables

3.5.1 Format

vAssist uses MS Office for creating and PDF as format for final documents and deliverables. Each final deliverable needs to be available in PDF format for internal review as well as for the final version for the submission to the Central Management Unit of the AAL Joint Programme (AAL CMU) and for its publication.

A deliverable template has been created to ensure they are all prepared to a high quality and have a consistent format. The template is available at the internal part of the vAssist website (http://vassist.cure.at/project-management_/templates.html).

3.5.2 Deliverable Procedure

All project activities will be carried out by a minimum of two partners, in order to provide a peer review of all the work done in vAssist. Deliverables will normally fall within the remit of work packages and tasks. The deliverable owner will be assigned to the production and editing of particular deliverables. The deliverable owner is responsible to set a roadmap to achieve the final deliverable in time. The following procedure has to be followed to guarantee a fluent documentation process:

- Start the deliverable by giving it the **right document name** as following:
  - o vAssist_DelNr_DelName_V0.x_Partnername.doc
    - ▪ e.g. vAssist_D.1.2_Ethical_Guidelines_V0.1_CURE.doc
- Deliverables are starting with a **first structure (ToC version)** that will be iterated between the involved project members
- Creates the first structure and **map the chapters with the responsible partner** so that it is clear which partner has to give input for which section
- Each partner that gives input for a deliverable has to:
  - o Activate the **"track change" mode**
  - o Update the **version history** at the beginning of the document
  - o Include the **name of** her/his **organization** at the end of the file
    - ▪ e.g. vAssist_D.1.2_Ethical_Guidelines_V0.1_**CURE**.doc
- The deliverable owner is responsible for
  - o The **merge of** the **input** coming from different project members

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- o   Creating and **managing** the different **versions** of the deliverable
- o   Starting the **internal review process**
- o   Creating the **final version** of the deliverable in pdf format
- o   **Uploading** the final version to the internal part of the **project website**
- o   **Communication** to the **project coordinator**

3.5.3   Deliverable Quality Assurance

Each project, particularly if results are built in a collaborative manner, requires procedures for ensuring a sustained high quality of its results to be in place. High quality of results is a key success factor for the acceptance of results by all stakeholders. vAssist has defined a peer-review process for ensuring a sustained quality of its results. This process regards quality as a multidimensional property of its results.

- **Review of deliverables:** All deliverables have been assigned to a group of two internal reviewers representing different partners, who are not (directly) involved in the drafting of the respective deliverable. Their task is to ensure that the overall quality and presentation of the deliverable reflects a high standard. The list of deliverables and responsible reviewers can be found at the internal part of the vAssist project website (http://vassist.cure.at/deliverables_.html)
- **Timing of deliverables:** Each deliverable has a due date, which is stated in the list of deliverables. The **internal deadline** for a first draft of each deliverable is at least **two weeks before the external date**. The deliverable owner has to send the document to the internal reviewers (at least two), who will review the document. This procedure ensures that enough time is available to address reviewers' comments and allow a high quality of project deliverables.
- **Content of deliverables:** The content of a deliverable must reflect the state of the art of the involved research. Internal reviewers have to ensure that the use of language is correct, the document is free of typos and the formatting is proper and consistent throughout the whole document.

3.6   Absence during Holiday Time

Each work package lead has to take holiday seasons into account to prevent from ad-hoc delays due to longer absences of single project members. **Absences for longer than two weeks have to be communicated to the work package lead and project coordinator at least two weeks in advance**. This procedure will guarantee a smooth and fluent planning of tasks and deliverables.

When being absent for more than two weeks a **proxy** has to be communicated to the work package lead and project coordinator to have a contact person available if needed.

4   Progress Reports

The vAssist project focuses on three different types of progress reports as following:

- Internal project progress reports (6 month interval)
- External progress reports to AAL CMU (12 month interval + Mid-Term-Review)
- External progress reports to national funding organizations (interval differs between partner countries)

In vAssist, the internal project progress reports have been setup so that they can be used to directly generate the external progress reports in an easy way. The figure (Figure 3) below describes the interaction and setup between the different project progress reports. The main aim is to re-use the internal reports as a base to generate the external reports for the AAL CMU and national funding organizations.
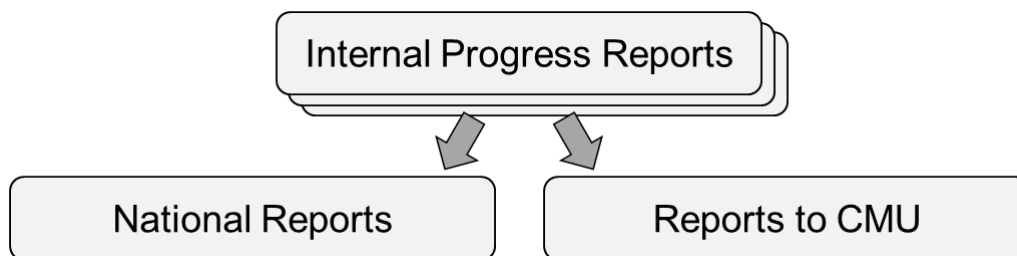
Figure 3   vAssist progress report setup

4.1   Internal Progress Reports

In order to have an overview of resources spent within the project, a half yearly report of each partner must be sent to the project coordinator every six months. This report includes:

- A brief description of the work done in the previous six months
- Resources used
- A brief description of the work planned for the next six months

Internal project progress reports will have to be completed within one month after the period has ended.

These 6 month internal reports will support all partners in creating the external reports for the AAL CMU and to their national funding organizations. A template is provided by the project coordinator, which is available at the internal area of the website (http://vassist.cure.at/project-management_/templates.html).

4.2 External Progress Reports

4.2.1 Progress Reports to AAL CMU

CURE as the project coordinator is responsible for the preparation and delivery of periodic reports and financial reports to the AAL CMU (Central Management Unit of the AAL Joint Programme). Progress reports for the AAL CMU will have to be generated at project month:

- **12**
- **18 (Mid-Term-Review)**
- **24**
- **36**

The progress reports will include copies of any dissemination and exploitation activity (e.g. publication, conference presentation etc.) that was done during the covered period.

All partners have to provide their information in time to generate these reports for the AAL CMU. Inputs from the internal progress reports will be re-used to form the external progress report for the AAL CMU.

4.2.2 Progress Reports to National Funding Organizations

Each partner is responsible for the progress reports to the local national funding organization (Austria, France, Italy). The intervals for the reporting periods vary between the different partner countries.

All partners have to provide their information in time to their national funding organization. Inputs from the project internal progress reports will be re-used to form the external progress report for the local national funding organizations.

5 Naming Conventions and Version Management

vAssist uses some naming conventions to ease the collaboration between the project partners. The scheme has to be used for all deliverables and further for all other material circulated among the consortium members.

5.1 Naming Conventions

- The name of a document must:
  - Directly and unambiguously refer to the correct project document defined in the description of work (DOW)
  - Be unique and should have the following structure
    - vAssist_WPx_DocName_V0.x_Partnername.doc
      - e.g. vAssist_WP1_Contact_List_V0.1_CURE.doc
  - Be descriptive (e.g. using the doc title)
  - Includes the name of the organization at the end of the filename
    - e.g. e.g. vAssist_WP1_Contact_List_**CURE**.doc

5.2 Version Management

The document owner is the person that is responsible for the version management.

- **Version numbering:** The document owner starts a document with the version number 0.1 (x.y) and includes the name of her/his organization at the end of the filename.
  - y = draft versions
  - x = approved versions

- **Example:**
  - Document owner starts with version 0.1 + name of her/his organization
    - vAssist_WPx_DocName_V0.x_Partnername.doc
      - e.g. vAssist_WP1_Contact_List_**V0.1_CURE**.doc
  - Sends the document to the partners
  - Partners give comments/input and include the name of their organization at the end of the filename and sends back to owner
    - e.g. vAssist_WP1_Contact_List_**V0.1_EURAG**.doc
    - e.g. vAssist_WP1_Contact_List_**V0.1_PLOT**.doc
    - e.g. vAssist_WP1_Contact_List_**V0.1_IT**.doc
  - Owner merges the versions from different partners and creates version 0.2 + name of her/his organization
    - e.g. vAssist_WP1_Contact_List_**V0.2_CURE**.doc
  - Several iterations can be made for the creation of the final document
  - Document owner sends final document to the reviewers defined in the deliverable list (http://vassist.cure.at/deliverables_.html).
  - Reviewer(s) give last comments and approve the document

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- o Document owner creates the final version (PDF Format)
    - ▪ e.g. vAssist_WP1_Contact_List_**V1.0**.pdf
- o Uploads the document to the internal part of the vAssit website
- o Sends an information mail with the link to the mailing list: vassist-all@lehar.cure-vienna.org

6   Dissemination and Publication

This section covers the processes for internal and external dissemination and publication of vAssist project results.

6.1   Approval of Publications

Each publication of material representing the vAssist project or including results from the project needs an approval by the project consortium. The purpose behind this approval procedure is to allow each partner a chance to object a publication in case the partner's legitimate interests might be damaged by the publication. An objection can of course be made only based on legitimate grounds.

A copy of any proposed publication in connection with or relating to the vAssist project will first be sent to the mailing list: vassist-all@lehar.cure-vienna.org at least **two weeks prior to the submission deadline**. Each of the project partners may contribute or object to the publication within **five days after the reception of the copy** of the proposed publication on any of the following ground:

(i)   Partner considers that the protection of the objecting party's foreground would be adversely affected by the proposed publication,

(ii)   The proposed publication includes confidential information of the objecting party, or

(iii)   The publication of such information would be contrary to the legitimate commercial interests of the objecting party.

The proposed publication will not take place until the expiry of the above defined period of five days. In the absence of any objection within the above mentioned period, it is deemed that all parties agree to the proposed publication. Following the end of the above mentioned period, the coordinator shall inform the parties whether or not any objection has been received.

In the case that an objection is raised of any of the above defined grounds within the above defined period of five days, the party proposing the publication and the party objecting shall seek in good faith to agree on a solution on a timely basis whereby such objection is resolved.

6.2   Dissemination within vAssist

The key reason for the internal dissemination process is to allow all partners to understand other partners' work, thus an as-easy-as-possible access to the results of partners is envisioned. In a first step, each partner has to upload all publications of which approval is requested to the internal part of the vAssist website (http://vassist.cure.at/partnerarea_.html) and sends the link to the general vAssist mailing list. This procedure has the advantage that the publication material is accessible for all project members and reduces E-mail size for the approval process.

All dissemination material will be made available to all project partners to avoid any copyright issues. This will have a positive effect on the collaboration between the partners and give all project members access to relevant dissemination information and room for contributions. This procedure will particularly positively affect the cross-activity information flow within the vAssist project.

- **Availability for review and contributions:** All conference and journal papers will be made available for review by all members of the project before the official submission date at least **two weeks prior to the submission deadline**.
- **Access to publications:** Project members have to upload all accepted papers and publications to the internal area of the vAssist website (if the license allows it).
- **Access to other publication material:** Project members upload all other dissemination material (e.g. presentation slides) where vAssist is presented to the internal area of the vAssist website (if material is not confidential).

6.3 Dissemination outside vAssist

vAssist aims to reach the public. Thus, a list of references to all accepted publications will be made available on the external (public) part of the vAssist website.

Further, presentation slides or a public accessible link to them for external publication can also be provided.

6.4 Citation of vAssist Partners and Acknowledgements Text

All persons that contribute to the generation of vAssist project results that are included in any publication of any vAssist partner must be cited as co – author in the publication.

All publications based on the vAssist project have to include the following standard acknowledgements text:

The research presented is conducted within the vAssist project (AAL-2010-3-106) partially funded by the European Ambient Assisted Living Joint Programme and the National Funding Agencies from Austria, France and Italy.