

Successful completion of SILVER, the first cross-national Pre-Commercial Procurement project

The SILVER project searched for new, innovative ways to acquire public sector health services by utilizing a Pre-Commercial Procurement (PCP) process. The goal was to find robotics based technologies to help the elderly live longer at home independently. The SILVER project is now completed and the result of this exercise, LEA Care robot, has been designed, tested and evaluated.

The SILVER project had the ambitious goal of establishing and executing the first multiple member state Pre-Commercial Procurement within the European Union. This goal was achieved by executing a three-phase procurement process by five partnering countries. The procurement process resulted in introducing LEA (Lean Elderly Assistant) by Robot Care Systems in 2015. Furthermore, with the development of LEA Care robot, the SILVER project demonstrated the effectiveness of a Pre-Commercial Procurement approach when addressing societal and governmental needs.

LEA is a care robot disguised as a stroller that provides a number of fully autonomous functions. LEA Care robot helps the elderly, for example, when getting out of chair or walking. It has a measuring function and reminds the elderly of the daily routine such as medication or food and drink. Thus, the elderly can function longer independently and caregivers have more time for social and specific care tasks.

During the third phase of the SILVER Pre-Commercial Procurement, LEA Care robot was tested by end-users in all partnering countries: Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Sweden and United Kingdom. The aim was to verify and compare the full feature set and performance of the LEA Care robot in real-life conditions. Both the elderly and the carers gave encouraging feedback on LEA.

- *LEA is stable. You cannot fall, whereas my normal walker is light and you can easily fall, says Taimi, one of the first Finnish test-users.*

All the SILVER procurers agreed that there is future potential for LEA Care robot in supporting the SILVER challenge of caring 10% more care recipients with the same number of staff after further development. Specifically, the prototype of LEA Care robot needs to pass several stages of re-design and certification to be ready for commercial procurement. These activities are not coordinated within the SILVER

project since the commercialization of the solution falls out of the scope of the SILVER Pre-Commercial Procurement project.

Currently, all the SILVER procurers are developing plans to continue working with Robot Care Systems in order to support the further development of LEA Care robot.

- *In my opinion LEA has a lot of potential to our customers or other elderly who could buy it for themselves. In the future, LEA could be one of the equipment that gives a safer environment for the elderly and also supports him or her to move more at home, says Satu Siikander, Administration Manager for City of Vantaa.*

The contractor, Robot Care Systems, encourages other SMEs to enter Pre-Commercial Procurement projects as they provide a good opportunity for developing new solutions and even starting up a new company. Furthermore, by participating in EU funded projects, SMEs are able to gain credibility which can be helpful, for example, in getting additional funding. Robot Care Systems won several innovation awards in 2015 which helped them move forward in the further development of LEA Care robot.

- *To the small and mid-sized companies that do not yet have financing, PCP is a perfect way to create a sustainable company that can distribute products all over the world, summarizes Maja Rudinac, CEO for Robot Care Systems, the main benefits from the SME's point of view.*

In order to further the use of the Pre-Commercial Procurement tool, the SILVER project consortium has gathered valuable recommendations and document templates for future Pre-Commercial Procurement exercises. These documents are available at: www.silverpcp.eu/deliverables.

More information

Video: [LEA Lean Elderly Assistant](https://vimeo.com/180551390) (<https://vimeo.com/180551390>)
Images of LEA: we.tl/QF4qbruagH

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www.silverpcp.eu