

Návrh Projektu ITU 2024/2025

Brno University of Technology - Faculty of Information Technology

1. The Application (Zadání)

1.1 Name & Topic (Název a téma)

1.1.1 YouQuest

We have decided we'd like to look into applications that provide tooling to help people in planning their upcoming trips, be it one or many cities, a new country, or a different continent. Nadzeya came up with this idea because of the many issues she and her friends had with the tooling they were recently using.

1.1.2 Team members

- Albert Popov (xpopov10) <- Captain
 - Nadzeya Antsipenka (xantsi00)
 - Nurdaulet Turar (xturarn00)
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1.2 Customers research (Uživatelský průzkum a specifikace)

We have found and interviewed 5 relevant customers in total. An offline interview, open-ended Q&A, and an online questionnaire were used. Here's what we've learned from them:

1.2.1 Our customers (kdo je konkrétní uživatel)

- People interested in traveling.
 - People who plan their trips without the help of travel agents

1.2.2 What they want/need from the application (co přesně od aplikace potřebuje)

- A tool that makes planning of a trip easy.

1.2.3 Underlying Research

1.2.3.1 Albert's customer research:

- Created a Google Form (<https://forms.gle/QXqrSPgtp4VPS8CR9>)
- Surveyed 2 respondents
- Trip Planning: Both respondents had travelled before and planned their trips themselves. They chose destinations based on accessibility, accommodation and transport costs, as well as online reviews and social media such as Instagram and Google Maps.
- Use of apps: Both respondents indicated that they do not use specialised planning apps, relying on notes on mobile devices. They appreciate the ease and convenience of editing schedules and sharing notes.
- Travel interests: One respondent prefers to visit attractions, while the other is interested in both attractions and events such as fairs and festivals.
- Budget: Learners indicated that their budget is usually 'floating' and they often spend more than they had planned. This indicates a flexible approach to finances.
- Thus, it can be concluded that users are interested in an app that would integrate route planning, trip information storage and weather alerts to facilitate trip organisation and improve travel comfort.

1.2.3.2 Nadzeya's customer research:

- Developed a list of questions for in-person respondent interviews.
- Surveyed 2 respondents.

To summarize, our potential customers want a travel app to have:

- A basic interface initially that grows in complexity only as needed.

- A clean, minimalistic design with color accents for important menu items.
- An easy-to-create wish list of destinations marked on a map without requiring daily or hourly scheduling.
- Automatic distance calculation between wish-listed spots, with suggestions for nearby attractions.
- Minor, lesser-known locations (e.g., cemeteries, small landmarks, abandoned buildings) with photos and descriptions, even if these places aren't typically classified as "mainstream" attractions.
- A simple list of local, free events without cluttering the primary experience.
- Filters or tags to prioritize affordable food, accommodation, and travel options.
- User-provided guides about places to eat, stay, visit, and other minor areas of interest.

1.2.3.3 Nurdaulet's customer research

- Developed a list of questions for in-person respondent interviews.
- Using that, has interviewed 1 relevant customer.

My interviewee does not have extensive experience with other trip-planning apps. I conducted an interview to learn more about his travel experiences, focusing on why he enjoys traveling, how he approaches trip planning, and how some of his past trips have went.

I aimed to find spots in his process, that we could optimize to improve his experience. To learn about that, I've started by asking open-ended questions, but then went more directly.

He is open to exploring new apps to find a better fit for his needs. Specifically, he would like an app that can assist with trip planning while suggesting activities and places to visit. A key use case he mentioned is when driving to a new city - using a navigation app to display interesting attractions and sightseeing opportunities along the route.

1.2.4 Customer Requirements (požadavky uživatele)

A summary:

- A streamlined, intuitive interface with minimal clutter.
- Ability to browse attractions with user recommendations on routes, not just destinations.
- **Recommendations** not only on places to visit, but **on whole routes with attractions to take**.
- Be able to find and research places. With pictures. When they are found and selected, **suggest possible routes to take**.
- Shared accounts for group planning.
- Weather forecasts for planned dates and destinations.
- Storage for travel-related documents (tickets, QR codes, location details).

1.3 Research of existing solutions (Průzkum existujících řešení)

We have decided to research 6 applications that are trying to do what our users are looking for. They are: TripIt, MakeMyTrip, Wanderlog, Stippl, Sygic Travel, and TripAdvisor.

1.3.1 TripIt (Albert)

TripIt is a travel management application designed to streamline the organization of travel plans by consolidating all trip details in one place. It automatically creates a detailed timeline from booking confirmations for flights, hotels, car rentals, and other services by forwarding confirmation emails to a dedicated address.

Pros:

1. Intuitive, easy to navigate, visually appealing timeline of trip details.
2. Centralizes booking info like confirmations and tickets.
3. Allows shared, multi-user trip editing.

Cons:

4. Overwhelming field options for adding events, hindering user experience.
5. No recommendation system, requiring manual addition of destinations.
6. Limited document uploads in the free version; paid version billed annually.

1.3.2 MakeMyTrip (Albert)

MakeMyTrip integrates booking options for flights, hotels, and packages in one app, simplifying travel planning.

Pros:

1. Integrated bookings for flights, hotels, transport, and packages in one app, streamlining travel planning.
2. Loyalty System: Regular users enjoy bonuses and discounts.
3. Travel Community Forum and Blog: Users can read and post reviews, sharing experiences and tips, which assists in planning.

Cons:

4. Cluttered Interface: The app's interface is overloaded and suggests services like hotel bookings before destination selection, complicating navigation, especially for undecided users.
5. Tailored mainly for Indian users, limiting feature access for international travelers.
6. Trip Planning Post-Purchase: Itineraries auto-populate only after booking, inconvenient for users who prefer route planning before purchase.
7. Your trip plan is available only online

1.3.3 Wanderlog (Nadzeya)

A comprehensive tool for organizing trips from start to finish.

Pros:

1. Has a wide range of features. Has almost everything you need to plan a trip: organize itineraries, plan routes, store reservations, accommodation and track expenses.
2. Allows for online collaboration with other people coming on a trip.
3. Includes lists of attractions that can help users find new entertainment ideas.

Cons:

4. Has a cluttered, unintuitive interface that can put off new users.
5. Users are unable to add customised pins or markers on a map.
6. Does not include real-time updates for weather or traffic.
7. Does not include user reviews of destinations or attractions and other guidelines or advice from other travelers.
8. Absence of filtering and sorting options when searching for attractions.
9. Offline maps are only for the paid Pro version.

1.3.4 Stippl (Nadzeya)

Pros:

1. Detailed guides to some cities and destinations for inspiration.
2. Allows users to collaborate with fellow travelers.
3. Trip info can be easily shared.

Cons:

4. Interaction with a map is confusing and very "lacking" in features
5. Doesn't have a app using tutorial.
6. Some users find the interface to be too complicated.
7. Does not include user reviews of destinations or attractions.

1.3.5 Sygic Travel (Nur)

Pros:

1. Offline maps, which is useful in areas with poor coverage.
2. Integrates reviews from external platforms such as TripAdvisor.
3. Detailed guides for cities and destinations worldwide.
4. A wide range of features. Users can organise itineraries, routes, reservations, accommodation and expenses.
5. An appealing interactive map for planning activities within a city

Cons:

6. Absence of collaboration features.

7. Offline maps are only for the paid Pro version.
8. Does not include user reviews of destinations or attractions and other guidelines or advices from other travelers.

1.3.6 TripAdvisor (Nur)

Helps travelers find, review, and plan visits to attractions, restaurants, and events worldwide. It provides user-generated reviews, ratings, and booking options to assist with informed travel decisions.

Pros:

- Large information database on attractions, restaurants, and hotels with reviews and ratings from users.
- Booking options directly through the app, simplifying travel planning.
- Integration with maps and navigation services.

Cons:

- Limited trip planning flexibility, especially regarding detailed scheduling and route tracking.
- Complex and unintuitive trip organization interface.
- Ads and commercial influence on search results.

1.3.7 Conclusion

User Needs and Preferences

- **Collaboration Tools:** Users want robust features to easily share itineraries with friends and family.

- **Simplified Planning:** Users seek straightforward tools for itinerary planning that integrate travel information seamlessly, without intrusive ads or excessive upselling.
- **Service Integration:** Users suggested linking the app to credit card services, as many already use these for travel benefits.

Competitor Analysis

- **Feature Gaps:** No existing app fully meets our respondents' top preferences. Some apps like TripAdvisor and Triplt excel in specific areas, while others, like Wanderlog, attempt to be comprehensive but overlook key user priorities.
- **Overwhelming Interfaces:** Apps like MakeMyTrip and Wanderlog suffer from cluttered interfaces, complicating navigation and detracting from the user experience.
- **Route and Attraction Recommendations:** Most apps, including Triplt and TripAdvisor, focus on individual bookings or reviews rather than offering comprehensive route recommendations or attractions along the way.

- **Interactive Maps:** Visual planning tools are essential, but apps like Stippl have confusing map features, reducing usability.

Key Takeaways

- **First Impressions Matter:** Designing a user-friendly, multi-functional app is crucial, as first impressions strongly impact retention.
- **Information Aggregation:** Respondents noted that they often gather travel information from various sources (social media, Google Maps, friends). Our app could consolidate this information, offering itineraries based on user reviews to help newcomers plan trips to unfamiliar destinations.
- **Trip Notes and Document Storage:** Many apps overlook managing travel documents and notes (e.g., timetables, booking codes). Adding this feature could streamline users' travel planning.

1.4 App Requirements (Zadání)

1.4.1 User Capabilities

Our app will allow users to:

- **Crowdsourcing** is the core of our app. What makes us different from our competitors. We want to bring users to a platform where they can share experiences, provide guidance to others.
- **Browse cities and attractions** using an interactive map of the whole globe. Add them to a wishlist.
- **Create routes between cities and attractions**
 1. Automatically using the built-in navigation software. Be able to tweak it if deemed necessary.
 2. Choose from routes created by other users.
- View and save **routes from the community** to their wishlist.
- View weather forecasts for dates associated with their chosen routes.
- Make reviews of places they've visited.
- Share information about ongoing activities, festivals, parties.
- Create and share routes they've taken with other users.
- Share routes via social media or using a link.
- Add new locations to the map.

1.4.2 Core Front-End Components

- **Onboarding** screens that skip several steps of the default use flow to introduce new users to the app. By doing so we aim to have the first-time interaction as frictionless as possible.
- **Inspirations** screen for browsing ideas for trips to take, places to visit.
- **Interactive map** for browsing and saving/selecting locations and/or attractions.
- **Organizing** screen for creating or selecting routes, setting visit dates, and viewing weather forecasts for the trip.
- **Document Upload** for a trip. Plane tickets, QR Codes for entering museums, City passes, etc.

1.5 FE Work distribution (Rozdělení práce týmu na FE)

1.5.1 Albert's FE

- Active Trip Section
- Options (Settings)

1.5.2 Nadzeya's FE

- Main screen
- Wishlist screen
- Route selection screen

1.5.3 Nurdaulet's FE

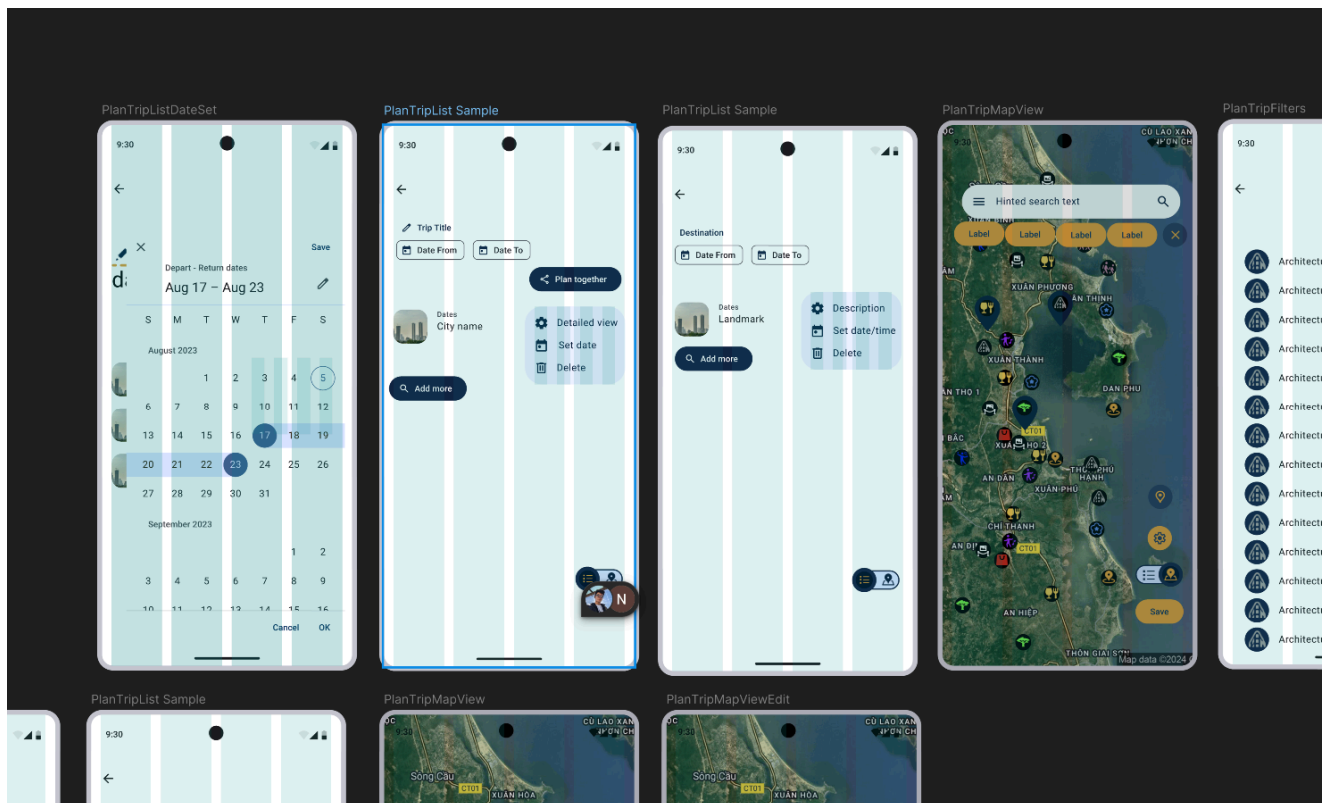
- Onboarding
- Documents viewing & uploading

2. App proposal (Návrh)

2.1 GUI (Návrh GUI)

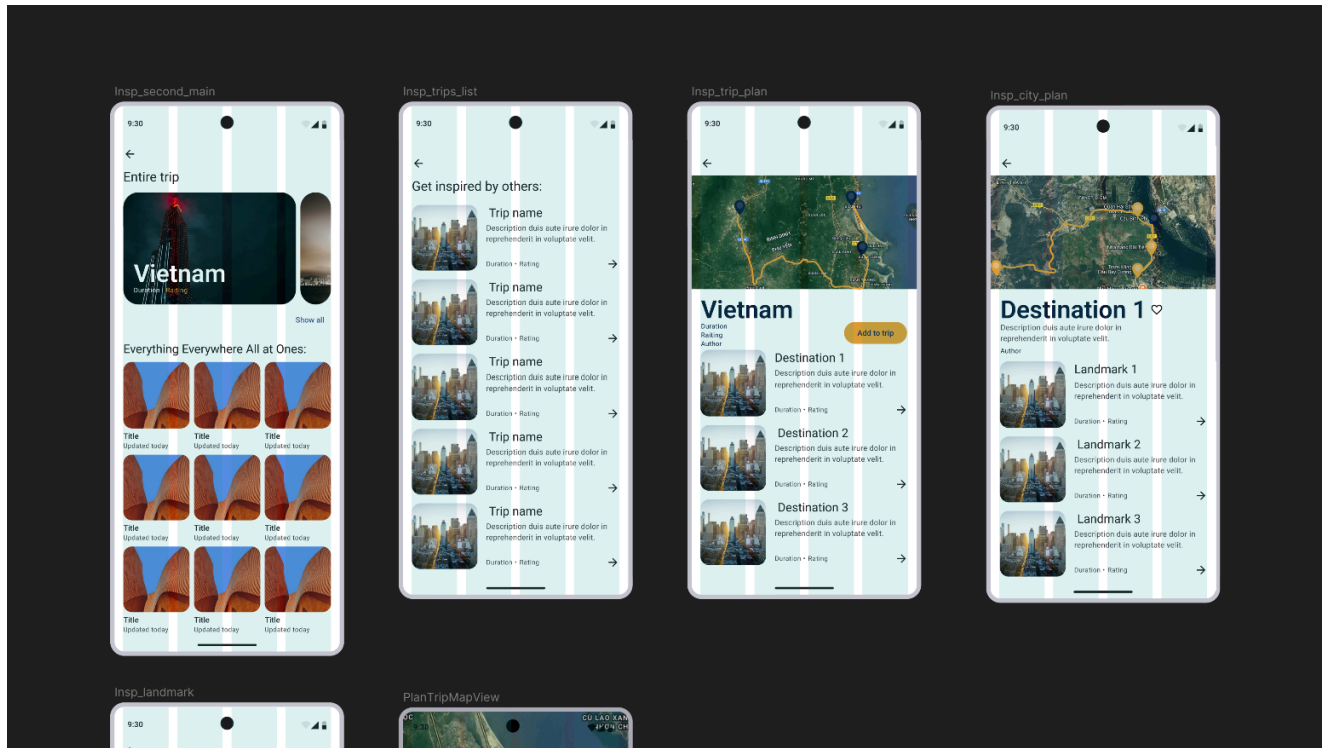
2.1.1 Albert's GUI

- Active Trip Section
- Options (Settings)



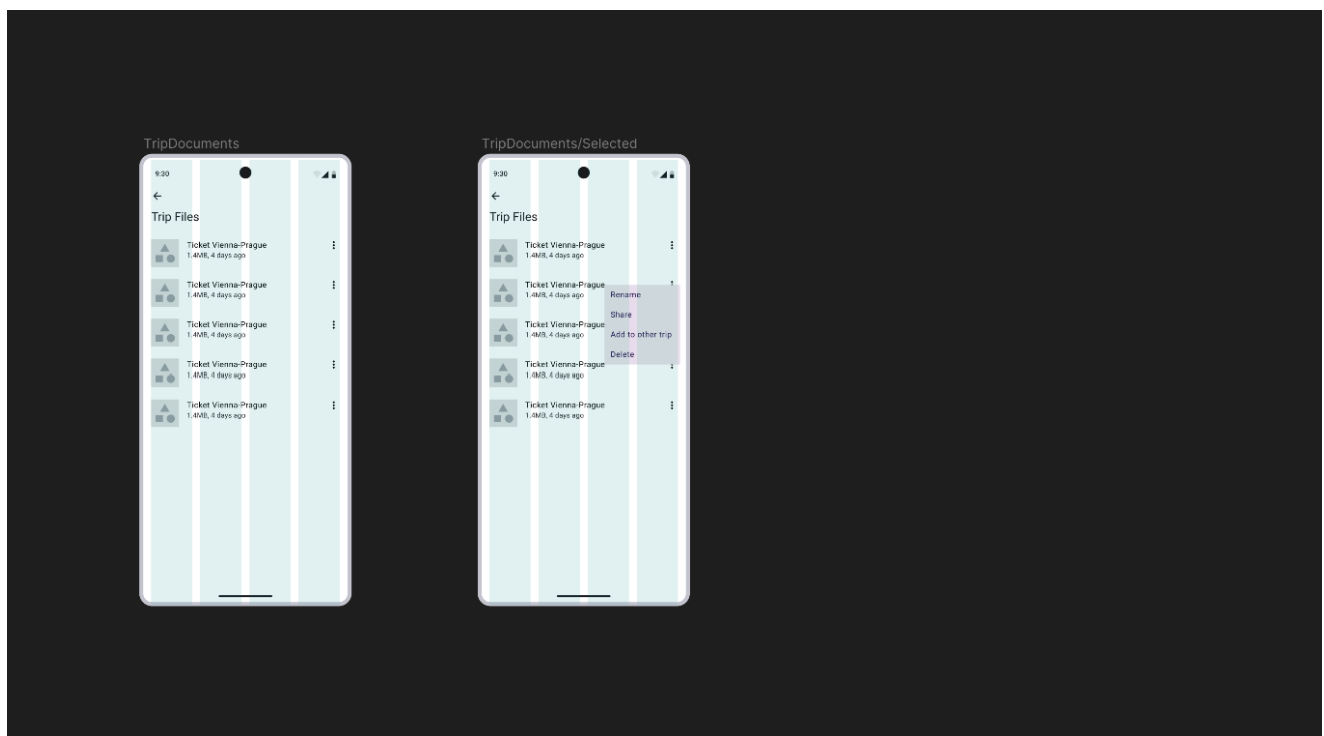
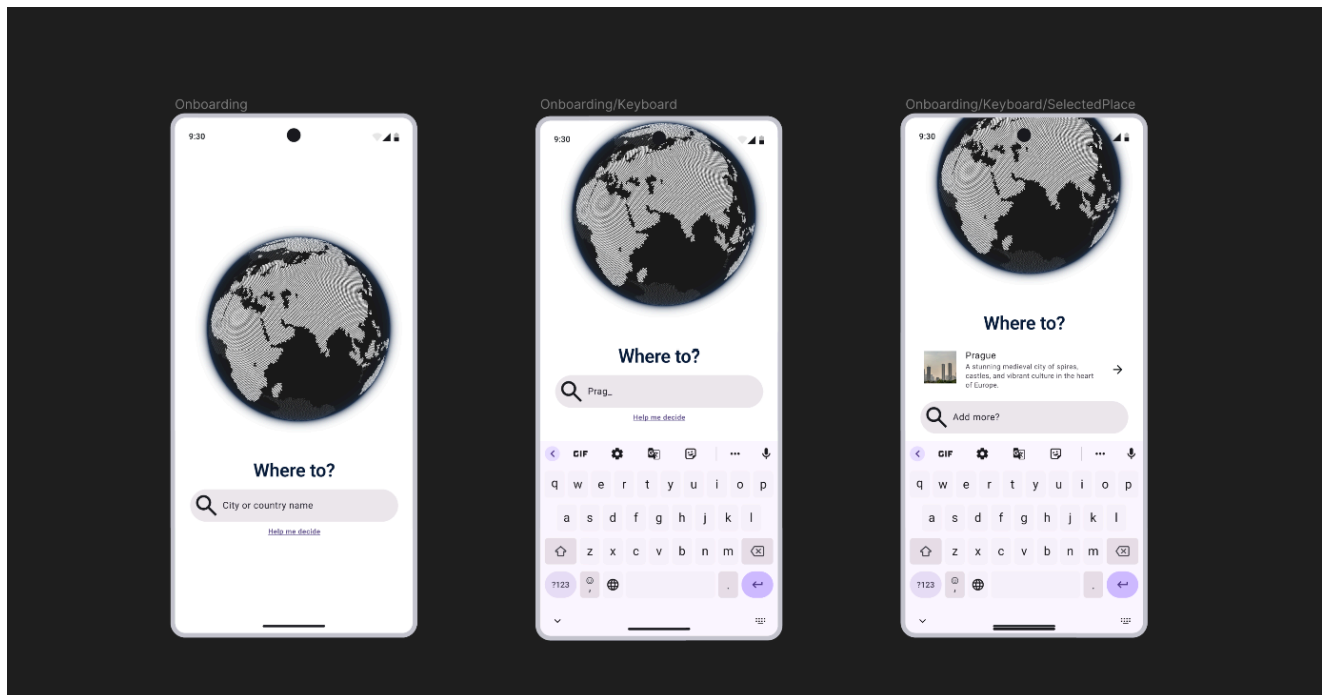
2.1.2 Nadzeya's GUI

- Main screen
- Wishlist screen
- Route selection screen



2.1.3 Nurdaulet's GUI

- Onboarding
- Documents viewing & uploading



2.2 Tech stack choice (Výběr technologií)

The following sections detail our choices for the platform and framework, along with the reasoning behind each decision.

2.2.1 Chosen FE Platform

We have decided to make a mobile application. Our users are always carrying their phones with them (everyone do). Since we provide **offline navigation**, storing of tickets, passes, mobile platform fits best for our use case.

2.2.2 Chosen FE Framework

We have chosen Flutter as our mobile framework, since it is the best fit for our application. When considering the choice of technology stack, we've been considering **Time To Market**, being how fast an application can be built & released, **performance**, since displaying a customized map is a moderately intensive task. **We did not care about the application size**, since it's safe to say that these days most phones can easily allocate ~100 MB of storage. Here's a table of comparison:

Platform	Development Time	Team Experience	Performance	Application Size
Native	Longest development time	No experience with native development	Highest performance	Minimal
React Native	Shorter time to market	Limited prior experience	Below average	Relatively small
Xamarin	Moderate time to market; may need platform-specific expertise	Strong in C# and .NET	Average	Moderate
Flutter	Shorter time to market	Dart is similar to C#; solid OOP background	Near-native performance	Relatively large

2.2.3 Chosen BE Framework

We've chosen .NET to develop an API for our application. Reasoning behind this:

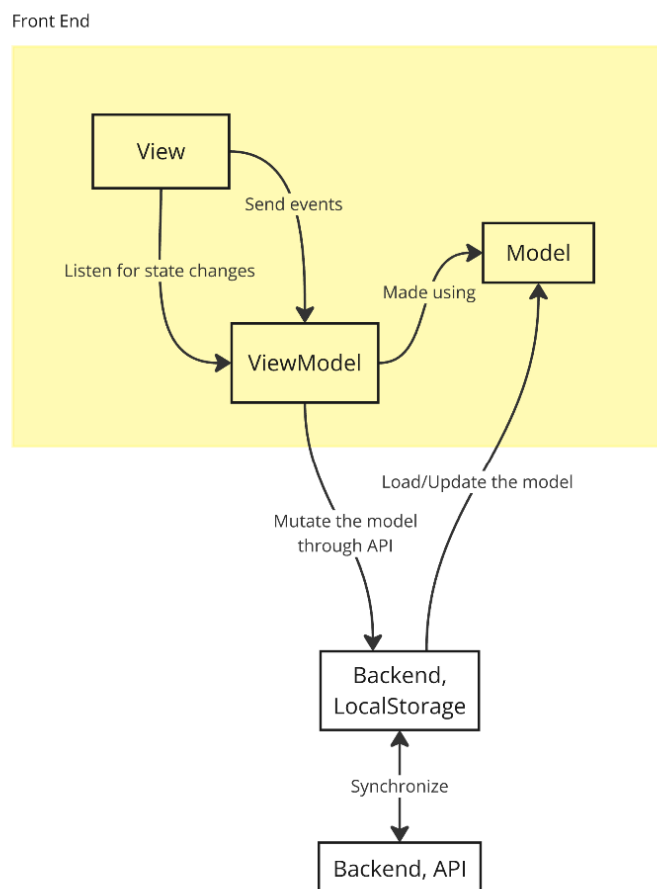
- We all have experience with .NET Framework -> it's the fastest way for us to create a BE.
- It's both performant in development time and execution time.
- Huge and very mature developers community.

2.3 BE API (Návrh API k BE, v rámci týmu)

2.3.1 Architecture: MVVM at FE

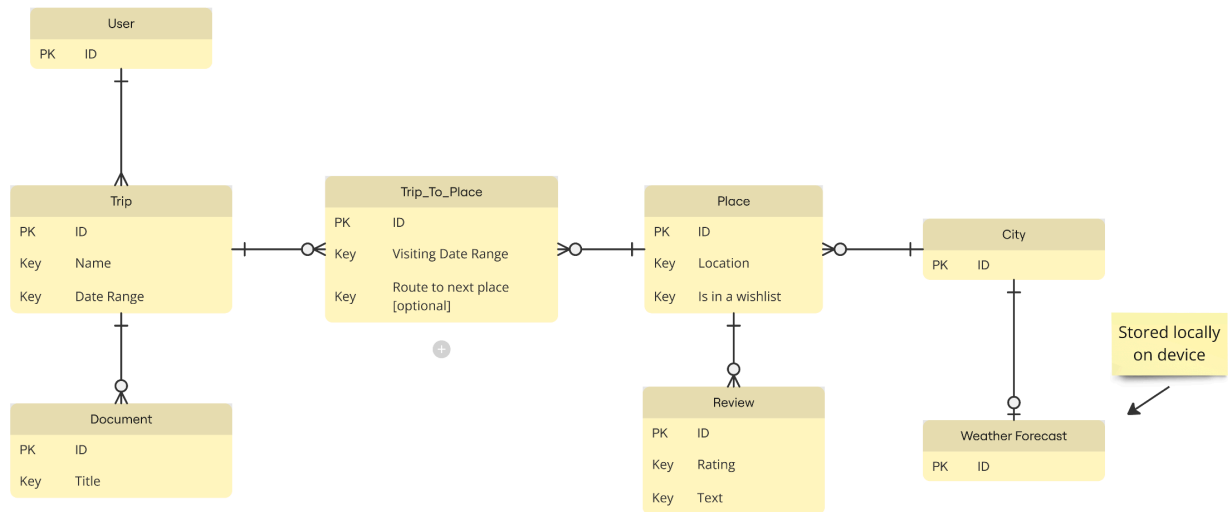
We have defined 3 layers of a FE part of the application:

- View: Takes care of GUI representation. Listens for changes in ViewModel layer & re-renders GUI elements when something changes. Sends events, actions, that ViewModel elements can react to.
- ViewModel: Is a representation of the application state. It defines actions that can be made, like "Add place to trip", "Upload document", "Duplicate the trip", etc.
- Model: A representation of data actually being stored.



2.3.2 Data model

Below our current sketch of our data model is presented. Cities are added when a place within that city is added. User can plan to visit several places within one city.



2.3.3 Backend

Most of the functionality is going to be provided via http API.

Our API will provide the following:

- 🌐 Querying of **Points of Interest (PoI)** within some location range. It can be a city, a town, a museum, a mall, or whatever else.
- 📄 Querying of Trips for inspiration. If user likes something, provide an action to copy it to his list of trips.
 - On BE, a recommendation system would be added (out of scope, won't implement). It would pick out trip ideas from a database of trips of other users, that would then be shown to users that are looking for some inspiration.
- 🏛️ Adding a **Place** he wants to visit which is linked to a **PoI**.
- ☁️ Get a weather forecast for the **Cities** or **Places** he wants to visit for the dates range. It can be within his planned visiting dates, or a wider range to pick better dates.
- ✈️ CRUD of his **Trips**, an entity that holds the places he wants to visit during the trip.
- 🏛️ CRUD of his places.
- 📄 CRUD of his **Documents**, files that are useful to have in hand during the trip.
- ★ Create a review for a **Place** he had visited.

During development, more actions may be added as we spot what we might've missed.