

Prof. Dr. S. Usui
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Dear Dr. Usui,

VISIOME 's 'Basic Neuroscience' section is of far broader potential relevance than just to the field of vision research, so it should be worthwhile to make this part at least more accessible to the neuroscience community at large, e.g., by joining forces with other projects (both at the national and international level) that aim at preparing for the INCF. One key technical feature that is of particular relevance in that respect is the establishment of interoperability with other platforms which is currently hard to achieve due to the lack of a common ontology (in the IT sense of the word) in neuroinformatics. It should be rewarding, therefore, to contribute to the development of such an ontology based on what has already been achieved by the VISIOME project so far.

With respect to the development process of the VISIOME platform itself but even more so of the personal VISIOME and SATELLITE projects I would like to suggest that you may want to consider opening the development process to a broader (software developer) community. Personally, I have made very good experiences with the open source software development model but you should be carefully considering the appropriate point in time when to do so. This would require, of course, not only a minimal amount of overhead for co-ordinating the distributed development model but also a certain amount of documentation and standardization of the software involved. Care has also to be taken to exclude components that are not open source or to reorganize the projects such that no such proprietary components will be needed.

Finally, I would like to stress that developing a platform like VISIOME realizes a key component for a new communication infrastructure within the neurosciences and you did a great job here, but maintaining and perfectioning it is at least as challenging and rewarding. This includes, e.g., broadening the user base, extending and updating the content, improving the software that implements the platform, and training people to make optimal use of it. This certainly requires substantial resources and it would be very counterproductive if the know-how that the NRV/VISIOME team members have gathered during the first phase of the project would be lost due to discontinued funding.

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