Chapter 16
Considering Subcontractors in Distributed Scrum Teams

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Abstract In this chapter we present our experiences with working with subcontractors in distributed Scrum teams. The context of our experiences is a medium size software service provider company. We present the way the subcontractors are selected and how Scrum practices can be used in real-life projects. We discuss team arrangements and tools used in distributed development teams highlighting aspects that are important when working with subcontractors. We also present an illustrative example where different phases of a project working with subcontractors are described. The example also provides practical tips on work in such projects. Finally, we present a summary of our data that was collected from Scrum and non-Scrum projects implemented over a few years. This chapter should provide a practical point of view on working with subcontractors in Scrum teams for those who are considering such cooperation.

16.1 Introduction
In this chapter we discuss industrial experiences in organising distributed Scrum teams that include members from subcontracting organisations. We present specific
context of working with subcontractors in such teams. We discuss details of our experiences in subcontracting [1] and in Scrum projects [2] that have been reported in our previous publications. However, in this chapter we focus on the practical aspects of cooperating with subcontractors in distributed Scrum teams.

The practices that we discuss should be particularly helpful for companies that are planning to use subcontractors in their distributed Scrum teams. However, those who already have such teams, can use all or selected recommendations in the later parts of this chapter. First we present, in Sect. 16.2, the process of selecting subcontracting partners we used. Next in Sect. 16.3, we discuss agile practices and tools that have been used in our distributed and subcontracted project teams. Those practices and tools are rather generic agile practices, but their specific aspects, for example quick feedback, are particularly important in the context of distributed teams with subcontractors. In Sect. 16.4 we go through a life-cycle of an example distributed project phases where we present how the agile practices and tools are used when working with subcontractors. Finally, in Sect. 16.5, we conclude this chapter with a summary of findings and possible future work. However, before going into details we should present the company (Sect. 16.1.1), which is the context for this work, and present our methodology (Sect. 16.1.2) and main results (Sect. 16.1.3) as an executive summary for the readers who are not interested in the actual details.

16.1.1 Company Context

As the experiences that we discuss have been gained in a context of a specific company, we will first present this context. Our experiences have been obtained through a few years of cooperation with subcontractors at Solita. Solita is a Finnish software service provider (SSP) that specialises in providing high quality software services in various domains. Since 1996 Solita has offered its services to customers in different domains, ranging from media, telecommunication, to public sector institutions and others. The diversity of customers and provided solutions demand very close cooperation with end customers, which requires a special approach to team organisation and choice of processes used. Additionally, the company has been changing internally over the years and has grown into a medium size company of 150+ specialists with two offices in two cities in Finland. These details give some perspective to the experiences we report on.

16.1.2 Methodology

Our findings on subcontractors in Scrum teams are based on our experience and the study we have conducted to find out the differences between Scrum and non-Scrum