

March 2024 BLSI Virtual Breakfast | Multidisciplinary teams as an enabler for digital-ready policies – key takeaways

We would like to thank our speakers: **Professor Min Tang**, University of Applied Management, **Athanasios Karalopoulos**, European Commission, and **Thomas Guillet**, beta.gouv.fr for sharing their valuable insights. In addition, we would like to express our gratitude to our attendees for their participation.

I. Preparing multidisciplinary teams for innovative tasks | Professor Min Tang, University of Applied Management

Different approaches to teams:

- **Multidisciplinary team:** combines knowledge and expertise without integration, members work independently.
- **Interdisciplinary team:** synthesize and integrate knowledge, members work collaboratively to complete tasks. Results of interdisciplinary collaboration: biochemistry, bioinformatics, or cognitive economics, etc.
- **Transdisciplinary team:** a higher degree of synthesis. Transcend the boundaries of disciplines through intensive collaboration. The goal is to create a new knowledge system and to bring change.

Multidisciplinary teams are **more than just a disciplinary diversity**. They include: functional diversity (educational backgrounds, tenure etc.), demographic diversity (age, gender, ethnicity etc.) and psychological diversity (personality, motivation etc.).

Diversity has a **double-edge effect** - it has both the positive and negative sides. To manage it teams must be adequately prepared for collaboration. The VICTORY Model provides guidance on how to achieve this goal.

The VICTORY Model:

- **Vision:** use clear vision to set up teams. Use vision to lead and inspire a team.
- **Ideation:** the process of coming up with ideas, evaluating them, and selecting the ones to develop. Leaders, if needed, should facilitate the ideation process through brainstorming workshops, brain walking etc.
- **Combine:** learn how to combine ideas and create something new.
- **Team:** create sense of shared responsibility, strong commitment and common goals bringing people together. A climate of trust, autonomy, and freedom enables an effective level of collaboration and communication for members to work together.
- **Openness:** members are prepared and open to different ways of acting. An open environment provides the opportunity to fail. In an open environment, members feel trust and autonomy.
- **Risk-taking:** members feel free to come up with their ideas.
- **Yes I Can:** strengthen the self-efficacy and confidence of the members.
- **Learning:** way to get work done while figuring out how to do this better (added in the updated version of the VICTORY model 2.0).

II. Multidisciplinary teams in the European Commission | Athanasios Karalopoulos, European Commission

Multidisciplinary teams in the context of the Regulation of data collection and sharing relating to short-term accommodation rental (STR) services. The objective of the regulation is to harmonise and improve the framework for data generation and sharing on STRs across the EU countries and to enhance transparency in the STR sector.

The multidisciplinary team was diverse functionally, demographically, and psychologically:

- **Functional diversity:** combining different profiles and roles (IT experts, legal and policy officers, middle/senior management) as well as representatives from different domains (single market, tourism, digital services).
- **Demographic diversity:** including males and females of different ages.
- **Psychological diversity:** sharing different thinking styles and values, having different motivations.

Challenges of working in a multidisciplinary team:

- Terminology (jargon)

- Lack of understanding linked to the complexity of a project's aspects
- Conflict and frustration
- Differences in prioritisation
- No back-up per functional profiles which caused delays

Benefits of working in a multidisciplinary team:

- Considering different aspects
- Early identification of challenges for different domains
- Increased quality
- Easier to address domain or country-specific issues
- Acknowledge the value of diversity

Lessons learnt from working in a multidisciplinary team

- Collaboration and communication are the most important
- Need to develop team spirit
- The role of team coordinator is key and challenging
- Openness to learn and work with others

III. Multidisciplinary teams in French public administration | Thomas Guillet, beta.gouv.fr

Multidisciplinary teams in the context of uniformization of price-cap policies across public services in the city of Strasbourg. The goal was to reprice the benefits and ensure that residents can find and use them.

The multidisciplinary team was originally composed of 3 people with different skills and expertise. However, it had to be expanded with 5 more people to fill the gap in domain-specific knowledge.

Challenges in the project:

- Wrong hypotheses on the data
- Lack of domain-specific knowledge
- Delays

Lessons learnt from working in a multidisciplinary team

- Shorter feedback loop
- Sponsorship is important to avoid frustration
- It is important to have a conversation and set up an open environment to benefit from diversity
- Pairs are valuable to understand how we can benefit from transdisciplinary teams
- For people to stay in the team, it is necessary to have time, a specific problem to work on, and sponsorship.