

# Career Sheet: Policy Advisor & EU Project Developer



## Martine Delannoy (Smart & Sustainable Cities & Communities Policy Advisor & EU Project Developer, Digitaal Vlaanderen)

In the year 2000, during the internet bubble, I entered the ICT sector and never left it since. This was kind of weird as I would regularly crash my parents computer when growing up and never associated ICT as something other than useful for my research... I had studied economics and public management at the University of Ottawa (Canada) and moved to Belgium in 1998. A large commercial company was seeking someone with a perspective on how users would use the internet, I had many ideas and a fresh perspective to contribute.

In 2006, I went from the commercial to the public service, because I found this a more meaningful environment. I was working to improve the city I lived in. My first role in Digipolis (Intermunicipal collaboration in charge of ICT for the cities of Ghent and Antwerp) was as program director on the digital divide (now referred to as e-Inclusion), followed by European Projects and External Strategy Coordinator and Chief Foresight Officer. I also made a short leap to the academic sector, working at Imec for almost two years. After which I joined the great team at Digitaal Flanders where I am currently working.



## OVERVIEW OF THE JOB

In my current job as SSCC Policy Advisor and EU project Developer I work at the intersection of technology and policy. What are the current regional policy priorities and how can they best be achieved with the digital technology at hand or soon to be released? How can we speed up uptake of innovative technologies through EU projects? Whom would like to work with us? How can we ensure the impact of our projects has a lasting impact?



## WHAT INSPIRED YOU

I have always been motivated to follow the path that I found the most interesting and in which my impact is at its maximum (never the easiest). I read a lot (lifelong learning) and question how things are and imagine how they could be. It leads me to seek out people that were changing things and evaluate how I could do the same.



## TYPICAL WORKING DAY

All my days are different as I like it.

I usually start off with my 6 minutes journal and planning in the meetings of the day in my alarm. I note 3 small and 3 important things I need to deliver on. After doing this I seek out the smartest way of getting this done always favouring collaboration, involving the experts, reusing what already exists and facilitating interaction with others to come up with a joint result.



## STUDY & CAREER PATH

I studied science and math in secondary school. I chose economics in Cegep (middle-school in Quebec between secondary and University) after first trying chemistry. Mathematics, I always found enjoyable because I approached it as a challenging game. At the University of Ottawa, I studied economics and public management. After graduating I never stopped learning in my free time immersing myself in anything and everything I found interesting via books, mooc's, video's... you name it.

In 2013, I discovered future studies which is the perfect combination of skills I had built up till then: technology knowledge, forward looking, participation, meshing perspectives to uncover new possibilities and areas where policy making would be needed.

Looking back I would not change a thing. Out of my trajectory I advise others to follow their heart and not be scared to make interesting combinations. We are all different and bring other sets of skills, experiences and perspectives. It is through uniting these that you get the best results. Embrace your difference and find what makes your contribution unique.



## KEY SKILLS

**Curiosity** allows me to eagerly seek and spot issues that could be solved and pinpoint possible funding mechanisms or collaboration opportunities.

**Analytical reasoning** I use to understand problems.

I often **research** documents covering the aspects and interview experts (**active listening** and **empathy**).

**Critical Thinking** allows me to constructively way into discussions to bring in new points of view and possible implications.

Within a government we not only need to **analyse problems** but also **solve** them within a challenging context. We need to take into account the context and the conditions (rules, financial context, available

skills, other tools currently used...). **Systems Analysis:** What will happen if we do this on other domains? Do we have sufficient means? If not, what would be effective alternatives?

Once we come up with a solution we need to sell the idea in a convincing way. This demands **business storytelling** based on an in-depth knowledge of the perspectives and objectives (**Strategic Planning**) of the listeners. If any issues or objections arise we need **openness towards feedback and criticism, emotional intelligence** and the **creativity** to adapt the idea on the spot.

In the Smart & Sustainable Cities & Communities field we are always working with how the most appropriate technology combination can be used in a public policy context. This demands we keep our knowledge on these technologies (**AI, Blockchain, AR, VR, XR, CitiVerse, IoT, ...**) up to date. We also need to know whom the experts are and how to find them.



## CAREER PROSPECT

My profile could fit in standard jobs and almost any industry as they all experience disruption through technological evolutions and many seek experts able to guide them.

I am a creative connector able to solve issues and advance society by bringing experts and technologies together. I need challenges and a creative setting to thrive.



## CHALLENGES

- Keeping a clear oversight of the important aspects that are changing;
- Growing a network of experts in complementary fields;
- Always staying on top of the new technological evolutions;
- Understanding the perspectives of the people you try to convince;
- Not just fixating on the current situation but also anticipating on what might happen;



## YOUR ADVICE TO STUDENTS

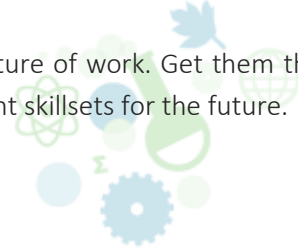
- Keep an open mind.
- Find out what makes you tick.
- Never stop learning.



## YOUR ADVICE TO TEACHERS AND PARENTS

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- Look with them into documents and other sources on the future of work. Get them thinking outside of the jobs they see today as they might not be relevant skillsets for the future.



## LEARN MORE

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