

“My colleagues are now coming to me with ideas”

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The critical first step to AI transformation

“The first stage of any change process is raising awareness. That’s where we are right now in the public service. We need to raise awareness about AI.”

As an experienced digital change manager who has led AI projects in the Federal Public Service Policy and Support, Iason Foscolos didn’t enrol in the AI Campus as a typical learner. He signed up to discover new ways to encourage and educate his colleagues about AI. Belgium has a mature digital government infrastructure, but its ranking in recent European e-government benchmarks suggests room for improvement. The influential AI4 Belgium coalition concluded that “too few” public institutions are experimenting with AI.

Iason wanted to use the AI Campus resources as a thought leadership tool for his team, where there are varying levels of awareness about AI. Iason encouraged them to explore the case studies, resources and communities available through the AI Campus. In his view, AI transformation can’t happen until there is AI awareness.

He believes that more colleagues in government need a deeper understanding of AI.

“We need to understand what it is, where you can get added value, what you can do with it and what you can’t do with it.”

Even within his team, Iason has seen how that knowledge can spark ideas for change.

“My colleagues are now coming to me with ideas. We’ve talked about creating an AI-powered, one-stop shop search bar to help citizens navigate federal services.”

Imagine the ideas and conversations that could be sparked if officials across Europe were part of a community exploring, learning and talking about AI.

This interview was conducted in April 2024.