Introduction: Part A

Eugene Kim, chief of the Department of Living Safety at the Korean National Policy Agency (KNPA), was stressed out due to the high volume of missing and runaway persons, even though the Agency operated numerous prevention and search programs. He thought that it was time to start thinking outside the box because the existing agency’s capabilities and resources may not be enough to resolve this problem. What further actions could the Department take to move this problem forward? Getting relevant information about missing and runaway persons from other central government agencies seemed to be a timely, feasible alternative. The KNPA already used additional information that was obtained from other agencies (e.g. the Ministry of Health and Welfare, the Ministry of the Interior and Safety, and the Korea Coast Guard), but those data were limited to identifying the whereabouts of missing persons.

Kim surmised that expanding the current collaboration network to share information effectively would lead this search project to success. He was aware that interest in interagency collaboration had been growing across government agencies, but feasible collaborations were rarely accomplished due to legal, structural, and cultural boundaries.
Lack of collaboration was not only the KNPA’s problem; other central government agencies faced the same situation. The typical organizational structure and culture of the KNPA were viewed as more authoritative, closed, cynical, passive, and rigid than those of other government agencies. So, collaboration with other agencies was not much valued and practiced within the Agency. Kim knew that creating collaborative environments at the agency would be challenging in this environment, but he was confident that collaboration would be worth trying to improve results of the missing person search and its long-standing success. His initiative was also a response to pressure from the current administration that emphasizes making government more flexible and innovative to create new values beyond bureaucratic boundaries.

The Chief did not know where or with which agencies to start working, so he asked Jimin Park, director of the Division of Women, Youth, and Children at the KNPA, to arrange a collaborative project for getting necessary information from other agencies. The Director felt sort of being forced by Chief Kim for extra collaboration without consensus with her Division on the needs and benefits of collaborative work, when she was asked to lead this project. Due to the underperforming results of the missing and runaway person search program, she had to justify the need for an expanded collaboration approach to the current search program. The Director did not have recent collaboration experiences with other agencies, and her previous experiences were very limited, not very pleasant, and rather inefficient. She asked herself what she planned to accomplish collaboratively and how she could positively reinforce her team and other unknown agencies by tapping into their needs to collaborate for the missing person search.
Each central government agency collected and maintained a variety of individual information across functions, but those data were not effectively shared with other agencies. If the Division could use distinctive information obtained by other agencies, searching for missing and runaway persons would be much easier and faster. However, there were numerous difficulties and barriers to interagency collaboration in terms of legal, institutional, and cultural circumstances that were detailed in later sections. On top of that, identifying potential partners was not an easy job due to limited knowledge about what individual information other agencies retained, whether that information was accessible, and to what extent partnering agencies were willing to collaborate with the division. Park’s team members in the Division spent a great deal of time preparing a list of potential partner agencies, but it was also hard to communicate with other agencies to request and share their data because of various limitations, such privacy of personal data, different rules and regulations for information sharing, and lack of uniform data-sharing policies across agencies.

The Need for Collaboration

The number of missing children reported in 2013 was 23,089 and 222 missing children were not found in the same year (KNPA, 2014): 99.99% of these missing children were returned home by the end of 2015 (KNPA, 2016) because of significant improvements in the KNPA’s information systems and operation mechanisms related to disappearances since 2011 (MOIS, 2014). However, the number of missing and runaway persons continued to increase as summarized in Table 1, even though the KNPA made intensive search efforts by running various programs. The Department of Living Safety was primarily responsible for protecting
citizens from harm and danger in their everyday life, so its core responsibilities focused on preventing crime and sexual violence, ensuring public order and regulations, and protecting women and children. As searching the missing children and persons was one of the Department’s target tasks, Chief Kim demanded that the Department should work together with other agencies to obtain extra information about those missing persons. To carry out the Chief’s request, Director Park and her team had back-to-back meetings to exchange ideas within and outside the agency.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Reported Missing and Runaway Cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dementia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentally handicapped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing (under 18 years old)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Runaway (over 18 years old)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In February 2013, the Board of Audit and Inspection of Korea (BAI) conducted audits in public information sharing and opening status to search for exemplary cases of discovering hidden sources of taxation and to promote government efficiency or benefits to citizens across government agencies. The BAI serves the President in overseeing the implementation of financial management and the central agency’s statutory and functional responsibilities (BAI, 2017). The agency is also responsible to inspect the performance of central government agencies and employees so it relatively gains power over other agencies. Based on the audit and inspection results, the BAI has constitutional authority to
request that the responsible Ministry, chief of the supervisory agency or chief of the agency take disciplinary actions, correction, and improvement.

During the process, the BAI unexpectedly found that it would be possible to locate missing or runaway persons if individual medical or traffic accident records could be cross-referenced among agencies after their disappearance. For example, healthcare providers claimed service charges to the National Health Insurance Service (NHIS), so if missing individuals were hospitalized, they can be identified in the NHIS system. These national insurance claims reported to the NHIS contain up-to-date information for those missing persons. The NHIS primarily aimed to provide the best healthcare service to all citizens as a method of promoting national and social security by working with government, the insured and healthcare providers. As a result, the KNPA can track those missing persons by using the locational information.

![Figure 1. Areas Requiring Interagency Collaboration (%)](image)

Source: Kim, Kwon, and Jin (2013), p. 28
At the Division of Women, Youth, and Children, Director Park and her team were already aware of the usefulness of national healthcare insurance data in searching for missing person, but they also knew that it would be hard to access these insurance records because of the sensitivity of medical information. The taskforce team including the Director agreed that the missing person issue could be resolved efficiently and quickly through collaborative interagency efforts. Their opinions were consistent with the results of the collaboration survey administered by the Center for Social Survey, Korea Institute of Public Administration (KIPA) during October 29 to November 8, 2013. The survey was designed to investigate collaborative practices across central government agencies. 1,000 public employees from 42 central government agencies, including 289 employees at the KNPA (Kim, Kwon, and Jin, 2013). The survey found that the most important need for interagency collaborative work was to resolve an issue promptly (80%). The followings were adjusting authority and jurisdiction (6.1%), meeting legal and institutional requirements (5.5%), implementing national primary goals (4.7%), saving budget (3.4%), and others (0.2%). The survey detailed the areas that needed interagency collaborative efforts at most presented in Figure 1 (Kim et al. 2013). 37.4% of the survey respondents in a variety of government agencies thought that public safety, to which the missing person project belonged, was the most demanding area that required interagency collaboration. Considering these factors, the nature of the KNPA business seemed to have a better position to conduct interagency collaboration rather than other government agencies.

Collaboration Milestones

The BAI mediated between the KNPA and the NHIS to build a
collaborative relationship for sharing public information based on Article 27 of the Audit and Inspection Law. With the help of the BAI, the Division of Women, Youth, and Children at the KNPA enabled to obtain medical records of missing persons and runaways from the NHIS without hassle and delay during March to May 2013. At first, the NHIS provided basic contact information of missing persons, which the KNPA used to find 7,922 people. In the second round, eight were additionally found by records of patients in mental hospitals and nursing homes and the pharmacy use (Ministry of the Interior and Safety [MOIS], 2014). In all, the KNPA located a total of 8,695 missing persons (MOIS, 2014), which was very successful in such a short period of time. On June 19, 2013, the case was introduced as a best practice of interagency collaboration in the joint-use resource category with overcoming organizational boundaries at the Government 3.0 vision proclamation ceremony. In fact, the New Administration heavily emphasized interagency collaboration, so working together with other agencies gave the KNPA a competitive advantage.

The KNPA actually moved quickly to arrange interagency collaborative efforts rather than other government agencies once the New Administration started in February 2013. So, the KNPA enabled to take advantages of a new government paradigm of Government 3.0 announced on June 17, 2013. Government 3.0 prioritized the four principles of openness, shared information, communication, and collaboration to deliver customized services and promote job creation and creative economy (MOIS, 2017). Government 3.0 was similar to the Obama administration’s U.S. Open Government Initiative that was implemented in 2009 and focused on transparency, participation, and collaboration as the cornerstones of open government. The Government 3.0 paradigm sought to reduce inefficiencies in government bureaucracy to respond to the dynamic
changes taking place in the socioeconomic and political environments. The new principles of Government 3.0 tried to exhort a longstanding idea of collaboration in practice so that the inherent inefficiency of government bureaucracy was expected to be resolved.

Director Park felt that the timing was right for the Division to have BAI involvement and recommendations in order to collaborate with the NHIS, because necessary information exchange and prompt communication between the two agencies were efficiently progressed with BAI’s mediation. These two factors were also founded as the most important elements to improve interagency collaboration successfully reported by the KIPA collaboration survey (Kim et al., 2013). 54 public employees, who involved in interagency collaboration projects, identified 16 key success factors rated on a ten-point scale (1 = very low to 10 = very high) to promote a collaborative work environment presented in Table 2. Director Park kept these success factors in mind while conducting interagency collaboration throughout the entire process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Obs.</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information sharing between partner agencies</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication between partner agencies</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear common goal setting</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear responsibility and share of authority</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership (strong support)</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High level of mutual trust between partner agencies</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing the needs for administrative collaboration</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement of public employee perceptions on collaboration</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prioritizing financial support to collaborative policy</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item</td>
<td>Obs.</td>
<td>Min.</td>
<td>Max</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-term collaboration and collaboration planning</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing a performance evaluation system for collaboration (applying weighted scores)</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expertise and capacity for persons who are in charge of collaboration</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing and improving a legal system for collaboration</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating and operating a dedicated organization to promote effective collaboration</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal and external marketing about collaboration</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educating and training public employees</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5.98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Kim et al. (2013), p. 37

During the collaboration with the NHIS, Director Park discerned that the NHIS’s partner team showed supportive attitudes toward this collaborative project. This corresponds directly to the result of the survey that changing employee perceptions about collaboration is critical to make a collaborative project a success. However, the partner team’s supportive attitudes should not be taken for granted. One of the task force members in the Division of Women, Youth, and Children observed cynical responses from the partner team when the task force team first opened the conversation with them. The Director spent extensive time with all members of the partner team in person explaining to them how the medical records could positively influence the missing person search and how this collaborative relationship would make both agencies’ jobs easier in general. She also welcomed any feedback and comments from both her task force and the partner team about this collaborative project, whether it was positive or negative. She tried to become more agreeable, more flexible, and more open in any
collaborative situation with the partner agencies.

The task force saw that her efforts seemed to reduce obstacles to build a trusting relationship for collaboration between the agencies. Her willingness to collaborate with the other agencies’ teams was one of the fundamental driving forces that made this project a success, which was also confirmed as the key to success reported by Kim et al. (2013). Their survey asked the central government employees to indicate the three most important requirements for interagency collaboration. As presented in Figure 2, 24.1% of the respondents identified the willingness of the person in charge to collaborate as the most important requirement. The other factors included leader’s interests, arrangement of a reward system, creation of collaborative organizational culture, and reasonable performance evaluation. The survey results supported that Director Park’s high commitment to this project contributed to the results of successful collaboration with the partner agencies.

**Figure 2. Key Requirements to Interagency Collaboration (%)**

- The willingness of the person in charge to collaborate: 24.1%
- Government policy support (e.g., financial support): 20.9%
- Interchange and collaboration between agencies: 19.6%
- Improvement of the legal system: 10.1%
- Development of competitive content: 8.8%
- Development of collaboration system and technology: 6.9%
- Training workforce: 4.4%
- Others: 5.2%

Source: Kim et al. (2013), p. 44
The KNPA initiated discussions with the NHIS, the National Pension Service (NPS), and the Government Employees Pension Service (GEPS) to build a routinized collaboration system for sharing information and cultivating a collaborative culture between July and August 2013. The GEPS is administered by the Ministry of Personnel Management to provide annuity and other benefits for government employees, while the NPS, affiliated with the Ministry of Health and Welfare, provides monthly benefits to the elderly, the disabled, and survivors of those receiving benefits. A potential selling point for collaboration with the newly contacted two agencies was that both agencies would be able to use the KNPA’s missing person data to investigate national pension fraud. For example, if a national pension recipient is missing, the missing person is no longer entitled to receive a pension payment.

After the positive outcomes of the initial collaboration between KNPA and NHIS, Chief Eugene Kim thought that the KNPA should start collaborating with the other agencies in the same way to expand its information-sharing network. Despite the significant accomplishment of the collaboration between KNPA and NHIS, Director Park was not sure whether the success with the NHIS was the result of specific things she and her team had done. She felt that the initial success of collaboration was somewhat contingent on factors beyond the KNPA and the Division’s efforts. What were the unforeseen conditions, unpredictable issues, and uncontrolled assumptions during the collaboration process? Without the BAI’s involvement at the beginning of the process, establishing a new collaborative relationship between two agencies would be difficult due to organizational boundaries, lack of legal grounds, and others. Consequently, Director Park had difficulty conceptualizing the tasks of her role for building and maintaining relationships with the partner team at the
NHIS because no one was sure what they were supposed to be doing until the BAI came in. She also questioned herself about what benefits the partner agency can be awarded to make the counterpart commit to continue this collaborative project.

The Director and her team felt that it would be an overwhelming task to achieve high levels of cooperation with other agencies in spite of the team’s recent success at collaborating, since maintaining those conditions often requires substantial investment in the organizational capacity for collaboration across central government agencies. The Director herself did not have enough experience to negotiate collaborative deals with other agencies, and training opportunities were rarely offered that would have enabled her to raise her collaboration game. She acknowledged that collaboration was easier in the first place when there was a noticeable issue and a common ground that motivated the KNPA and partner agencies to be collaborative, but the problem itself may not be obvious to other government agencies all the time. The Director asked herself what enables strong, ongoing collaborating to take place with partner agencies. Shared goals for a collaborative partnership with other agencies were neither straightforward nor obvious, so motivating a collaborative mindset was a challenge. Things just may not click with the partner agencies, even with a mutual desire to carry out the missing person search successful. Was the collaborative approach going to be the new normal within the KNPA and across other agencies?

**Outreach Efforts for Interagency Collaboration: Part B**

Director Park, as the agent in charge of this collaborative task, strategized to emphasize this information exchange feature as the mutual benefits
of a collaborative partnership between the KNPA and the partner agencies. The Director constantly communicated advantages of interagency collaboration by holding well-prepared meetings and follow-ups with the counterpart agencies, so that the agencies recognized the value in working with, rather than against, one another. Her selling points to get the agencies on board with this collaborative network were to save resources for collecting hard-to-reach information, resolve each agency’s policy issue comprehensively, and improve agency’s productivity mutually. As a result, she was able to reach consensus on target groups (missing children and runaway individuals), scopes (missing date and time, medical benefits information, contact information), and a cycle of information sharing in every March and September per year with the NHIS and the GEPS (Kim et al., 2015).

Through consultation with the NHIS, the KNPA expanded the use of individual medical information provided by the NHIS to search for missing children and runaways. Personally identifiable information was restrictedly shared with the KNPA only for crime investigation before this collaboration work. Recently, the two agencies have also promoted to design a real-time information sharing system together. The NHIS and the GEPS can use the missing and runaway individual data to investigate fraudulent pension and healthcare benefit claims and file fraud charges if necessary. If there is strong evidence a missing person is dead, payments from the national pension plan can be terminated and the amount paid from the national pension plan can be collected.
Table 3. The Use of the Missing Person Information by the National Pension Service

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Suspension of pension payments (case)</th>
<th>Lapse of the right to receive pension (case)</th>
<th>Recollected fraudulent payment (case/KRW)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11/81,439,120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5/56,022,890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>16/137,462,010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Kim et al. (2015), p. 115

In September 2013, the NPS also joined discussions with the KNPA about information sharing between two agencies. Starting in October 2013, the KNPA agreed to provide information about missing persons to both the NPS and GEPS. As a result, both agencies were able to recollect fraudulent pension payments. Table 3 shows the budget savings as a result of the use of the missing person data by the NPS. In September 2014, the KNPA consulted with the Division of Employment Support and Unemployment Benefits at the Ministry of Employment and Labor (MOEL) to access employment data. The KNPA has been sharing information with the Korea Employment Information Service (KEIS), which is affiliated with the MOEL, to collect and analyze employment data since February 2015. Director Park and her team observed that a solid collaborative network had a sort of a domino effect as other agencies saw their success. Their previous success made it possible for other agencies to listen and want to join in discussions on information sharing between agencies.
Collaboration Conundrums

Director Park and her task force acknowledged that collaboration is worthwhile, but government agencies may not be inherently good at it due to the strict boundaries that organizations use to outline their responsibilities, functions and authority. The wicked problems and complicated environments facing government are hard to manage within these boundaries. The collaboration survey conducted by Kim et al. (2013) showed the need for collaboration across central government agencies. The survey asked 955 employees about the need for interagency collaboration for their work in the future. 87.9% of the respondents (37.8% - highly necessary; 50.2% - mostly necessary) recognized the necessity of collaborative work, while only 12.1% of the respondents (1.8% - no need; 10.3% - not much need) did not. With regard to areas for future collaboration needed, the respondents thought the demand for collaboration was highest in the general administration area (84.1 out of 100 points), followed by economic affairs (81.1 points), social and cultural affairs (81 points), and foreign and national security affairs (76.2 points). The current trend of boundaryless organizations does not necessarily imply that boundaries should be eliminated in government organizations. Rather, feasible and sustainable strategies of collaboration are necessary to work effectively at the organizational boundaries.

The KNPA was already using the Ministry of Health and Welfare’s solitary and disability data, the Ministry of the Interior and Safety’s resident registration data, and the Korea Coast Guard’s boarding data to search for missing children and runaways. However, the KNPA was only authorized to use patient medical records controlled by the NHIS for crime investigation under Article 199 Section 1 and 2 of the Criminal
Procedure Law. The Protection and Support Act for Missing Children and Persons did not authorize the KNPA to access patient medical records under Article 21 of Medical Law that lists only 11 Acts as entitled cases across government agencies. Director Park talked with the upper-level manager who was previously involved in the missing person project, while she was working on the collaborative work. The manager mentioned that his task force team did not even consider using medical records to search the mission persons due to legal limitation under Medical Law. He also shared that interagency collaboration was difficult due to NHIS’s narrow interpretations of laws, privacy and confidentiality issues of individual records, lack of appropriate legal frameworks for sharing information, and different information sharing standards between two agencies (Kim et al., 2015).

At the beginning of this collaboration, Director Park also noticed that these legal, bureaucratic, and technical issues had contributed to the conditions for insufficient collaboration facing the KNPA. The biggest challenge was the absence of legal standards and lack of the scope of operational controls in sharing personal information across agencies, since individuals had a right to control their identifiable personal information. In most cases, protections of individual information are not explicitly framed with regard to interagency use, so agencies hesitate to allow crosschecking of individual records for secondary use. In fact, the KNPA’s request for patient medical information put the NHIS in a difficult position to search for applicable legal guidelines and procedural requirements to share that information. In previous cases, the NHIS had refused to provide medical records for purposes other than KNPA’s crime investigation without deliberative discussions. Through consultation with an attorney, the NHIS initiated a legal document review about the
availability of that information to the KNPA and types of information.

Another challenge that the Director encountered was the different information sharing standards between agencies. Legal boundaries triggered this circumstance, but a lack of agencies’ awareness about the importance of information sharing with other agencies caused no uniformed rules in place to determine what they could share and what they could not (Kim et al., 2015). The managers at the NHIS admitted that the NHIS had overlooked the importance of information sharing with the KNPA, so they were not serious about aligning their standards properly for possible collaboration with other agencies. Their responses evidenced that a positive employee perception was critical to promote interagency collaboration. As Kim et al. (2013) reported in Table 4, the lack of understanding between partner agencies about the need of interagency collaboration may directly cause a lack of commonality of information-sharing standards across central government agencies. The survey noted that 51.9% of the public employees in central governments had negative perceptions of interagency collaboration, twice as many as had positive opinions (25.9%). Structural and operational rearrangements would be necessary to make agencies’ information sharing standards comparable with others, but employees’ low value and lack of understanding on collaborative work should be changed first.
Table 4. Barriers to Administrative Collaboration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Obs.</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Looking out for own department first (organizational boundaries)</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common goal ambiguity between partner agencies</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of understanding on collaboration between partner agencies</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional workload for administrative collaboration</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of information sharing between agencies</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absence of genuine support from top leaders</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of communication and shared ideas between agencies</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7.26</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of financial support (incentives) for collaborative projects</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Following a trend</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of discussion to reach consensus</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of expertise</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5.87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Kim et al. (2013), p. 38

Epilogue

The KNPA leveraged its strategies and operations to overcome the difficulties for collaboration through developing a systematic collaboration platform that enabled to share information without a hassle and delayed process. The collaborative platform has been continuously refined as the KNPA learned more about the possibilities and challenges in light of other agencies’ needs to improve their operations and clarify their responsibilities. With the aim of increasing the sustainability of the current collaborative relationship with the KNPA’s partner agencies, the Director
and her task force developed an information-sharing collaboration system with four partner agencies as illustrated in Figure 3. The NHIS and the KEIS provide medical and employment records respectively to the KNPA, which is required to report the results of their use of the information in searching for the missing. The KNPA then provides the missing person information to the NPS and the GEPS, and both agencies must report the results of their information use for investigating fraudulent pension claim cases. The cycle of information sharing and reporting among agencies is on a quarterly basis.

Figure 3. Information Sharing Collaboration System

Source: Kim et al. (2015), p. 109

This system was designed to enhance voluntary interagency collaboration through sharing partner agencies’ resources. Both the directors of the KNPA and the NHIS who were in charge of this missing person project agreed that resource exchange between two agencies had mutual benefits and strengthened a voluntary collaboration relationship (Kim et al., 2015). The NHIS director clearly pointed out that a one-sided offer of resources may not work to establish a sound collaborative network. Director Park also admitted that if an agency had no resources to share with the partner agency, voluntary collaboration would be unlikely to continue. However, the NHIS director clarified that the primary reasons for collaboration
were not all about gains or losses for agencies. Rather, the collaboration should prioritize the interests of the public first (Kim et al., 2015). Consistent with this principle, the NHIS provided information to the KNPA without receiving any information in return. All relevant participants fairly had the ability to commit their resources to collaborative work.

As Director Park had worried about the expansion of this collaborative relationship during the entire process, this mutual cycle of collaboration was a satisfactory accomplishment for her. Once the KNPA reported how NHIS and KEIS information was used for the missing person search, both NHIS and KEIS were able to use the results to evaluate their annual organizational performance. Measurable benefits for all participating agencies are guaranteed through this collaboration mechanism. When Director Park talked with one of the team members at the NHIS, the member was concerned about the results of this collaborative project being regarded as merely as the achievement of the KNPA (Kim, 2016). In the Korean government evaluation system, the performance of a central government agency’s mid- to long-term strategies was assessed in terms of interagency collaboration. For example, the indicator of collaborative system building was weighted to stimulate desirable outcomes of the prioritized national policies (Government Performance Evaluation Committee, 2016). The evaluation results should be directly connected to practices in policy reform, budget allocation, and organizational operations.

Director Park knew that this performance evaluation was not sufficient to motivate the partner agencies to collaborate in the face of extra burdens on them. For example, how much time did the partner teams spend in meetings and responding to emails or phone calls to assist this project? Her team members even complained that they had little time for their
own critical work due to organizing this project. The Director also found that the proportion of her time for arranging collaboration with the partner agencies was hovering around 80%. Meanwhile, the partner agencies’ own performance may suffer from their contributions that might be lopsided as they participated in this project for input, access to information, or consultation. Since the partner agencies’ giving mindset and willingness to help the KNPA’s missing person search project were greatly appreciated by the KNPA, this collaboration system should include proper incentives and performance evaluation for the partner agencies. With the intention of promoting a tight collaborative relationship among all participating agencies, increasing the weight of the collaboration category in performance appraisal was suggested by all agencies (Kim, 2016).

Consequently, the Director and her task force thought that the KNPA information-sharing platform could build a trust relationship within the collaborative network by offering a transparent process where an agency reported the use of the partner agencies’ information in conjunction with the Korean government evaluation system. All participating agencies could then have clear expectations about the potential benefits of collaboration. Considering this information-sharing system as a pioneering effort in government, the KNPA expanded its collaborative synergy with private and nonprofit organizations as well. For example, the KNPA signed the alert agreement for searching the missing children with Facebook in July 22, 2015. South Korea is the fourth county to launch a Facebook-based location alert system for missing children search after U.S., Canada, and the Netherlands. Once the KNPA determines to issue an alert for a missing child case, sufficient descriptive information (e.g., the name and description of the child, the time of the incident, circumstance) is registered on Facebook. Facebook alerts inform nearby Facebook users.
when an alert is issued. Based on this experience, the KNPA has reached out to other social networking sites to disseminate the missing children information quickly.

All participating agencies agreed that legal constraints were the prevalent challenge for sharing individual information across agencies for secondary use. Since enacting a new law may take considerable time and efforts to be implemented promptly, the Director and her task force reviewed various alternatives to make this collaborative project workable at the beginning of the process. They found that existing laws enacted by the partner agencies still can offer relevant legal ground for sharing individual information as long as participating agencies were willing to interpret their legal boundaries in order to accommodate collaborative work. In view of the team’s observation, the KNPA resolved the lack of legal capacity to address the secondary use of individual information by expanding interpretations of existing laws rather than enacting a law. The fruits of such efforts moved the missing person search project forward and avoided collaboration fatigue.

Despite the KNPA’s significant progress in establishing a collaboration system, Director Park expressed that “collaborative innovation in the public sector is a continuing journey. As the KNPA and the partner agencies learn more about the possibilities and the challenges of collaboration, the nature of interagency collaboration has to be refined based on emerging demands and environments.” She knows that there are many residual questions and issues that need to be dealt with, such as jurisdictional and goal ambiguity, fragmentation of authority and responsibility, constrained resources, conflicting demands, rigid organizational culture, interagency rivalry, and lack of guidelines. No
matter what comes next, she is willing to go the extra mile to build a bridge between the KNPA and other organizations to make government more collaborative in the belief that all central government agencies are on the same side and serve the same public.
References


Aimed at functional collaboration, this case study led by the Korean National Policy Agency (KNPA) describes the background information of the interagency collaboration project, a series of collaboration efforts serving as the fundamentals of collaboration success, and challenges to collaborate with other government agencies within the bureaucratic environment. While the logic of collaboration for information sharing across agencies may seem simple, working together across organizational boundaries is not easy when the organizations operate in different legal, institutional, procedural, and cultural environments. As an example of interagency collaboration, this case allows students to think further about feasible and sustainable conditions of interagency collaboration where a collaboration network should evolve as government agencies learn more about its possibilities and challenges, and be continuously refined based on emerging demands and changing environments.

**Synopsis**

The KNPA ran numerous prevention and search programs for missing and runaway persons, but the number of those individuals steadily increased over the years. The Chief of the Department of Living Safety at the KNPA thought that getting additional information about those missing and runaway persons from other government agencies seemed to be a new strategy to resolve this problem given its limited resources
and inability to track all of missing persons’ activities. The Chief was also aware that there were inherent challenges to building a collaborative relationship beyond organizational boundaries. The Director Park of the Division of Women, Youth, and Children in the Department, as a delegate for this interagency collaboration project, searched for potential partner agencies that would allow the KNPA to access necessary personal information.

Director Park found that it was hard to obtain individual data from other agencies due to various limitations such as privacy of personal data, different rules and regulations for information sharing, and lack of uniform data principles across agencies. With the help of the Board of Audit and Inspection of Korea that suggested first the use of personal medical records to identify locations of missing persons, the KNPA found a total of 8,695 people who had disappeared, using the National Health Insurance Service’s medical records. After the success of this collaborative project, the KNPA planned to expand the information sharing network with other agencies. The major challenges of collaboration were the absence of laws and lack of the scope of operational controls in sharing personal information across agencies. In most cases, the protections of individual information were not explicitly framed with regard to interagency use, so it was difficult to search for applicable legal guidelines and procedural requirements to share that information. Another challenge was different information sharing standards between agencies caused by lack of awareness about the limitations of intergovernmental information sharing.

The KNPA leveraged its strategies and operations to overcome these barriers by developing a collaboration system whose aim was to increase
the sustainability of the current collaborative relationships with all participating agencies and set out clear expectations about the benefits of collaboration by reporting how provided information was used by the partner agencies. In addition, the lack of legal grounds for secondary use of individual information was resolved by expanding the interpretations of current laws rather than enacting new laws.

**Teaching Objectives**

This case helps students to understand the dynamics of collaborative networks and collaborative overload in addressing the need for effective interagency collaboration and maintaining a sustainable collaboration system. Students will gain insights on how to manage collaborative efforts effectively among government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and/or private organizations. Specifically, this case provides opportunities for students to:

- Demonstrate the public value and importance of collaboration across agencies
- Identify the possibilities and challenges of interagency collaboration
- Analyze the impacts of institutional, legal, and cultural environments to collaboration
- Develop alternatives to overcome challenges to collaboration.

This case allows both undergraduate and graduate students to build a solid understanding of interagency collaboration by discussing its possibilities and challenges. Students can also discuss ways to promote a sustainable collaboration system and mutually beneficial partnerships between agencies. This case is useful for any types of class activities such as in-class discussions,
role-playing, group analysis, and written homework assignments. Key lessons from the case shed light on genuine commitment to interagency collaborative practices.

**Teaching Strategies**

The importance of interagency collaboration has been always recognized, but organizational boundaries make it difficult for agencies to collaborate with each other in the Korean administrative system. Government 3.0 was adopted in June 2013 as a new paradigm of the New Administration to emphasize the four principles of openness, shared information, communication, and collaboration (Ministry of the Interior and Safety, 2017). A mandatory requirement of collaboration seems to be the driving force to make government more service-oriented, transparent, and competent. Collaboration across organizational boundaries in the Korean central government was fuzzy at the outset, although agencies’ efforts were rewarded to improve service delivery. The blurring of boundaries between agencies disturbed organizational responsibilities to lead specific tasks so collaboration was difficult to accommodate. Agencies had to find common ground on goal setting and problem solving for effective collaboration. The collaboration pathways should be carefully arranged to share interests and reach consensus among peer government agencies.

This case can be used in various ways to facilitate students’ understanding of the subject of interagency collaboration and apply their knowledge to real-world situations. This case can be taught in any one-hour to three-hour classes.
Discussion Questions

As this case is divided into the three main sections (Part A, Part B, and Epilogue), the instructor can lead students in distinct class discussions of different parts of the case. Students are assigned to small groups of three to five students and have a small group discussion in which each student shares and compares responses with the group members. The Part A discussion can focus on what worked with the initial collaboration with NHIS, and how to transfer those lessons to the expanded collaboration with NHIS, NPS, and GEPS. Examples of discussion questions of the Part A are as follows:

• How did Director Jimin Park get the NHIS partner team’s support for information sharing during the collaboration process? What leadership actions can able to build the collaboration with the partner team?
• What were the successful milestones for this collaboration project to get additional information about the missing? How can these factors play significant roles to promote a collaboration relationship between the KNPA and the NHIS?
• How did Director Park and her team do to develop successful collaboration with NHIS?
• What are the preconditions to promote effective collaboration across government agencies?
• To what extent does the difficulty level of the work types impact the building of interagency collaboration? Evaluate the level of collaboration difficulty for the missing person project based on the four criteria suggested by Lee et al. (2013): setting the goal achievement bar high, the expertise and complexity of the assignment, the diversity of stakeholders, and the impact of external environments.
• What is the optimal level of collaboration for both KNPA and NHIS?
• Admittedly, there is quite a difference between the KNPA and the NHIS in terms of their strategies, goals, organizational cultures, and other factors. How can we tell which of these aspects makes collaborative efforts successful?
• What are the rewards of collaboration for both KPNA and NHIS?
• What are some things Director Park and her team can do to expand collaboration to NPS and GEPS?

After discussing about the Part A questions, a small group discussion for the Part B can focus on how KNPA achieved the expansion of collaboration with the counterpart agencies, and how to overcome challenges of collaboration. Examples of discussion questions of the Part B are as follows:

• What were the critical barriers to collaboration in searching for missing persons? How can these barriers be resolved to enhance the collaborative approach in government?
• How might Director Park and her team overcome the challenges of interagency collaboration in the future based on their successes?
• To what extent can the NHIS share personal information with the KNPA without sacrificing privacy?
• Does each agency properly monitor the use of personal data by other agencies?
• How can agencies develop interorganizational collaborative capacity?

After each small group has a chance to address their own thoughts about the Part A and Part B questions, full group discussion can be arranged to generalize applicable conditions of interagency
collaboration across different governments. For a full group discussion, students can read the Epilogue section to find out what happened and understand Director Park’s reflections on the entire collaboration process. The instructors may also use the Epilogue as a basis for discussing broader lessons about joined-up collaboration. Examples of discussion questions are as follows:

- What are situations in which interagency collaboration is not desirable?
- What are the potential benefits of collaboration across agencies? Given the benefits, what are some reasons why collaboration isn’t more common?
- Is collaboration actually important to central government agencies? Why or why not? When it is important, how do you ensure that collaboration is critical to the way each agency designs its business?

The instructor can also ask students to write a one- or two-page memorandum as a take-home assignment. This memo should focus on articulating recommendations to improve intergovernmental collaboration for better results and can be written to either Chief Eugene Kim or Director Jimin Park by a student playing a role as an outside expert.

_Stakeholder Identification and Power vs. Interest Grid Practice_

A stakeholder analysis is a practical way to understand the dynamics of a collaborative network across agencies. A stakeholder analysis can be conducted for the early stage of this collaborative case, focusing on identifying who should involve and why they involve in the process. Students will be assigned to small groups to identify, discuss, and list the
external and internal stakeholders who may contribute to the development of an effective collaboration system. The instructor asks individual groups to brainstorm an initial list of stakeholders for organizing a collaborative network. Then, the group should identify each stakeholder’s influence and contribution to the project, and then place them into a rough order based on their importance to this collaborative project.

Figure 4. Power vs. Interest Grid

![Power vs. Interest Grid Diagram]

- **Subjects** - have a significant interest, but little power
- **Players** - have a significant interest, but little power
- **Crowd** - have little interest and not much power
- **Context setters** - have substantial power, but little interest


The Power versus Interest Grid model introduced by Eden and Ackermann (1998) helps to determine which stakeholders’ interests and power bases must be considered in order to develop an effective
collaboration system and process. Power refers to a degree of influence to the organizational collaboration, while Interest means interest in a political sense. Once the group develops a list of the external and internal stakeholders, ask the group to visualize the power versus interest of the stakeholders according to two dimensions on a two-by-two matrix as shown in Figure 4.

**SWOT Analysis Approach**

The instructor assigns students into a small group with three to four students or one-on-one based on class size. Conducting a SWOT analysis in a group format will be effective to share their understanding of the KNPA’s internal and external positions. The acronym of SWOT stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, which is useful to identify an organization’s competences to develop valuable plans for collaboration. Strengths and weaknesses are organization’s internal factors that are related to the availability of resources or abilities, while opportunities and threats are organization’s external factors that influence an organization in either a positive or a negative way. When groups develop a list of SWOT for the Division of Women, Youth, and Children or the KNPA, asks students to use the SWOT matrix presented in Figure 5. Furthermore, the instructor asks groups to discuss how the Division of Women, Youth, and Children or the KNPA could minimize negative factors and maximize positive factors for successful collaborative interagency work; and how the results of SWOT analysis could guide the organization to plan realistic objectives for successful collaboration.
Following group discussions, individual groups present their analysis to the whole class, so they can compare their results with other groups’ findings. The instructor might ask to the whole class what they learned from conducting SWOT analysis in order to wrap up this in-class exercise, including its advantages (e.g., simplicity, no training cost) and disadvantages (e.g., ambiguity, lengthy lists, no weights, subjectivity). This SWOT analysis can also be assigned for a brief analysis paper.

**Collaborative Task Force**

The team including the Director of the Division of Women, Youth and Children is charged with developing, facilitating, and coordinating structures,
processes, resources, and necessary activities across organizational boundaries between the KNPA and its partner agencies for successful collaboration preparation and implementation. The Director and her team are the keys to success in leading this collaborative relationship. Identifying and clarifying the team membership, roles and responsibilities, and tasks will help students to think about how this project relates to real-world practice. The instructor can ask students to work in groups to fill out Table 5 and then report the results to the entire class.

Table 5. Collaborative Team Membership, Roles and Responsibility, and Tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member</th>
<th>Roles and Responsibilities</th>
<th>Specific Tasks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Director</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member B</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key Performance Indicators**

The instructor asks students or a small group to list key performance indicators, definitions, and decision standards in terms of criteria of technical feasibility, economic possibility, political acceptability, and administrative operability. The technical feasibility criteria measure whether this information-sharing project can achieve effective and adequate collaboration. The criteria for economic possibility measure costs and benefits of the information-sharing collaboration. The political acceptability category addresses whether this collaborative approach will be acceptable to relevant stakeholders. Lastly, administrative operability measures how possible it is to actually implement the
collaborative system. Students can also use different categories of criteria other than the four groups if they wish to come up with them. Examples of evaluation criteria related to the missing person search project are a total number of meetings, total wages of staffing for the project, an authority to lead the collaboration system, and a level of the commitment of top managers and field staff.

**Effectiveness Analysis of the Collaborative Project**

The instructor asks students or a small group to evaluate the missing-person project based on the effectiveness index of collaboration presented in Table 6. Use a three-point scale of high, medium, and low for each indicator. When students or groups present their assessment, ask them to explain their justifications in detail.
Table 6. Effectiveness Index of Project Collaboration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Measuring Standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration difficulty</td>
<td>Setting the goal achievement bar high</td>
<td>A level of direct contribution of collaboration goals to achieve national government goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expertise and complexity of the assignment</td>
<td>A level of required expertise and operational/procedural complexities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A diversity of stakeholders</td>
<td>A level of conflict between stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Impacts of external environments</td>
<td>A level of impacts of external environments, such as international relations, macroeconomic variables, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration efforts</td>
<td>Establishment of the interagency taskforce and its operation</td>
<td>Whether a taskforce is established or not: a level of its feasible operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overcoming barriers</td>
<td>Specific efforts to resolve the problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Development of an incentive system</td>
<td>Whether an incentive system is created to motivate participants for collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Commitment to active collaboration</td>
<td>Any efforts to promote collaboration, such as personnel exchange, field monitoring, opinion survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration performance</td>
<td>Implementation</td>
<td>A level of implementation of an action plan for the project goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Goal achievement</td>
<td>A level of goal achievement based on contents of the project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Policy impact</td>
<td>A level of the media’s positive responses on the project</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>