



Sveriges lantbruksuniversitet
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Building interdisciplinary proposals

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Why interdisciplinary proposals?

Why interdisciplinary proposals?

- Funders demand it...
- The nature of the issue I want to explore calls for it.
- Seems like a great way to develop new knowledge.
- It seems fun.
- I've always been curious on molecular biology, urban sociology, research through design...

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As other types of research, also interdisciplinary research can be basic or applied.

multi, inter, trans...

- Multi-disciplinarity
- Inter-disciplinarity
- Trans-disciplinarity



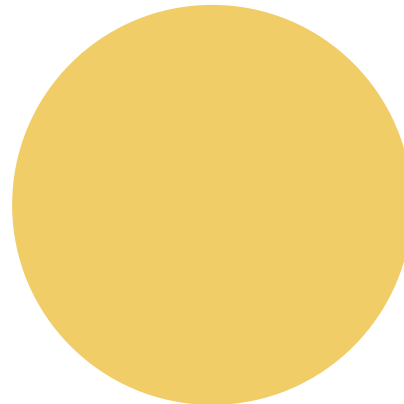
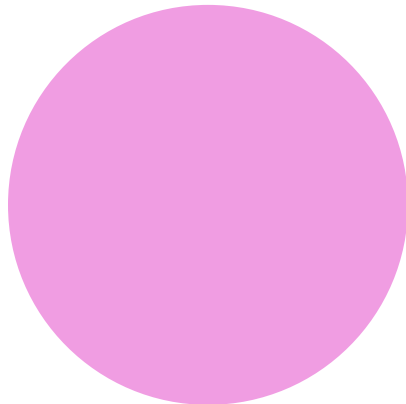
increasing
integration



increasing
diversity &
complexity

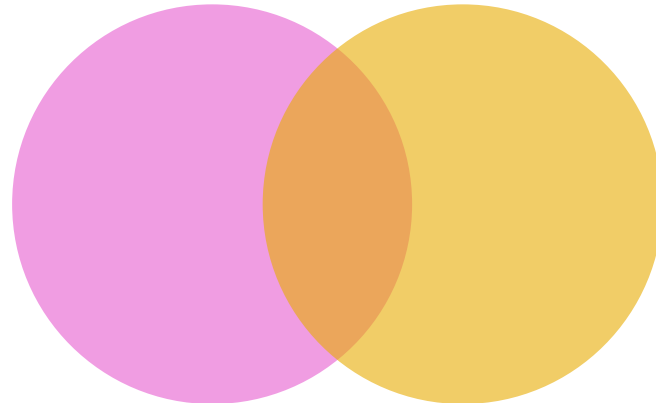
Multidisciplinary research

- Includes two or more knowledge fields exploring the same issue.
- Each field defines its own RQs, theory and methods.
- Findings are compiled and compared, but no integration is planned to happen.



Interdisciplinary research

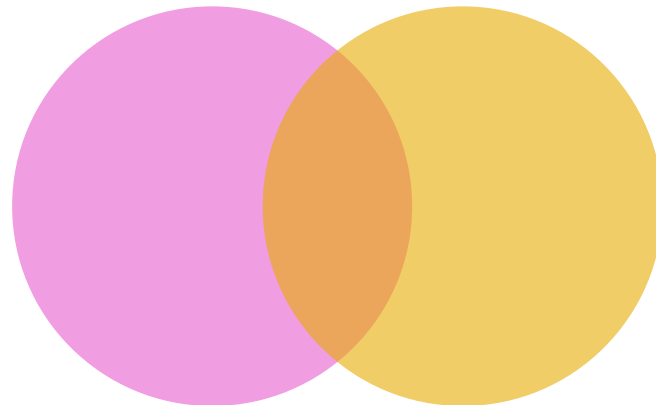
- Includes two or more knowledge fields exploring the same issue.
- Integration to provide holistic or emergent outcomes is planned to happen.
- The fields together define RQs, theories and methods.



Interdisciplinary research

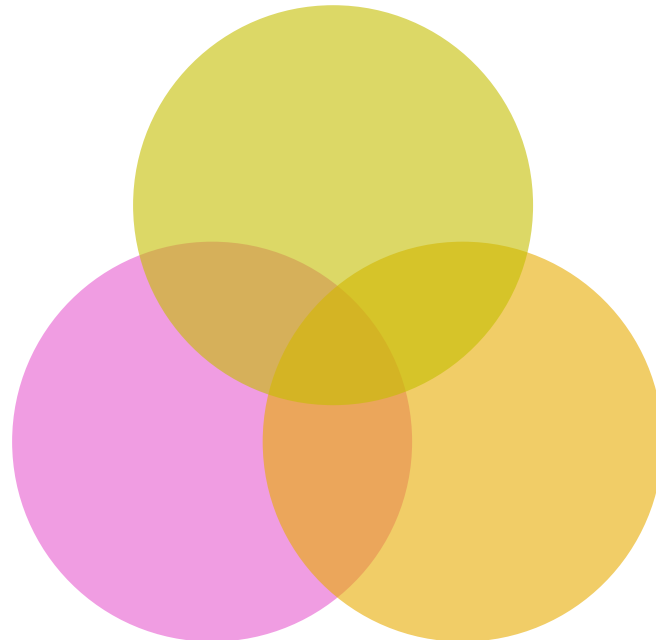
Definitions vary across funders!

Formas (in spring 2018 calls) defines this as: “Within the same across different scientific disciplines”



Transdisciplinary research

- Includes also other types of knowledge than academic knowledge, such as experience or practice.
- Integration to provide holistic or emergent outcomes is planned to happen.
- The fields together defines RQs, theories and methods.



What can differ across fields?

Everything! But particularly...

- Concepts
- Models
- Methods
- Research practice
- Theory
- Epistemology
- Ontology

- And all things related to publishing: writing style, journals (or conferences), authorship practices...

Interdisciplinary research demands more resources

- It takes more time
 - To learn to communicate with each other
 - To learn to work together
- It needs more active coordination



Common challenges

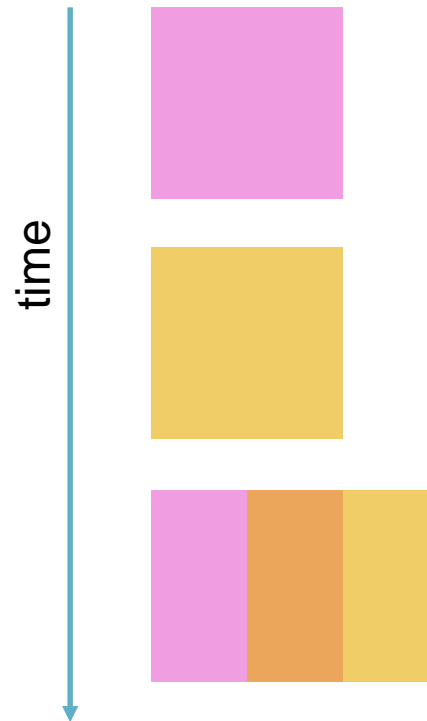
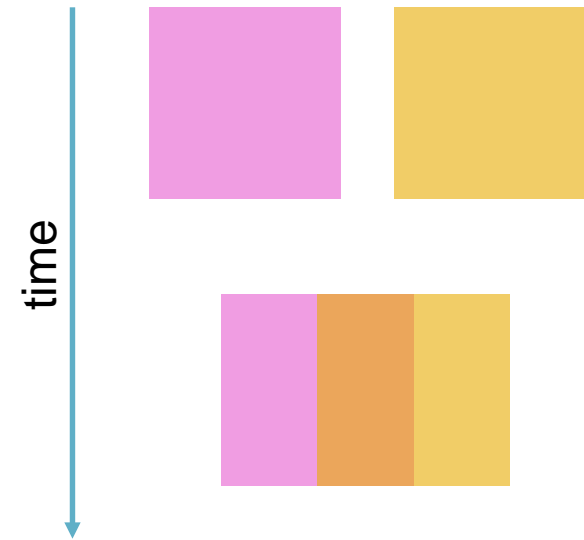
- Terminology and communication
- Differing worldviews (ontology and epistemology)
- (Institutional differences)

Make a convincing case 1(3)

- Why is an interdisciplinary approach needed (or beneficial)?
- What disciplines are to be involved and why?

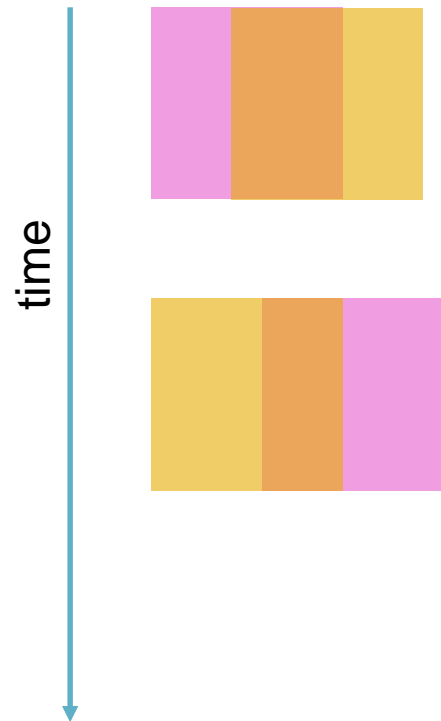
Make a convincing case 2(3)

- How and when in the process will integration take place?



Make a convincing case 2(3)

- How and when in the process will integration take place?



Make a convincing case 3(3)

- How will you assure quality of integration?
 - Describe coordinator role and strategy
 - Describe previous experiences of interdisciplinary research in team (if any)
 - Specify and justify any additional resources needed

Summing up

1. Why is an interdisciplinary approach needed (or beneficial)?
2. What disciplines are to be involved and why?
3. How and when in the process will integration take place?
4. How will you assure quality of integration?

Take away messages

- There are many different reasons for inter- and transdisciplinary research
- Inter- and transdisciplinary research demands more resources
- A careful research design and process design is necessary to build a convincing proposal
- Inter- and transdisciplinary research (often) demand more time for proposal writing (and more space, mind the limitations)

Questions?

A few references

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