



# **Unit 9 Cooperation and best practices**

## **Lecture 9.2 Networking, cooperation and start-up culture**

*D 2.1 Training toolkit and e-book*

**June 2021 – Miguel Vaz (AEI TÈXTILS)**



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# Lecture 9.2 Networking, cooperation and start-up culture

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# Introduction

In a complex and fast-changing world, increasing pressure to quickly develop and launch new products and services is pushing companies to growingly rely on **innovation networks** with external stakeholders to improve their long-term competitiveness.

Current innovation processes are increasingly being developed outside the boundaries of the organization through the adoption of **open innovation** and **cross-border strategic alliances**.

**Organizational agility** and commitment to open innovation have become strategically relevant for companies to manage dynamic changes of the external environment.



# 1.1 Innovation networking

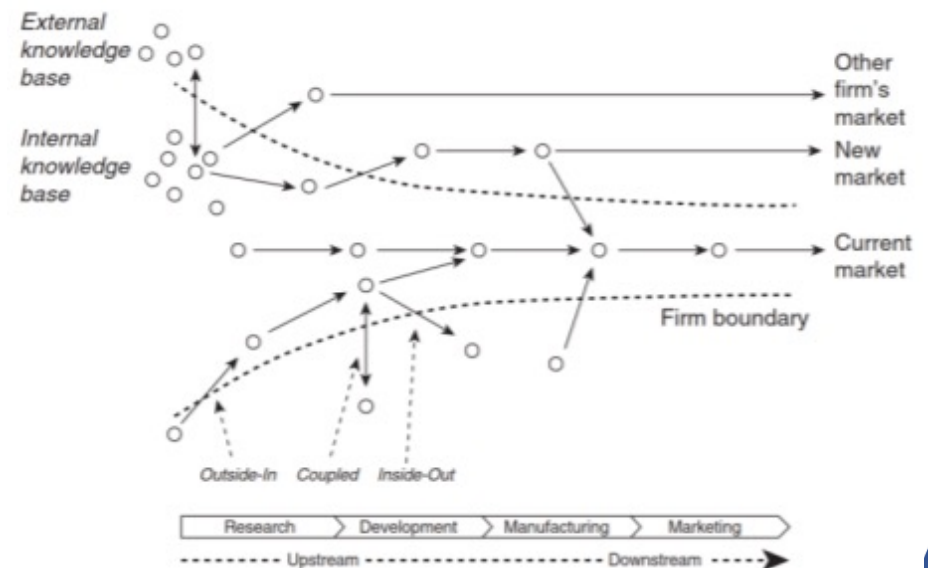
- **Innovation networks** are **sets of alliances between two and more organizations** that are in an interactive way involved in an innovation process;
- Innovation networks comprise companies, R&D organizations, universities, technology transfer agencies and government working altogether to **achieve common innovation goals**;
- Organizations embark on boundary-spanning collaborations for **knowledge exchange and co-creation**, rather than through in-house R&D, to sustain their innovation capacity and maintain competitive.

# 1.1 Cross fertilization

- **Cross-fertilization**, commonly comprises the exchange of knowledge and skills between different fields, sometimes apparently unrelated;
- Processes of cross-fertilization are typically related to the transfer and application of knowledge, from one production sector to another;
- Cross fertilization leads to the **creation of a recombinant innovation**, with two or more different technologies recombined to generate a new improved technology;
- Cross fertilization **triggers the development of radical innovations**.

# 1.2 Cooperation through open innovation

- **Open innovation** as “the use of purposive inflows and outflows of knowledge to accelerate internal innovation and to expand the markets for external use of innovation” (Chesbrough, 2003);
- A shift in paradigm from closed / in-house R&D of new products towards an open innovation model that fully combines internal and external ideas, knowledge and technologies.



## 1.2 Cooperation through strategic alliances

- **Strategic alliances** are crucial in industrial sectors in which new product developments are riskier and costly, and access to novel knowledge, technology and critical capabilities is crucial;
- In increasingly volatile and uncertain environments, strategic alliances with core universities, research centers, customers, suppliers, or even competitors, have become key to **improve innovation capacity and stay** competitive.

# 1.2 Cross-border alliances

- There is a growing relevance of **acquiring internationally dispersed technological capabilities** by engaging in **cross-border technology-based alliances**;
- Cross-border R&D alliances commonly encompass **bilateral technology transfer R&D programs** such as **joint R&D projects** and **joint ventures**;
- By bridging the gap between two separate sets of technical capabilities from different places, cross-border alliances can provide **unparalleled learning opportunities**.

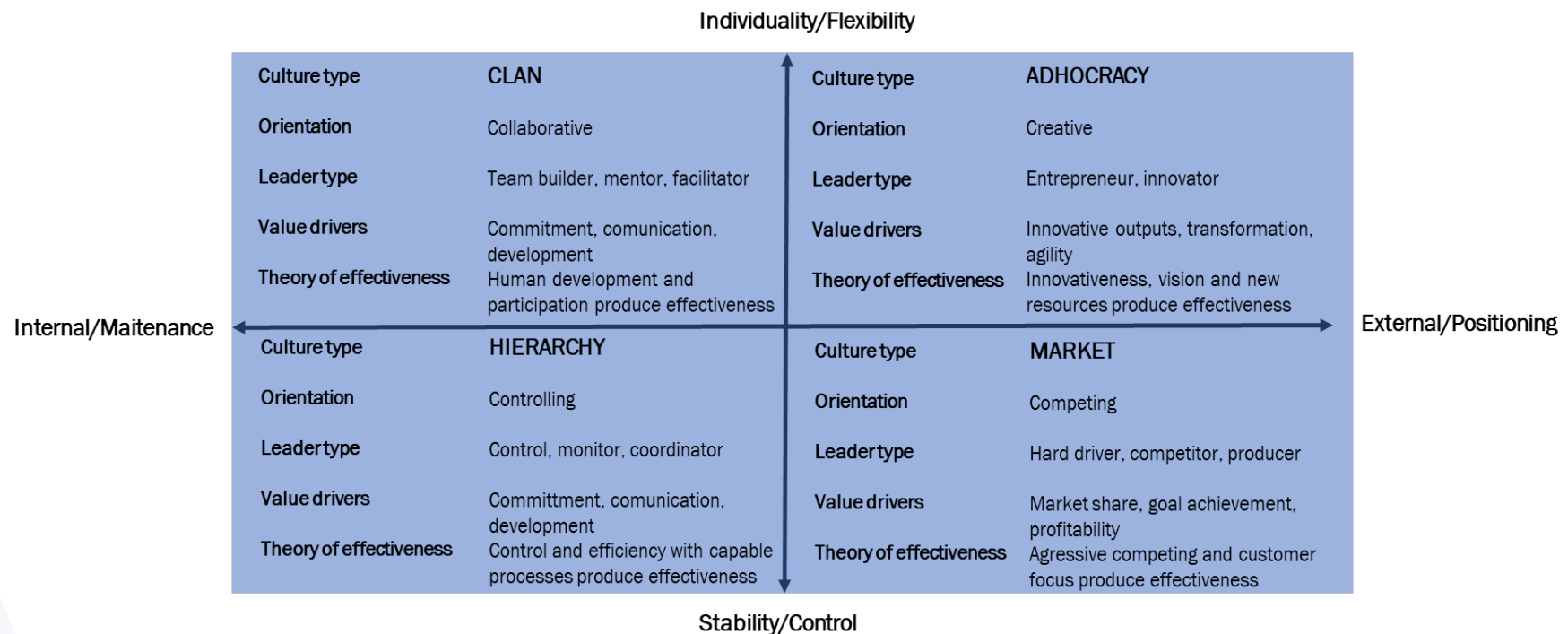


### 1.3 Start-up culture: managerial capability and agility

- **Agility** is the organizations' capability to successfully manage uncertain, volatile and unpredictable changes of the surrounding environments, in order to be able to sustain growth;
- It relies on an innovative and **risk-taking embedded culture, flat hierarchies** and **transformational leadership**;



### 1.3 Start-up culture: The role of culture in organizational agility



**Source:** (Cameron and Quinn, 2014)

### 2. Examples of good practices: The CONTEXT network

- **CONTEXT** is “the European network of experts on advanced textile materials”;
- **CONTEXT** is funded by the European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST), which provides funding for the creation of research networks, called COST Actions;



# 2. Examples of good practices: The CONTEXT network

CONTEXT main goals are:



To promote the development of a **joint research roadmap** for **smart textiles**;



To foster the **transfer of knowledge** among different actors in order to find suitable applications in various **multidisciplinary fields**;



To act as stakeholder platform to identify needs and requirements from different points of view in a **bottom-up approach**;



To promote **networking activities** in order to attract talent, build more and better research projects with more consciousness on the objectives of creating exploitable results.

### 3. Conclusions

- Increased **collaboration via networking and open innovation** among firms, entrepreneurs, research institutes, clusters and the public sector is paving the way towards **more competitive businesses**, enhancing their **innovative capacity** individually and altogether as an ecosystem.
- The establishment of **strategic alliances** greatly promotes **technological learning** and increased **innovation performance** of the involved partners, particularly via **cross-border collaborations**;
- **Organizational agility** is deemed crucial for organizations' innovation and their increased competitive performance in contemporary businesses.

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## The partners



**Project Coordinator**  
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