

MAPPING THE CROSS INNOVATION PROCESS – INSIGHTS FROM XI LAB IN THE LOWER RHINE REGION

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Research idea

Keywords: Cross innovation, reference model for cross innovation, innovation management, Cross Innovation Lab – NiederRhein (XI Lab)

Research on innovation performance in Germany has unlighted a heterogeneous picture. Especially a long lasting declining trend in innovation performance has been described in regions of North Rhine Westphalia. Often SMEs can be found as important players in these regions. Unfavourably, particularly for these SMEs there is a long-lasting trend of a decreasing innovation ratio. In order to address this issue, ideas and strategies (e.g., “digital strategy NRW”) have been proposed, with cross innovation being one of them. Cross innovation is associated with high potential as it offers an important perspective for increasing innovation performance in weakly innovative regions. Besides SMEs, there are diverse players in the market, e.g. start-ups, state agencies, universities, creative industry who can collaboratively innovate and benefit from each other. The Cross Innovation Lab – NiederRhein (XI Lab) wants to foster these development by setting new impulses and establishing the use of agile methods and collaboration formats. Our goal is to integrate innovation management in a systematic way into the organizations. In order to reach our target we have performed an interdisciplinary project under participation of experts and students from different industry branches. Based on a profound literature research, workshops in which innovation methods have been tested, as well as questionnaire design we were able to develop a reference model for cross innovation. This reference model states goals, relevant inputs and outputs for each stage in the cross innovation process. It aims to create a mutual understanding among all participants in a multi-disciplinary innovation environment. Especially, we have assigned various innovation methods to the different stages of the cross innovation process, in order to give practitioners a tool by hand to find and select appropriate means of performance. With the developed reference model organizations are able to find new ways of performing cross innovation.

Proceedings of the 18th International Open and User Innovation Conference: Book of Abstracts

RWTH Aachen University, Aachen, Germany, June 21-22, 2021

Edited by

Frank Piller, Patrick Pollok, and Kathleen Diener, *OUI 2020+1 Conference Co-Chairs*

Organized by

The Institute for Technology and Innovation Management, RWTH Aachen University
<https://www.time.rwth-aachen.de/tim>

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The Open and User Innovation Society
www.oui-society.org

Funded by

We gratefully acknowledge a conference support grant by **DFG - Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (German Research Foundation)** for OUI 2021 (Grant 465371358). In addition, we sincerely thank all participants who contributed by selecting the "support fee" during registration.

We further acknowledge financial support by the

- [TIME Research Area](#), RWTH Aachen University
- [RWTH Aachen CampusForum](#)
- Cluster of Excellence [Internet of Production](#), RWTH Aachen University, under Germany's Excellence Strategy – EXC-2023 – 390621612

An electronic copy of these proceedings will be available at SSRN:

<https://ssrn.com/abstract=3870410>