
Editorial

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Biographical notes: Marko Seppänen is the Vice Dean for Education Faculty of Business and Built Environment, and a Full Professor in the field of industrial management in the Tampere University of Technology, Finland. He is an expert in managing value creation in business ecosystems, business concept development and innovation management. In his latest research, he has examined, e.g., platform-based competition in business ecosystems, and innovation management in business networks. His research has appeared in high quality peer-reviewed journals such as *Journal of Product Innovation Management*, *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, *Journal of Systems and Software*, and *International Journal of Physical Distribution and Logistics Management*.

Peter E. Harland is an endowed Junior Professor in Innovation Management and Entrepreneurship at the International Institute Zittau, a central unit of the Technische Universität Dresden, Germany. Before that, he worked as a Postdoc at the Technische Universität München, Germany and as a Research Assistant at the Technische Universität Darmstadt, Germany. He holds a PhD in Innovation Management and a joint Master's in Electrical Engineering and Business Administration from the Technische Universität Darmstadt. His research interests cover various topics in the field of innovation management, especially product platform concepts, service innovation, product management and idea generation.

Ecosystem research has greatly stimulated academic curiosity over the past decade. In addition, business managers and policy decision-makers have enthusiastically adopted the concept of innovation ecosystems in their work. The concept has its roots in innovation research whereas business ecosystems refer metaphorically to ecological ecosystems. This special issue was compiled from papers presented at the ISPIM2014 Innovation Conference held in Dublin, Ireland, from 8 to 11 June 2014.

Using the SCOPUS database, Kati Järvi and Samuli Kortelainen conducted empirical research on business ecosystems. Their systematic literature review examined the kinds of actors involved in business ecosystems, the relationships between these actors, and

established ecosystems identified in the literature. Their paper contributes to the emerging theory on ecosystems by suggesting avenues of research, particularly those relating to methodological approaches and ecosystem characteristics such as interconnectedness and cooptation.

In the second paper, Heli Aramo-Immonen, Jari Leppäniemi, Jari Soini and Sian Joel-Edgar tackle the question of how to improve innovation diffusion in business ecosystems via SME networks in collaboration with academia. The authors introduce a mediator-assisted innovation diffusion model that was tested in a multiple case study (n = 18). Their findings highlight the importance of selecting pilot cases for innovation research. Since the results suggest that our understanding of the function of holistic innovation is still in its infancy, the authors propose that research examining the early stages of innovation ecosystem formation may be beneficial.

The third paper, by Björn Sautter and Günter Clar, offers an integrated, forward-looking, and outward-looking approach to innovation ecosystems using a combination of strategic policy intelligence and management tools. A German case study involving MicroTEC Südwest – an industry-driven, public-private R&I network with about 350 actors – was used to demonstrate how politically formulated ‘grand societal challenges’ can be turned into future market opportunities and business models. The findings have potential implications for policy: they favour better coordination between, and alignment of, innovation-related policies at multiple governance levels, which may in turn lead to larger and stronger innovation ecosystems in which companies effectively contribute to a sustainable economy and society.

In the fourth and final paper of this special issue, Oliver Som and Janis Diekmann examine the barriers to non-technological innovation and how these barriers differ from those impeding technological innovation. Using a qualitative analysis of innovation projects targeting organisational and marketing innovation in 11 European firms from different sectors, this paper provides pioneering insights into external barriers to non-technological innovation such as market failure and systemic failure, and concludes that they affect non-technological innovation. The findings may be useful in improving and adjusting existing policy instruments targeting non-technological innovation.

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