

Reflections on supporting design in SMEs

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Objectives

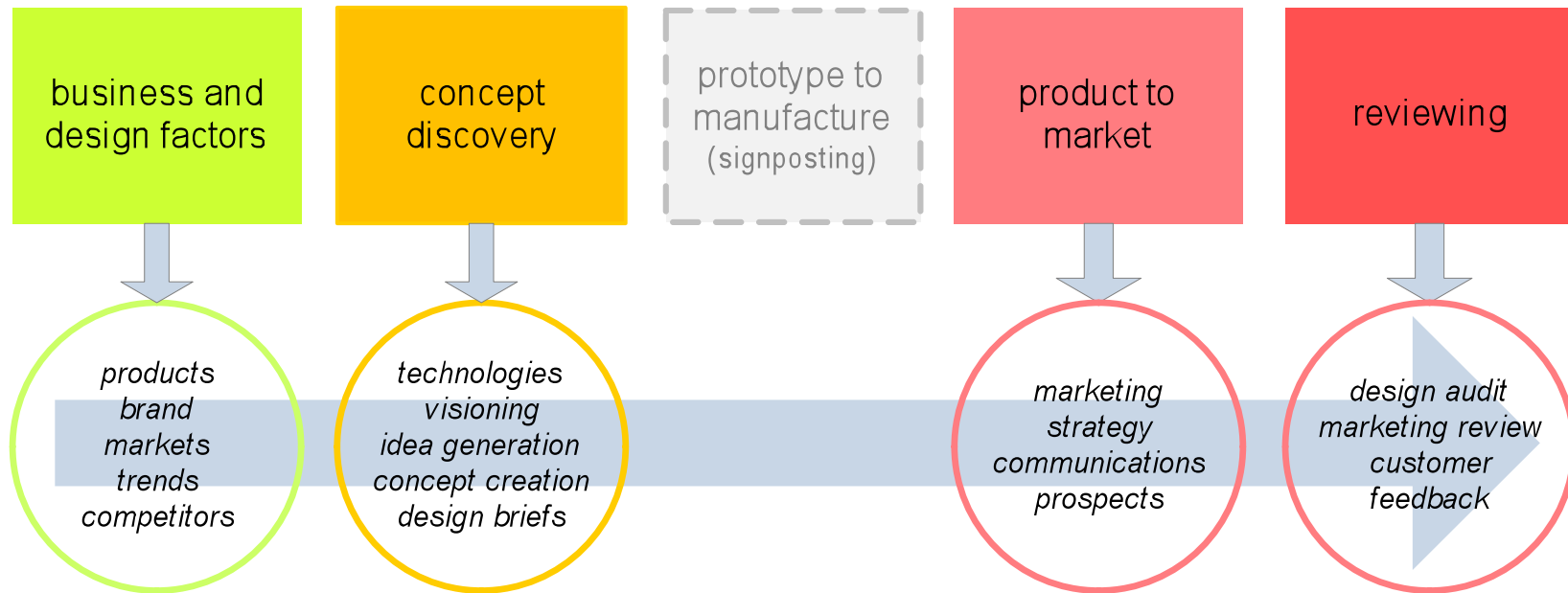
- Reflect on three case study projects with regard to design knowledge improvements in SMEs
- Explore implications for regional public policy

Centre for Product Design Information
1999 - 2001

Furniture West Midlands
2003 to present

Design Knowledge Network 2002 to 2008

Project activities



Summary

- CPDI
 - website of information
 - no direct contact – influence not controllable
- FWM
 - no particular service
 - facilitation of networking events and showcasing
- DKN
 - product development and design related services
 - direct contact with companies – but not contact between

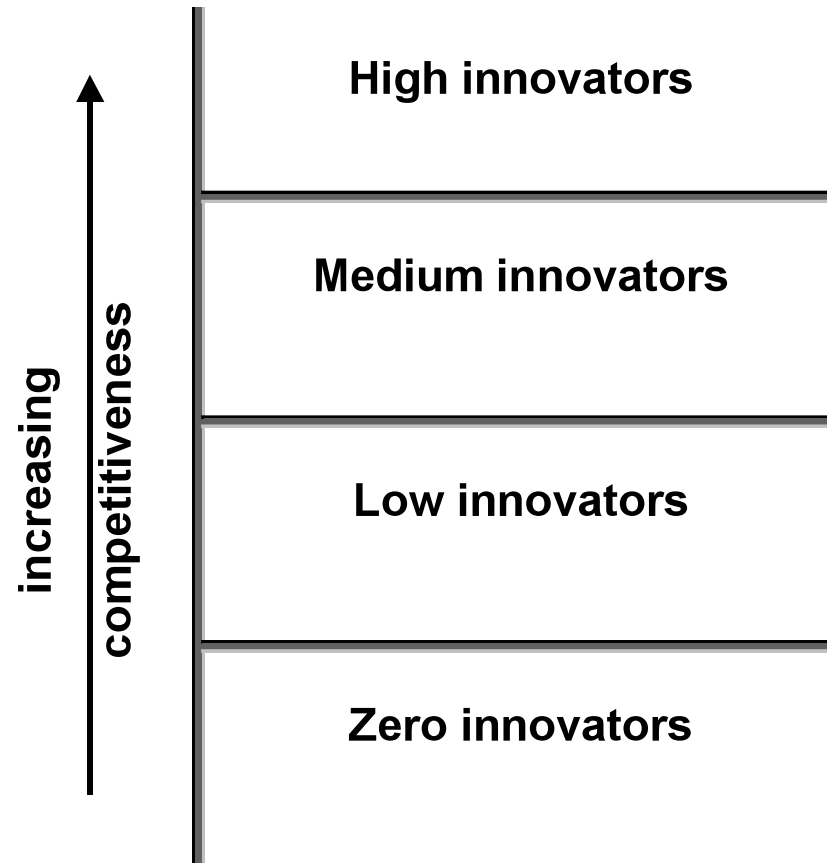
Comparison

activity	relationship	no clients	design impact
FWM	many-to-many	medium	low
CPDI	one-to-many	huge	medium
DKN	one-to-one	low	high

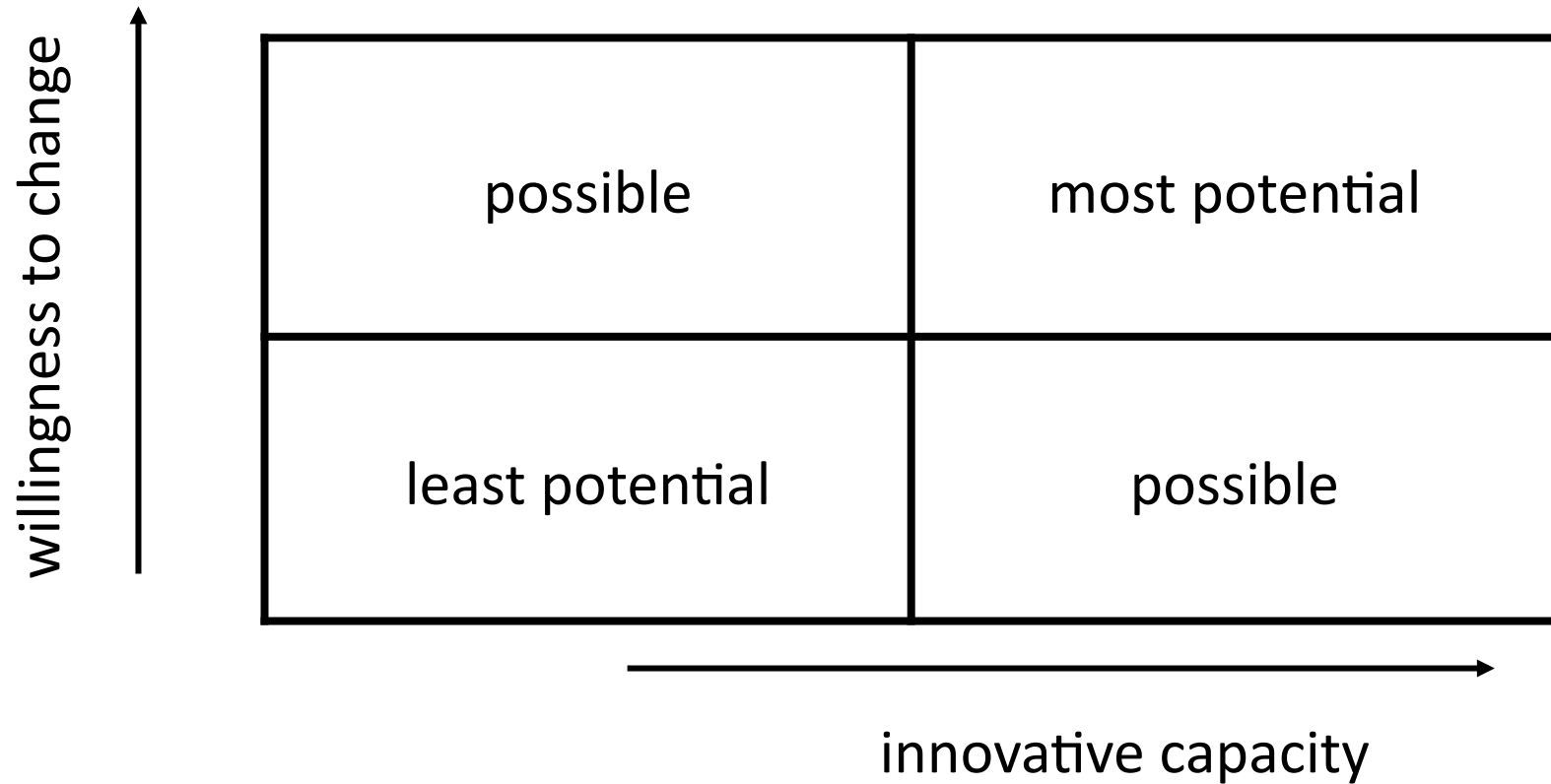
Results

- Differences between companies
- Measurement of design effectiveness/design impact/design knowledge
- Understanding of thinking in KE and organisational learning

Innovation ladder



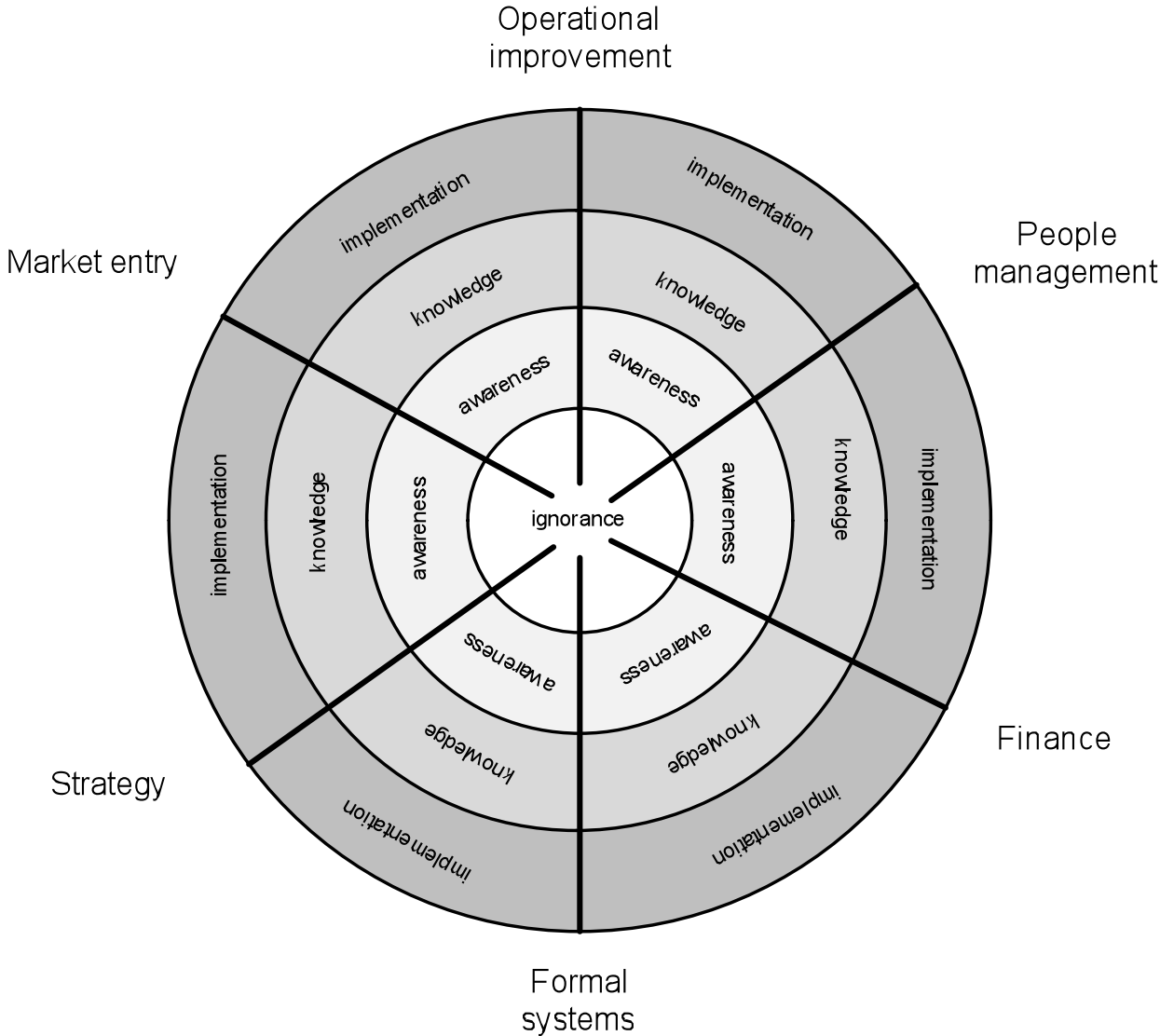
Company typology



Literature

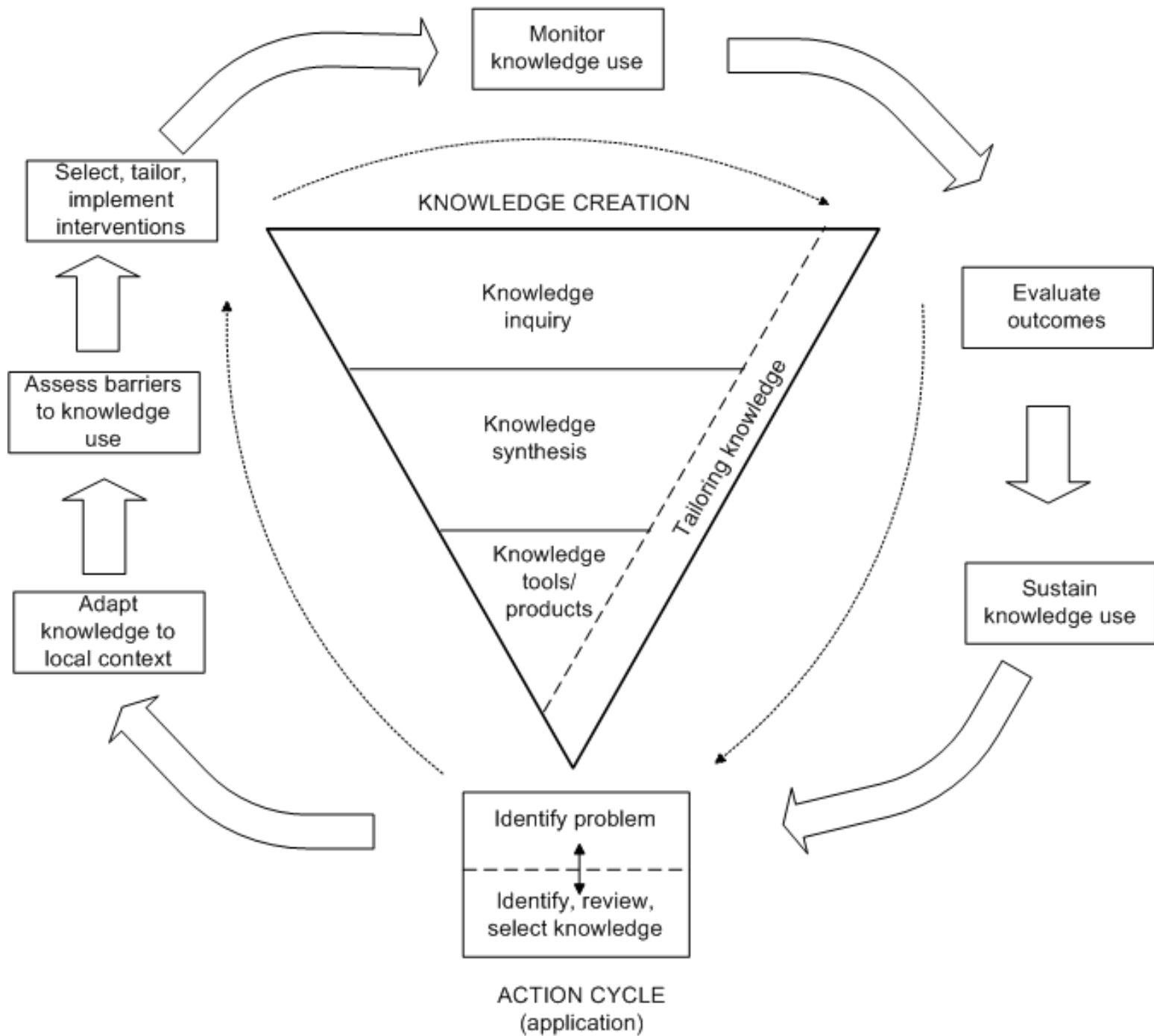
- Lack of design capability/design capacity work
- Absorptive capacity (Cohen and Levinthal, 1990, Zahra and George, 2002)
- Capability “to recognize the value of new, external information, assimilate it, and apply it to commercial ends”
- Acquire; assimilate; transform; exploit
- Bessant et al (2005) add tipping points

Bessant model

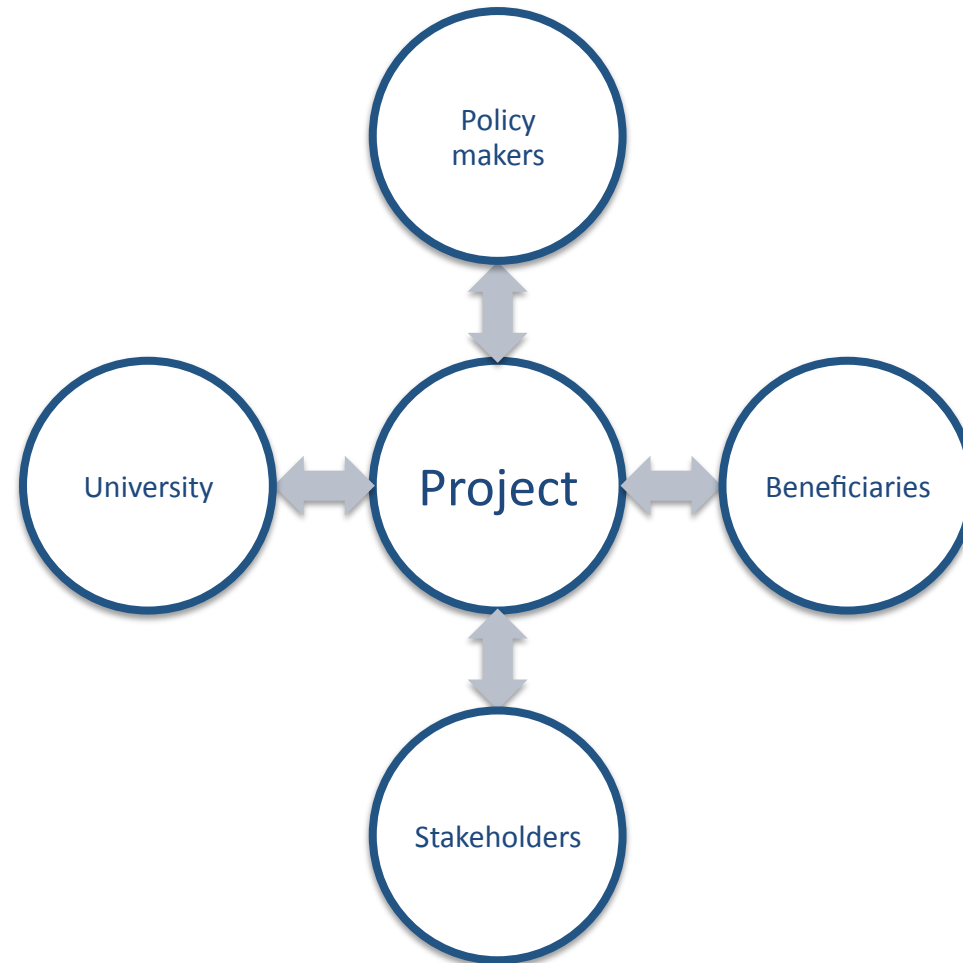


How measure design knowledge?

- in-house design department
- number of new products introduced
- university and other knowledge transfer channels
- company design process
- design integral to business plan and management structure
- number of collaborative relationships



Routes for knowledge exchange



Acknowledgements

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