

Key points in integrated analysis and synthesis

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Rural innovations evolve in complex ways and in different contexts

Key dimensions of successful innovations are:

• Context

Innovation contexts are dynamic and different across European regions.

Contexts are often characterised by the coexistence of different and sometimes contradictory paradigms: e.g. renewable energy and petrol economy, direct marketing and concentration in food retailing.

• Organization of networks

Different types of innovations – technological, economic, social, organizational – are strongly intertwined

Innovation happens through an interplay of different actors: socio-economic actors, end users, public decision actors, and information and knowledge actors. However, socio-economic actors and end users are the actors that turn an idea into practice and that are essential in all innovation processes.

• Knowledge and social capital

Innovation processes integrate coded and tacit knowledge.

The application and building of social capital and of functioning knowledge networks is key to successful change.

• Systemic and territorial aspects

Successful rural innovations tend to be embedded in their local/regional territorial context.

In the innovation system a shift is happening from government to governance, and from a separation of knowledge, local resources and territorial capitals to integration.

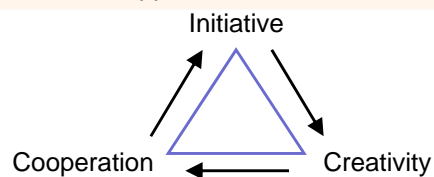
• Support

There is a great diversity of innovation support instruments. Examples are demand and supply driven instruments, bottom-up and top down approaches, and public and private partnerships. They are aimed at various types of innovations. The major challenge for support systems is to achieve coordination and to maintain flexibility.

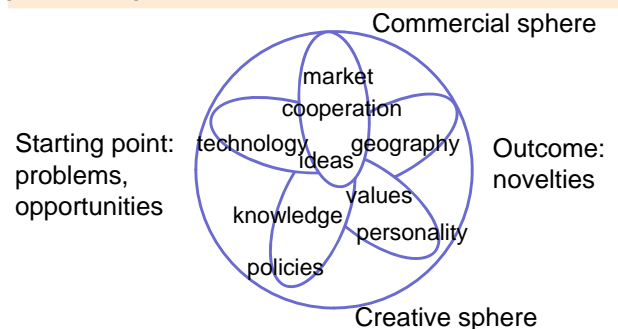
Successful rural innovations are co-produced through the evolution of collaborative networks

Four steps in co-production of innovation

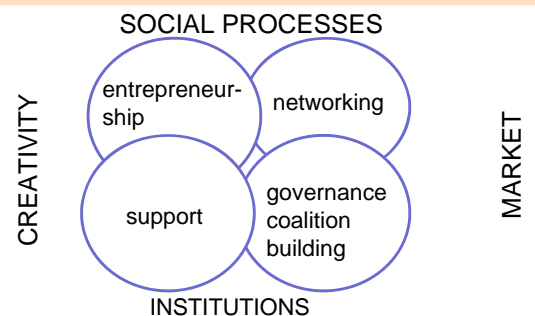
First step: **Creativity and initiative** in response to problems and opportunities



Second step: **Engagement of actors, building alliances, partnerships and market chains**



Third step: Establishing **collective norms**, promoting **innovative products and services**, achieving novel **economic, social and organizational solutions**



Fourth step: **Stewardship of innovation**: Reflexive evaluation of innovation results and re-direction towards new challenges and sustainability objectives

