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ELICITING THE VALUE OF INNOVATION INTERMEDIARIES IN THE COPERNICUS PROGRAMME ECOLOGY: AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

Abstract

This study aims to understand how and why innovation intermediaries support value creation in the Copernicus Programme ecology by taking the end-users' perspective.

The Copernicus Programme aims to provide full, free and open access to data and information on our planet and its environment. Copernicus data create value for many end-users (e.g., organisations in the Energy, Insurance, and Health sectors). However, end-users often lack knowledge of the value of Copernicus data for their business, limiting their adoption and hindering the potential value for European citizens. Therefore, the European Commission is promoting the rising of innovation intermediaries to support end-users in adopting the Copernicus Data.

Innovation intermediaries are public and private organisations supporting firm-level and system-level innovation. Innovation intermediaries provide links between organisations, and share knowledge about technologies and knowledge-intensive products and services. Although the role of innovation intermediaries has been extensively studied in academic literature, end-users perspective on innovation intermediaries supporting value creation is still under-investigated.

To cope with this gap, we first identify the Copernicus Accelerators, the Copernicus Academies, the DIAS platforms, and the Copernicus Relays as innovation intermediaries in the Copernicus Programme ecology, based on secondary data analysis and three open interviews with senior experts who contributed to designing the ecology. Second, we conducted 32 semi-structured interviews with managers of end-users organisations who leverage the intermediaries to adopt Copernicus data in their business. Lastly, we inductively analyse the interviews following the Gioia method and sensemake our findings with the well-established VRIO (Value, Rareness, Imitability, and Organization) framework.

We found that the Accelerators support value creation by providing end-users with ecosystem knowledge. The Academies offer technical and ecosystem knowledge, bridging the gap between academia and industry. The DIAS platforms enable end-users to vertically integrate towards the upstream through data accessibility and elaboration infrastructures. The Relays offer ecosystem knowledge and support

new partnership development. Besides, taking the end-users' perspective, we discovered that innovation intermediaries do not create value when are not able to reduce the information asymmetry between the space sector and the end-users, or do not offer tailored services to the end-users.

Our research contributes to innovation intermediaries and project ecology body of knowledge. We provide innovation intermediaries managers with the VRIO model tailored for their organisation to assess the value created from the end-users' perspective. Officers in the European Commission benefit from the strengths and weaknesses regarding the innovation intermediaries in the Copernicus Programme ecology.