

INOTEC - Network for Technological Innovation

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INOTEC (Network for Technological Innovation) aims at supporting innovation and entrepreneurial modernization by utilizing the services of a network of experts and specialized services. It uses information and communication technologies to facilitate knowledge transfer between government R&D agencies and companies at large.

INOTEC was conceived by the Centre for Technical Information for Industry (CITI), the information centre of The National Institute of Industrial Engineering and Technology (INETI). A perceived need for substantial organizational changes to meet new societal and economic demands had resulted in a project proposal submitted to the INETI Board. The project reflected the proactive attitude of the information centre, which went beyond information management and assumed the lead in initiating the knowledge management process at INETI.

As the project progressed, it became evident that INETI needed to devise an appropriate Knowledge Management (KM) strategy to enable it to fulfil its mission. INOTEC is central to this strategy:

- At the internal level, by creating technological and organizational conditions conducive to a knowledge sharing environment; and
- At the external level, by providing electronic access to INETI expertise and advice, thus facilitating the transfer of knowledge to the business and industry community.

INOTEC was conceived with a view to strengthening INETI's connection with other organizations of the national technological sub-system, such as Technological Centres and Industrial and Business Associations, which, in the first phase of the project, have a demonstrative and intermediary role. Portuguese industry mainly comprises small and very small companies lacking innovative capability and needing quick and personal access to expertise, advice and information about how to meet the challenges of technology and related business.

This goal is achieved by the creation of a "knowledge network", incorporating the following:

- Scientific, technical and technological data and information produced as a result of current research at INETI;
- Records of individual expertise and team competencies; and
- "Implicit knowledge" made explicit, using appropriate KM processes, for sharing within the scientific and technical community, and also to be made available externally, using interactive communication channels (including video conference and chat systems).

This project was planned in two main phases: prototyping and development. The prototyping phase included the development of a KM process, system design and provisional architecture (logical, technical and organizational aspects), definition of prototype functionalities, prototype implementation, and presentation. This phase has just concluded and the model proposed was tested. The development phase includes the implementation of the KM process (content management, defining the required roles and skills, setting up the KM team), implementation of the logical architecture (knowledge map, thesauri, intelligent agents, search engines), implementation of the technical architecture (security, confidentiality, groupware tools), content production and conversion (digitization, migration), training and marketing.

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