

CALL FOR DOCTORAL STUDENTS (2021/2022)

Project leader: **Dr Anja Tekic, Assistant Professor**
Research project: **Digitization as a driving force of open innovation and co-creation: implications for value creation and value appropriation**

Broader research setting

The trend of **open innovation** (Chesbrough, 2003) has led many companies to recognize the value of collaborative innovation not only with their partner companies, universities or startups, but also with individual external contributors—users and customers, field experts, students, or amateur innovation enthusiasts—who may provide valuable input to the company's innovation projects. This specific form of collaborative innovation between companies and individual external contributors is typically known as **co-creation** (Piller & West, 2014; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004; Tekic & Willoughby, 2019).

The emergence of novel and sophisticated digital platforms has transformed innovation in significant ways. Digitizations has opened new opportunities for companies to tap into external sources of knowledge and creativity to enrich their product and brand development projects, changing thereby radically the notion of openness in terms of degree, scale and scope (Nambisan et al., 2019).

To involve individual external contributors in their co-creation projects, companies employ a variety of digital platforms to support crowd- and community-based collaboration. Collaborative practices, such as **crowdsourcing contests** (Ghezzi et al., 2018), **community innovation** (Hienerth et al., 2014), **lead user workshops** (Brem et al., 2018) or **hackathons** (Granados & Pareja-Eastaway, 2019) have been considered to bring great value to companies in solving complex innovation and product development problems, allowing them to tap into expertise, experience and creative potential of individual contributors (Afuah & Tucci, 2012; Garcia Martinez, 2017; Jeppesen & Lakhani, 2010).

Objective of the research project

Beyond simply providing a gateway to potential contributors, adoption of digital platforms in open innovation and co-creation have broader implications for **value creation** and **value appropriation** that are in the focus of this research project. Namely, extensive openness in collaboration may support value creation by attracting individual external contributors to freely share their ideas and solutions and get engaged more intensively in companies' collaboration initiatives. However, too open environment may lead to difficulties for companies to keep control over the collaboration process and appropriate benefits from it. Such conflicting needs for control and openness in managing IP apparently put in front of managers an either/or choice (Dahlander & Gann, 2010; Lauritzen, 2017), making them to choose value appropriation over value creation, or vice versa.

Thus, the overall research objective of this project is to determine the pathways that companies need to follow to be able to shift their focus from resolving the inherent tension between opposing poles of control and openness to managing the **paradox of controlled openness** and be able simultaneously both to create and appropriate value through digitally-empowered co-creation.

Potential research questions

Taking into account that there is a competition among the companies and open innovation intermediaries for active and prolific contributors, whose time and attention are in high demand (Franke et al., 2013; Hutter et al., 2011), companies need to be able to attract the right individuals to collaborate and support the creation of value. Thus, with regards to **value creation**, there are four important issues our research project will focus on:

- What are the key motivational drivers of contributors' voluntary behavior and what influences or constrains their self-selection to participate in co-creation?
- How to identify valuable contributors and thereby increase value creation effectiveness through collaboration?
- How to design collaborative digital platforms and manage co-creation to fit the goal of specific project (new product development, product improvement, etc.)?
- What are the determinants of the successful ecosystems and community platforms as the key actors in value creation?

Conversely, there is the growing consensus in academic research that effective IP management is a prerequisite for companies to be able to appropriate value in open innovation and co-creation (Mazzola et al., 2018; Tekic & Willoughby, 2020). Thus, with regards to **value appropriation**, there are additional three important issues our research project will focus on:

- What the key elements of digitization facilitate and/or inhibit companies to appropriate value created through collaboration with individual external contributors?
- How do IP-focused terms and conditions influence the effectiveness of co-creation and open innovation initiatives?
- How do companies and individual external contributors navigate control-openness tensions in collaboration?

Project leader

Anja Tekic is Assistant Professor at HSE Graduate School of Business, Department of Strategic and International Management. She received her PhD in Innovation Management from Skolkovo Institute of Science and Technology – Skoltech (Russia), as the first PhD graduate of Skoltech's Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation. She holds master degrees in Project Management and Product Lifecycle Management, both from University of Novi Sad (Serbia). She was a visiting scholar at the Fraunhofer Institute for Industrial Engineering (Fraunhofer IAO, Germany), and the Polytechnic University of Turin (Politecnico di Torino, Italy). Her research interests include co-creation, open innovation, product innovation management, and intellectual property management in co-creation projects.

Requirements for doctoral students

- Fluency in English (both spoken and in written)
- Strong research interest in innovation, product development and/or technology management
- Experience in conducting qualitative and/or quantitative data analyses

NOTE: Doctoral students are eligible for the stipend within the framework of the research project (up to 30.000 RUB per month based on students' performance and results), in addition to the state and the school awarded scholarships.