

EUROPEAN GUIDE TO INDUSTRIAL INNOVATION

Partners in Innovation Ltd (UK) have been awarded a contract by the European Commission to develop the European Guide to Industrial Innovation (GIDIE).

The aim of the Guide is to provide a company with a means of assessing their innovation performance using a software based system, with hard copy support.

Taking inputs from members of the management team, the software directly produces a comprehensive analysis of performance in a variety of innovation-related , together with a 'signpost to action' report and a data base listing sources of support for innovation in each country of EU.

The first draft of the Guide has been prepared and we are now entering the β -test phase of the project. It is important that we gain as much user comment and experience, and the Commission would like to involve potential users in this project - as early as possible in its development.

The enclosed provides a brief description of the Guide. It should be emphasised that this in draft form, and may be subject to revision and alteration.

The Purpose of the Guide

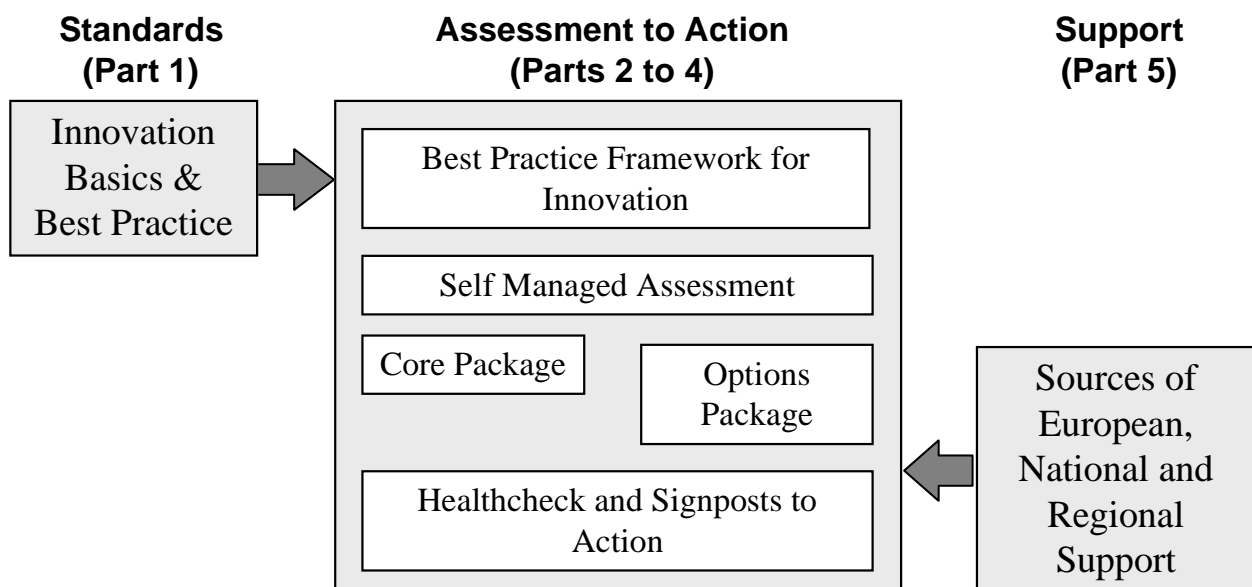
The aim of the Guide is to provide managers and staff with a practical understanding of the benefits of innovation and the routes to becoming an innovative organisation. It uses a software based self assessment and analysis system with a focus on establishing actions to:

- improve short term performance or problem solving
- undertaking medium term innovation projects
- establishing longer term plans to become a 'best practice' innovative company

To maximise the impact of available support to innovation, the Guide includes a data base of European Union, National and Regional initiatives for all member states.

The style of the Guide is essentially practical and provides workbook material to support self managed assessment.

The Guide is in 3 main sections as shown in the diagram below, but is divided into 5 parts for ease of use.



Innovation Basics and Best Practice, Part 1 - emphasises the importance of innovation as a key issue in developing the competitiveness of European businesses. It raises awareness that innovation is a company issue, that it is a continual process and that it has its own practices which companies have to learn and exploit.

A range of case studies is included to examine the gap between European innovation performance and that of the USA, Japan and other Asian countries, and to highlight lessons to be grasped. Guidelines are developed to illustrate the characteristics found in innovative companies, further emphasising the company wide nature of actions to create competitive and innovative companies.

Assessment to Action - Parts 2 - 4 set out a practical but structured approach to creating action plans to improve innovation performance.

The **Best Practice Framework** used for assessment is evolved from the conclusions of Part 1 and extensive other recognised models. The structures of the assessment, analysis and action planning modules follow this framework to provide continuity through the following stages:

- The Innovation Best Practice Framework
- How to get real results using self assessment
- Using the Core and Options Assessment Packages
- Reports and identifying areas for action

This section of the Guide is supported by a series of Quick Reference Cards in addition to the Guide material.

The system produces two key reports :

Healthcheck Report - a series of graphical and numerical reports on where the company is today in relation to best practice standards, and

Signposts to Action Report - analysed assessment data which highlights areas of opportunities, agendas for detail analysis and linkages to the support data base.

In addition, reports are available on Innovation Themes of Use of Technology

A demonstration package is included in the Guide to allow users to become familiar with analysis routines.

Support Measures for Innovation - Part 5 which links the specific outputs from the assessment into sources of support available at European Union, National and Regional levels. Three categories of initiatives are covered - organisations, programmes and publications. The Guide and data base cover the European Union and 15 member states and allows companies to focus on their specific support needs - the assessment detail shows what is needed and the data base says where help can be found.

Benefits of the Guide

The Guide provides companies with the opportunity to self assess their innovation performance and to set up reliable action plans for short, medium and long term improvement. It has been specifically designed to produce the following benefits :

- A practical statement of what issues innovative companies focus upon and some of the results they have achieved
- An ‘across the company’ assessment format which is easy to use and which produces rapid and specific results
- A software based package for established and developing SMEs that can provide results within the hour
- A facility to tune the software assessment to particular company needs for established SMEs or larger organisations
- Tools to help in identifying the most relevant areas for improvement action and support

The structure of the assessment package provides a basis for organisations to focus on the 3 key issues in developing an innovative company :

1. Establishing the right organisation **culture for innovation**
2. Focusing on the **business systems** needed for innovation development, i.e. customer focus, supplier focus, use of technology, product management, finance and external resources
3. Creating an **effective organisation** in terms of knowledge base, team skills, uses of information, organisation and communication

The approach can unlock the potential of all employees in the organisation.

The Limitations of the Guide

The Guide addresses many of the traditional barriers to innovation, such as

- Failing to understand and acting upon customer needs
- Not responding rapidly & effectively to opportunities and threats
- Lack of differentiation of product and services.
- Failure to make full use of available technology

The Signposting in the Guide helps the organisation to identify and overcome these problems

However, users should not assume that the questionnaire format used in the Guide is the only method of assessing performance, many other methods are available. Having used the Guide to identify areas of opportunity, other more specific innovation management tools should be considered by the organisation, and used, as appropriate, in particular for detail planning in specific innovation projects.

The Guide is not prescriptive and will not provide simplistic, one-off answers to problems. The emphasis of the Guide is on identification of opportunities for improvement and provision of substantial material to guide company management to develop sound action plans for their exploitation. It is important that there should be a strong commitment, at all levels in the organisation, to the structured action plans developed from the self-assessment.

Best Practice Framework

BEST PRACTICE COMPANIES

There are a number of common management practices which are found in companies with a track record in innovation. This finding accords with other analyses of high performance companies undertaken for the UK Innovation Management Tool Kit as early as 1990 up to more recent analyses for the US Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award.

The common practices have been categorised into three areas of focus, shown below in Figure 2.1.

1. Creating the right **culture for innovation** - concerned with issues such as *leadership, vision, role of strategy, customer driven quality*
2. Improving the **business practices** concerned with innovation - concerned with issues such as *Customers, Suppliers, Products/ Services, Technology and Finance*
3. **Effective organisation** for innovation - concerned with issues such as *Training, Team Working, Continual Improvement Management, Communication and Organisation*

Figure 2.1 FOCUS OF BEST PRACTICE FRAMEWORK

In more detail, the above groups cover such issues as:

Culture for Innovation : Senior manager leadership role in innovation, external communications, strong strategic commitment and sound plans, emphasising customer driven quality as a key issue, creating a responsive and flexible approach to opportunities.

Business Practices for Innovation : Planning processes which allow for risks, market and customer analysis, customer satisfaction programmes, strategic relationships with customers/suppliers, improving product development performance, design for quality, making full use of available technology in products and support areas, knowledge of support needs and sources, sound financial management.

Effective Organisation for Innovation : Employee participation, training and development, effective internal communication, teamworking, selection and analysis of business data, senior manager leadership in innovation.

It is important to translate these practices into a formal model of best practice which can be used by all companies to steer assessments and priorities in action planning. The Best Practice Framework used in this Guide has been evolved from:

the broad indicators identified in Part 1 of the Guide

the work referred to in the introductory paragraph to this section, and

extensive practical experience on the subject arising from work with leading companies, conferences and available literature.

BEST PRACTICE - FRAMEWORK AND DESCRIPTION

The following paragraphs cover:

1. The Guide Best Practice Framework, and
2. The Best Practice Framework Benchmark Standards and their linkage to the common practices identified above.

The Framework of Best Practice used in the Guide is outlined in Figure 2.2. The three areas of focus are 'formalised' into 8 Innovation Group headings which represent the key areas of management in innovation. To provide the ability to both understand and plan action in detail, the standards for each of the 8 Innovation Groups are defined in 4 benchmark statements. The Framework of Best Practice is therefore built around 32 benchmarks.

The Innovation Benchmark Areas are used across all company level assessments, analysis and action planning support throughout the Guide. This provides the ability to view the various stages as part of a total consistent structure.

The benchmark standards developed from the sources listed earlier are given in summary form in the following four pages. Each Benchmark Standard includes a short introduction to the background of the specific Innovation Group and its linkage to earlier parts of the Guide.

In each of the thirty two key indicator areas the critical measures of success and a definition of the benchmark standard are listed. These statements are the standards achieved by best practice businesses and hence represent targets for improvements which impact on overall performance of the company. They are not listed in any order of priority - all are important.

FOCUS	INNOVATION GROUP	INNOVATION BENCHMARK AREA
CULTURE FOR INNOVATION	Innovation Culture	Innovation leadership Customer driven quality Effective strategy External impact
BUSINESS PRACTICES FOR INNOVATION	Customer Focus	Customer and market knowledge Marketing and sales plans Customer relationships Customer support
	Supplier Focus	Purchasing policy Develop supplier relationships Supplier strategies Professional services
	Use of Technology	Technology strategy Internal technology development Technology acquisition Support technology
	Product Management	Product /service life cycles Product/service development Order to delivery process After sales service
	Finance/External Resources	Financial planning Cash and cost control External stakeholders External resources
EFFECTIVE ORGANISATION FOR INNOVATION	People	Human resources for innovation Training and staff development Performance appraisal and reward Participation and involvement
	Organisational Effectiveness	Analysis of data / information Continual improvement Flexibility and responsiveness Internal communication

Figure 2.2 BEST PRACTICE MODEL

INNOVATION CULTURE

Senior management should be both visible and active in communicating the organisation's aims and purpose. This should focus on providing products that create ever-increasing customer value, and of finding innovative ways to make and deliver these products.

Senior management must demonstrate a strong personal commitment to achieving the organisation's goals and ensuring that all staff are empowered to enable them to contribute to the implementation of strategic plans - this will involve a positive coaching/mentor role for senior managers.

One of the key measures of success will be external stakeholders' view of the performance of the organisation in terms of quality of products/services, and response in dealing with problems and opportunities.

CUSTOMER FOCUS

Without satisfied customers, an organisation risks having no business. In a very competitive world, a business must seek to provide customers with new or modified products that provide innovative responses to meet their changing needs.

The organisation must understand the present and future needs of its main customers, their priorities and the market pressures they face. They should make the customer the driving force of the business and focus operations to give priority to meeting and anticipating customer needs and requirements, and to exceeding their expectations.

Customer satisfaction must be regularly measured and analysed, this data should be used to find ways to improve performance in this area.

BENCHMARK STANDARDS

- 1. INNOVATION LEADERSHIP**
Senior managers have created a vision, which has been effectively communicated, of an innovative organisation which motivates staff to participate in an active way.
- 2. CUSTOMER DRIVEN QUALITY**
Senior managers believe that quality is judged by the customer and act to give priority to achieving high levels of quality as perceived by the customer.
- 3. EFFECTIVE STRATEGY**
A formal strategy and objectives have been defined by senior management, who communicate these policies, plans and strategies through all levels of the organisation. and ensure that all staff agree to implement them.
- 4. EXTERNAL IMPACT**
The organisation has earned an external reputation with customers, suppliers, funders and society for innovation, growth and responsiveness.

BENCHMARK STANDARDS

- 1. CUSTOMERS & MARKET KNOWLEDGE**
The current requirements of key customers are well understood, as are the future needs of the market. The products of direct competitors are systematically studied, analysed and evaluated.
- 2. MARKETING & SALES PLANS**
Consistent marketing and sales plans are developed. These are derived from organisational objectives and strategies, and are based on the analysis of market data.
- 3. CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS**
Structured and multiple level contacts have been developed with major customers and the information from these contacts is used as the basis for action.
- 4. CUSTOMER SUPPORT**
High standards of customer support/service are provided throughout the life of the product/service. Customers seeking information and assistance have easy access to sources of help. Customer satisfaction is measured using a consistent procedure, and the information obtained is acted upon.

SUPPLIER FOCUS

It is essential to establish close relationships with key suppliers, who can provide creative resources and ideas for innovation.

All suppliers should be evaluated and selected on the basis of their ability to provide goods or services that consistently meet requirements. The capabilities of current suppliers should be regularly assessed; as well as those of potential suppliers. Contacts with suppliers should be used to generate a data-base of potential sources, which should also include other available information, and knowledge of who supplies your major competitors.

The appropriate relationship with key suppliers is partnership. It provides the basis for optimising risk sharing in new business ventures involving them. Partnerships, including Research and Development, can help to define joint efforts aimed at improving suppliers' performance.

USE OF TECHNOLOGY

A significant gap exists in most organisations between the technology that is available externally and what is being used at present in design, production and delivery of products, and in productivity improvements. Without action, the gap will get larger.

The organisation should develop a strategy to identify technology needs and the routes for acquisition through research and development and / or through outside acquisition - in four areas;

- Identify the technology needed for improving existing products, and developing new products.
- Support technology needed to achieve best practice standards in production processes, systems and procedures.
- Support technology to manage and respond to environmental risks in a proactive manner.
- Information technology needed to support the development of the organisation and support systems.

BENCHMARK STANDARDS

1. PURCHASING POLICY

Knowledge of potential suppliers has been developed to support an approach of buying at best value from market leaders rather than at lowest cost from any qualified supplier.

2. DEVELOP SUPPLIER RELATIONSHIPS

A formal and comprehensive data base of key suppliers has been established and partnerships of mutual trust developed with existing suppliers.

3. SUPPLIER STRATEGIES

Best practice suppliers are encouraged to play a part in future innovative business ventures. and joint activities are developed with them for mutual advantage.

4. PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Professional services that are best provided in house have been identified, and those purchased externally provide quantified benefits to the business.

BENCHMARK STANDARDS

1. TECHNOLOGY STRATEGY

A technology 'road map' for the organisation has been established. Internal research and development capabilities are well defined. Available technology that could be used in new / improved products is regularly scanned. The organisation has developed a capacity to absorb technology through co-operation with outside bodies.

2. INTERNAL TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT

Resources are available for internal research and development. New ideas are gathered from all sources in order to develop in-house capabilities. Processes are in place that encourages all staff to make creative and innovative suggestions for improvement.

3. TECHNOLOGY ACQUISITION

Resources are available for development and / or acquisition of technology. Technology and intellectual property is securely maintained in the organisation.

4. SUPPORT TECHNOLOGY

The organisation regularly evaluates, accesses and uses the best available technology to support manufacture / delivery of products, and provision of analysed information.

PRODUCT MANAGEMENT

Managing the company's product portfolio should be an integral part of the Strategic Plan. Customers' needs and requirements are constantly changing. Driving for market leadership requires a strategy that provides for continual improvement of existing products, and the creation and timely launch of new products which are superior in meeting overall customer needs.

The quality of product is dependent on how they are produced - processes are the key factor in determining quality.

Ensure that the entire organisation is focused on developing, manufacturing and delivering products that meet customer requirements. Processes that are managed and continually improved will deliver better customer service.

FINANCE/EXTERNAL RESOURCES

Financial resources must be managed effectively to support the innovation policy of the organisation. It is important to plan the approach to the use of external sources of finance, and other assistance from external stakeholders.

Short term funds are needed to ensure the efficiency of day-to-day operations and short term improvement.

Long term capital funding from various sources is required to support the financing of innovative opportunities in the future. Relationships must be built with providers of funds to provide continuity in support.

BENCHMARK STANDARDS

1. PRODUCT LIFE CYCLES

Each product is treated as though it were an individual 'business'. Business results are regularly reviewed with emphasis on the progress in improving product specifications, and how obsolete products are run down or phased out.

2. PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

An integrated process has been established to improve existing product, or to introduce new products, that consistently reduces the time it takes to bring new products to the market.

3. PHYSICAL PRODUCTION

Documented processes ensure that all activities concerned with production are controlled. This ensures the production of consistent products with minimum variation.

4. ORDER TO DELIVERY PROCESS

Resources are devoted to provide innovative means of fulfilling customer orders; including order-processing, delivery, logistics, installation and after-sales service. This ensures total customer satisfaction

BENCHMARK STANDARDS

1. FINANCIAL PLANNING

Managers keep tight control of operating plans and investment policies; but make funds available to support small innovation projects. They set targets for the business that stimulate innovative solutions.

2. CASH & COST CONTROL

The organisation sets difficult targets for the control of expenditures and cash flow. Reliable processes control waste in the form of non-productive costs.

3. EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

Full and open communication is maintained with external stakeholders on all new business opportunities and investments.

4. EXTERNAL RESOURCES

The organisation makes full use of support and improvement initiatives from regional/ national/ international agencies

PEOPLE

If an organisation wants to keep its customers; then it needs committed staff. Staff are crucial to customer satisfaction; they are the organisations' main point of contact with the outside world. Innovative companies invest in developing the knowledge, skills and motivation of all employees.

Senior managers must ensure that the organisation has creative staff who are empowered to innovate.

Training and development of all staff should be integrated with the development of the business.

Policy should be directed to the creation of a high performance workplace, and to the development of the potential of *all* staff to foster high achievement, adaptability to change and job satisfaction.

ORGANISATION EFFECTIVENESS

In today's world an organisation is constantly subject to change - global markets, new technologies, ever-increasing, competition. Organisations must respond to these changes by continually improving the performance of every activity of the organisation. This requires the selection and use of appropriate data and information that are effectively used as the key foundation of a performance oriented organisation - management based on facts is an important commitment for the organisation.

Customers and competition impose constant pressures to change. All staff should be empowered to develop ideas / suggestions and to take part in improvement activities. This requires effective three way communication; up, down and across the organisation.

Flexibility and response to solving problems on exploiting opportunities is a key issue in organisation effectiveness as seen by external stakeholders.

BENCHMARK STANDARDS

- 1. HUMAN RESOURCES FOR INNOVATION**
Trained and competent staff are available to meet organisation plans for change and to exploit innovation.
- 2. TRAINING AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT**
A continuous programme of business focused training and development is available to all staff. This includes exposure to business improvement activities and training to ensure effective teamwork.
- 3. PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL & REWARDS**
Recognition and reward for outstanding results maximises the contribution of all staff to achieving the aims of the organisation.
- 4. PARTICIPATION & INVOLVEMENT**
The organisation culture encourages acceptance of change, fosters new ideas from all sources and encourages a strong team approach to managing change.

BENCHMARK STANDARDS

- 1. ANALYSIS OF DATA & USE OF INFORMATION**
The organisation selects and uses the data and information that is needed to support the achievement of its objectives.
 - 2. CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT**
The organisation has a continual commitment to ongoing improvements to all business processes, systems and procedures, using everyone in the organisation..
 - 3. INTERNAL COMMUNICATION**
The organisation has established effective three way (up, down and lateral) communication for both good and bad news.
 - 4. FLEXIBILITY AND RESPONSE**
The organisation culture encourages the acceptance of change and the exploitation of new ideas. The organisation structure matches the changing needs of the business and not vice versa.
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Using Self Assessment to Develop Innovative Companies

INTRODUCTION

Achieving good results from self assessment requires that two important conditions are met in the concepts of the system, namely:

1. That the design of the system should have specific features, namely
 - meet best current 'best in class' concepts
 - provide a basis for both short and long term actions
 - be capable of dealing with a range of sizes of companies, and
 - provide a depth of analysis to establish reliable action plans.
2. Achieving results by offering a range of practical options and an approach involving step by step commitment, building upon initial results and from gaining experience plus supporting information.

FEATURES OF SELF ASSESSMENT SYSTEMS

The conditions for design of the system are as follows:

Assessment 'Best Practice' - experience of the extensive European development in Innovation Management Tools has been employed in defining 10 features of assessment best practice for the system used in this Guide, as shown in Figure 2.3 below.

1. Extensive explanatory material to support self assessment
2. Use of relevant model of best practice
3. Flexibility of assessment options to meet the specific needs of the company
4. Data collection to be straightforward and results presented in clear formats
5. Choice of assessment plans based on the features of the company, its performance and aspirations
6. The assessment to provide for involvement of all employees
7. A built in bias to action planning and identification of support needs and sources
8. Action plans to include targets/success criteria
9. Emphasis on self management of action plans, including follow up to maximise learning and sustain commitment
10. Hardcopy and software approaches available to provide flexibility and ensure depth of analysis

Figure 2.3 BEST PRACTICE FEATURES FOR SELF ASSESSMENT

Short and Long Term Actions - able to support the areas of subsequent action shown in Figure 2.4

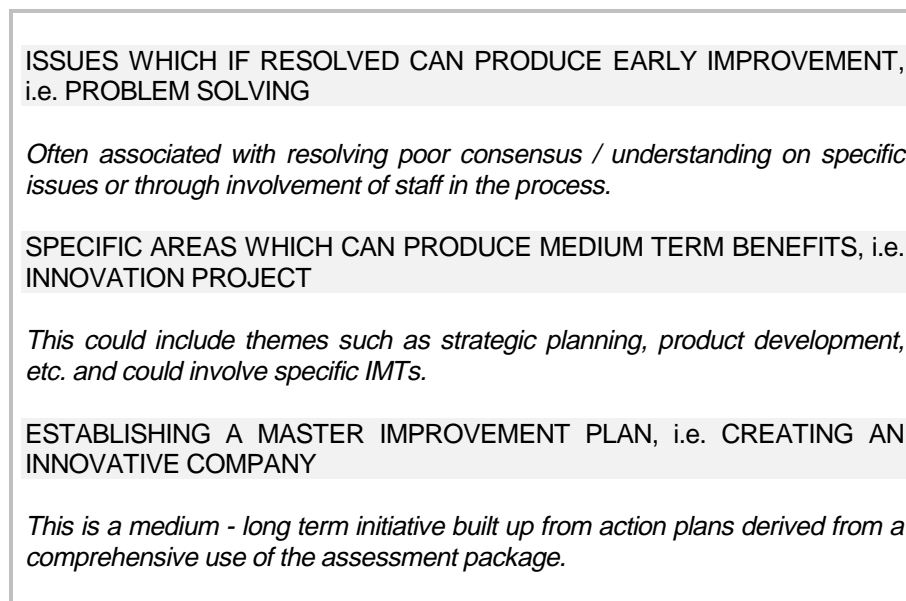


Figure 2.4 AREAS FOR ACTION FOLLOWING ASSESSMENT

Company Size - able to support the needs for a range of organisations from

- businesses which are at any early stage in their development but which are expected to meet high standards and to demonstrate sound innovation capabilities in specific and relevant areas
- established small to medium sized organisations in highly competitive markets where total performance counts, and standards need to be high in all management areas.

Depth of Analysis - the system should be able to provide the capability to examine strengths and weaknesses in more detail to ensure that the range of actions to increase performance or solve problems are reviewed.

The assessment system described in the later in this Part of the Guide seeks to follow all of the above principles in terms of its potential for company development, applicability, depth of analysis and embodiment of currently perceived best assessment practice.

ACHIEVING RESULTS FROM SELF ASSESSMENT

The Guide should provide a comprehensive and highly productive range of tools and approaches to promote and support development towards an innovative company. In practice this is a major programme for most businesses involving performance improvement in all areas of activity.

Whilst Parts 3 and 4 of the Guide will identify some specific approaches to maximise the impact of the Guide there are 4 general issues which are relevant at this stage;

1. The importance of understanding what programmes can be initiated from the initial assessment
2. That the development of an innovative company is a major task which needs to be approached on a step by step basis
3. Identification of priorities for action and understanding the potential for impact across the business, and
4. Developing the right specification for external support from agencies or consultants.

Potential Programmes : The company wide nature of the Best Practice Framework and Company Assessments coupled with the Detail/Thematic Assessment opens up a wide range of potential developments. This is illustrated in Figure 2.5 which shows typical issues for a range of potential short to long term developments that could emerge from the initial stages of assessment.

FOCUS	ORGANISATION EFFECTIVENESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved communication • Specific training initiatives • Specific data collection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restructure to meet business needs • Align training to business needs • Establish team-work training & development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible organisation • 'Management by fact' • Continual improvement • Response to challenge
	IMPROVING SYSTEMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer / Market analysis • Supplier quality • Specific technology search 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop customer strategies • Create technology plan - sources & routes • Improve order to delivery process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer satisfaction • Supplier partnerships • Effectiveness in using technology • Financial performance
	CREATING CULTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff suggestions scheme • Creating internal customers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior manager leadership in innovation • Commit to innovation strategy • Establish processes for customer driven quality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic stability creation • External impact • Measurable impact of innovation
		PROBLEM SOLVING (SHORT TERM)	INNOVATION PROJECTS (MEDIUM TERM)	INNOVATIVE COMPANY (LONGER TERM)
DEVELOPMENT TIMESCALE				

Figure 2.5 TYPICAL AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT FOLLOWING ASSESSMENT

Step by Step Commitment : It is possible to plan a route towards creating an innovative company through a step by step process of innovation projects. The content of the Guide, Quick Reference Cards and the System Software provides for a number of options for 'migration' following the initial assessment - all formats contain material to cover both Core and Options Packages. This issue is complementary to that of the previous section, and is concerned with how to expand the use of the systems modules to support the potential developments highlighted by the initial assessment. Figure 2.6 shows a range of possible ways by which users can expand their approach from an initial assessment using Quick Reference Cards plus the Core Package into positive development programmes.

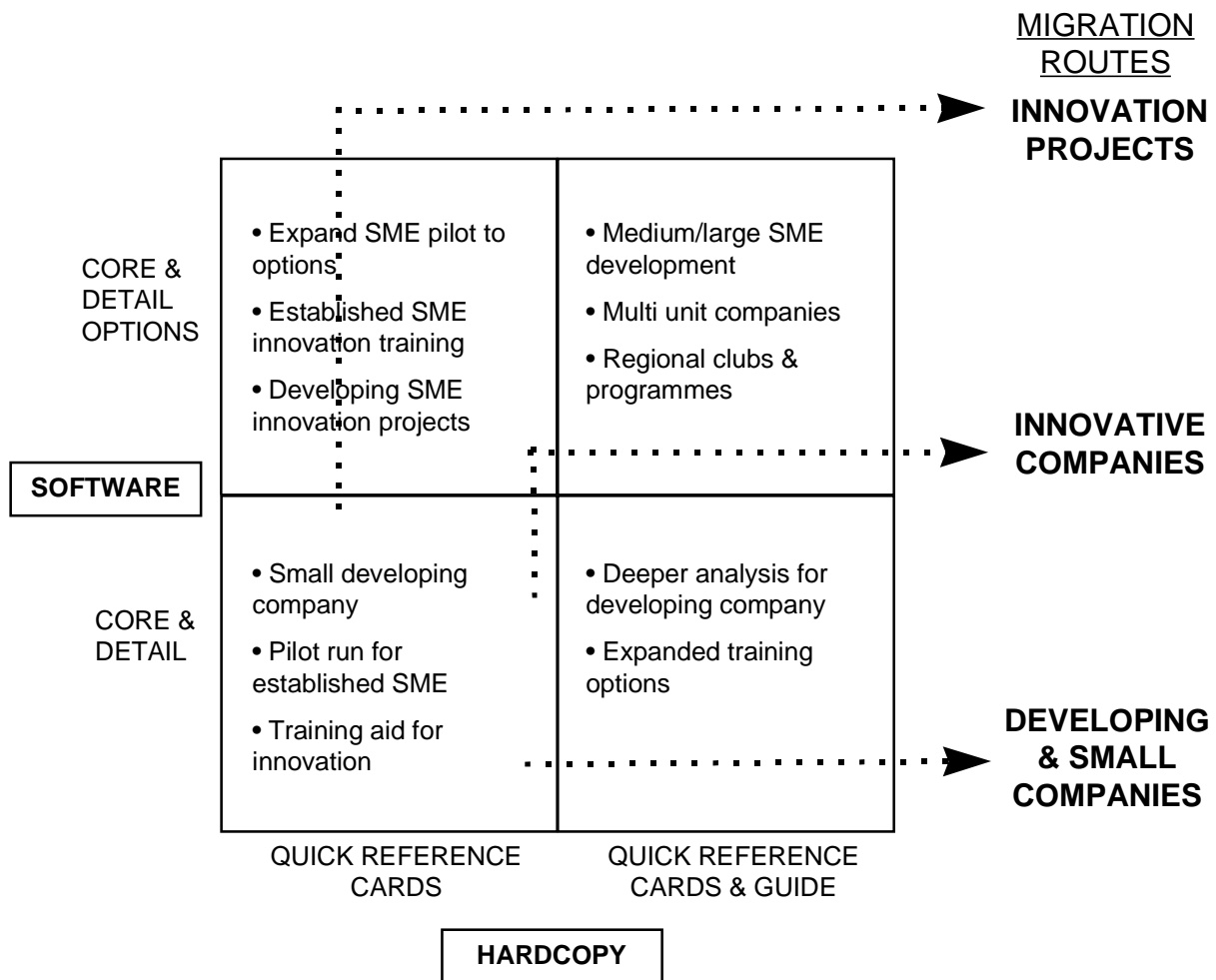


Figure 2.6 PROGRESS BUILD UP OF COMMITMENT

Priorities for Action : For most companies the initial assessment will provide:

- an overview of how far the company is perceived to be from overall best practice standards in innovation, and
- those areas of strengths and weakness which might be selected as actions to improve performance in specific areas.

The task facing managers is to decide on which 2 or 3 critical issues they should focus upon for action planning. A process for dealing with this problem is outlined in workbook form in Part 4. At this stage the following general points are made:

- Any action plan at this stage is unlikely to commit the company to overall development to become an innovative company - at best it will commit management to develop a Master Plan to achieve this, and
- Action plans are likely to be built from issues arising on either short term improvement programmes or innovation projects. It is important to have a basis for profiling potential action areas to define those that should be given priority. Part 4 offers a process to do this which looks at a range of potential impacts covering:

- Impact on Business
- Ease of Resolution
- Time scale to resolve
- Downside risk - impact of failure
- Positive impact on other areas
- Contribution to best practice development

Particularly in actions concerned with short to medium term completion it is important to consider the cross-impact issues, e.g. an action to improve communications can have a major impact across the business.

Specification for External Support : Making use of the Company and Detail/Thematic levels of the assessment provides a very detailed description of those issues which the company perceives as creating poor performance. The Action Planning Support sheets in the Signposts to Action Report include suggested reasons for poor performance as well as potential courses of action.

It also seeks in conjunction with the **Sources of Support Data Base** to produce a 'short list' of relevant agencies, programmes or publications. Managers must make full use of all of this information if they are to produce an effective brief for any external assistance programme to which they are likely to commit their company.