Content

List of Figures **12**

List of Tables **13**

Abbreviations **14**

Interview Codes **14**

1. Introduction **15**

2. Organizational Learning from Boundary-spanning Activities **21**

Bringing the Environment into Theories of Organizational Learning **21**

Linking External Changes with Internal Dynamics in Organizations 22

The Notion of Boundary-spanning Activities 24

Processes of Organizational Learning **28**

Stages in Processes of Organizational Learning 31

Weaknesses of Conceptualizing Organizational Learning in Terms of Stages 33

Toward a Contextualized Model of Organizational Learning **34**

Knowledge Acquisition through Boundary-spanning Activities 35

Boundary-spanning Activities and the Distribution of Knowledge 37

Boundary-spanning Activities and the Interpretation of Knowledge 39

Boundary-spanning Activities and Organizational Memory 43

Emerging Theoretical Model and Implications for Research **45**

3. Research Design, Context, and Methodology **47**

Research Design **47**

Research Context **49**

The IST Program 49

The Management of the IST Program 52

Focal Boundary-spanning Activities 56

Methodology **57**

Data Collection 57
Analysis of the Data 61

4. Learning from Boundary-spanning Activities with ISTAG 63

The Role of ISTAG in the Management of the IST Program 63
The Rise of Organizational Learning Needs 64
Acquiring Knowledge from ISTAG 66
Providing a Vision for the IST Program 66
Tailoring Knowledge Provision to Learning Needs 69
The F6 Unit as ISTAG's Advocate 73
Distributing the Knowledge Acquired from ISTAG 75
The Linkage between ISTAG Activities and Internal Dynamics of DG INFSO 75
Facilitators of and Barriers to the Distribution of the Acquired Knowledge 80
Interpreting the Knowledge Acquired from ISTAG 82
Making Sense of the Acquired Knowledge within the Context of DG INFSO 82
The Impact of Organizational Politics on Knowledge Interpretation 84
The Organizational Memory and the Knowledge Acquired from ISTAG 85
Challenges to Established Structures in DG INFSO 85
Inertia in DG INFSO 89
Summary of the Main Findings 91

5. Learning from Boundary-spanning Activities with ISTC 93

The Role of ISTC in Managing the IST Program 93
Prescribed Learning Needs 95
Acquiring Knowledge from ISTC 96
Gaining Access to Policy-oriented Knowledge 97
Limits to the Knowledge-seeking Behavior of DG INFSO 99
Channeling of Policy-oriented Knowledge into DG INFSO 102
Distribution and Interpretation of the Knowledge Acquired from ISTC 105

Barriers to the Wide Distribution of the Acquired Knowledge in DG INFSO 105
Relevance of the Acquired Knowledge in DG INFSO 109
Organizational Memory and the Knowledge Acquired from ISTC 112
Stability in the Implementation of the IST Program 112
Taking Regulations for Granted 114
Summary of the Main Findings 115
6. Discussion of the Empirical Evidence in Light of Theory 117
Variations in Processes of Organizational Learning 118
The Rise of Organizational Learning Needs 119
Knowledge Acquisition 121
Distribution 125
Interpretation 129
Organizational Memory 132
Concluding Comments 134
Distinctive Qualities of Organizational Learning Triggered by Boundary-spanning Activities 136
Overlapping Stages in Processes of Organizational Learning 138
6. Conclusions 141
The Study in Retrospect 141
Processes of Learning in the European Commission 142
The Learning Behavior of the European Commission 143
Policy Sector Matters for Learning from Boundary-spanning Activities 145
Theoretical Implications of the Impact of Boundary-spanning Activities on Organizational Learning 147
The Formation of Learning through Boundary-spanning Activities 148
Complementarities in the Contextualized Learning Model 150
Organizational Learning and the Institutionalization of Organizational Life 152
References 155