Objective

The technology of managing large organisations has become an important feature of modern societies. Although this technology is associated with a considerable degree of uncertainty, a great many management tools and models are used in society at large, as well as in individual organisations, both private and public. This management technology is to a great extent the product of scholars and practitioners in the United States, but it is used extensively even in systems which differ in many ways from the North American. This is particularly remarkable since modern organisation theory has provided firm evidence that the organisational context is crucial to the efficient use of different organisational tools. Thus even if they are efficient in the North American context where they have been developed and this is far from certain - it is highly doubtful whether they will be so in another context.
Constraints which can be expected to affect the success of management models include legal systems, financial systems, systems for corporate governance, industrial structures, cultural traditions, etc.

Needless to say these conditions differ as between the United States and other countries. From a EU perspective there is thus an urgent need to explore in some detail the diffusion of North American models in the European context.

The present research programme will consequently focus on two questions:

1. To what extent has modern management technology been diffused in various European countries?

2. What message has been communicated through this diffusion process?

From a consideration of two questions it can be established that management technology is diffused by three major carriers: graduates, publications and consultants. In the case of all three of these carriers the task of this programme will be first to identify the major operators in the participating European countries, i.e. institutions for management education, publishing houses and consulting firms. These major actors will be identified in terms of their impact in the different countries, by using indicators such as the educational background of top managers, the circulation and impact of publications, and the market shares of consultant companies. The identification of the major operators will then make it possible to tune into the messages communicated. This will be accomplished with the help of analyses of curricula, of the contents of publications and of the products offered by consultants. Particular attention will be paid to the claims of these messages to be context-neutral. In this way it is hoped to alert people to the problems involved in the uncritical application of a general management technology.

Although the programme is related primarily to the technology part of TSER (Area I), it is also closely connected with the educational part (Area II). It is expected that the results of the programme will contribute to improvements in European management practice, by encouraging appropriate changes in the curricula of management education and in the further progress of European management literature, and by promoting greater attention to the European dimension in the output of consultancies.

The programme is based on co-operation between four partners and nine subcontractors, together covering ten European countries.

**Programme(s)**

**Topic(s)**

**Funding Scheme**

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