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## The coordination of export promotion networks for the creative industries

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**Abstract:** This study aims at investigating the different approaches used by three countries that are successfully supporting the internationalisation of their creative industries. The study departs from several contributions in the areas of export promotion and public networks and adopts an interorganisational perspective, focusing on network coordination. The research was based on three case studies: design in the UK, filmmaking in Colombia and the creative industries in South Korea. The data analysis used case description, within-case analysis and cross-case analysis. The results showed that the three countries have adopted markedly different coordination systems to ensure cooperation among a number of public and private entities that offer export promotion services and support and that both the centralisation of export promotion activities and the coordination of a network of institutions may work satisfactorily. However, each approach serves different purposes, given each country's cultural and economic context.

**Keywords:** export promotion; network coordination; network governance; interorganisational theory.

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## 1 Introduction

Export promotion programs (EPPs) are defined as “public policy measures which actually or potentially enhance export activity at the company, industry or national level” [Seringhaus and Rosson, (1990), p.5]. EPPs are operated by trade support institutions (TSIs), which include a broad set of organisations that offer support to exporters, including export promotion, financing, quality standards and legal advice. These organisations can be public, private, non-profit, or a combination of these. Among the TSIs, the most commonly studied is the trade promotion organisation, or export promotion agency.

The first export promotion agency appeared in the early 1900s in Finland. According to Lederman et al. (2009, 2010), there was a substantial increase in the number of export promotion agencies in the previous two decades, with the purpose of helping companies

to overcome liabilities of foreignness when expanding abroad. Although data on the evolution of TSIs is not available, the Trade Promotion Organizations Directory 2015 lists 113 members (ITC, 2015). The International Trade Centre considers “their establishment an important step in achieving export success” [ITC, (2014), p.31]. Moreover, TSIs’ weight in government budgets has also increased over time (Freixanet, 2012), and their importance seems to be reinforced by the fast pace of change in the global environment (Belloc and Di Maio, 2011; Geldres-Weiss and Monreal-Pérez, 2017). As the number of organisations in charge of export promotion has increased, questions have been raised about their effectiveness (e.g., Freixanet, 2012; Gillespie and Riddle, 2004), particularly in developing countries.

Several studies have addressed the issue of EPP and TSI performance (Schmidt and Da Silva, 2015). In fact, although empirical evidence has been controversial, recent work has shown that they do have a positive and significant effect on exports (e.g., Coudounaris, 2018; Hayakawa et al., 2014; ITC, 2016a, 2016b; Kang, 2011). Authors have also identified relationships between EPPs and the improvement of firms’ export-related capabilities (Leonidou et al., 2011); between the adoption and successful absorption of EPPs’ benefits and firms’ marketing-related capabilities (Wang et al., 2017); and between the adoption and usefulness of these programs and certain firms’ characteristics (Coudounaris, 2012; Dominguez, 2017). Olarreaga et al. (2015) observe that more effective export promotion agencies tend to focus on new exporters and medium-sized firms. In addition, investigating the network promotion role of EPPs in driving SMEs’ export performance, Haddoud et al. (2017) suggest that experiential programs may positively impact firms’ exports.

Whatever the results, research on TSIs and EPPs has not covered certain issues that remain under-investigated. As pointed out by Tesfom and Lutz (2008, p.365), “organizational set-up and strategic approaches may differ considerably” across TSIs and EPPs in different countries. Moreover, the ITC (2011, pp.3–4) recommends boosting cooperation between public and private organisations to achieve “more efficient allocation of scarce resources, to conduct more appropriate trade policies and regulations, (and to) remove the biggest obstacles to trade...” Finally, Costa et al. (2017) confirmed that institutional networks have a positive impact on SMEs’ international strategies by reducing risks and consequently encouraging their internationalisation process, highlighting the need for further research on the differences between export promotion actors and their impact.

Therefore, EPPs may show a diversity of arrangements, and they may not be organised and implemented by one single organisation, but may be rather the result of a joint effort. EPPs are thus difficult to analyse, since they may involve several public or private organisations. This situation appears more frequently in service industries, and particularly in the creative industries. The reason is that, while manufacturing and traditional industries follow a well-defined value chain (from input sourcing to output selling), which can be served by standardised programs, the services industries and the creative segment of the economy both present substantial heterogeneity, making it more difficult to implement standardised programs to stimulate exporting (outward or inward) activities.

In this paper we address the following research question: “How are networks of TSIs in countries with different levels of economic development organised to serve the needs of firms in the creative industries?” To answer this question we examine cases of export

promotion networks aimed at expanding segments of the creative industries in three different countries: the UK, Colombia and South Korea.

The paper proceeds as follows. After this introduction, we present our theoretical background. Then we describe the methodology adopted in the study, the rationale for case selection, the data sources, and the data analysis methods used. A general description of the three cases is followed by a cross-case analysis and a discussion of the findings. Lastly, we draw our conclusions and discuss the research's limitations.

## **2 Theoretical background**

Different countries have organised their export promotion efforts differently (Serinhaus and Rosson, 1990). In some cases the government is the dominant player, controlling the organisations responsible for EPPs. This is the case of Canada and Australia, which have developed a coordination mechanism to organise the efforts of various agencies at different levels of government. Other countries combine government and the private sector to render export promotion services. This is the case of the UK, which has adopted "an organised partnership approach with extensive sharing and cooperation" (p.15). Finally, other countries, such as Germany, rely mainly on the private sector (e.g., chambers of commerce, industry associations) to carry on these activities. Serinhaus and Rosson (1990, p.15) suggest that "planned and strategic EPPs will probably outperform those that are more loosely coordinated." Comparing two models of export promotion from the user's perspective, one private or quasi-private and based on strategic planning (Austria), and the other public and loosely coordinated (Canada), Serinhaus and Botschen (1991) discovered that Austrian firms considered the export promotion services provided by the Austrian system more useful and also used them more often than their counterparts in Canada, thus suggesting that coordination and integration may help to design, implement and control export promotion activities.

In a survey of export promotion agencies around the world, Lederman et al. (2009) found that 85% were government-related (62% semi-autonomous and 23% part of a ministry), 10% were fully private, and 5% were public-private. However, even when there was a dominant agency in a country, there were several "public and private agencies working in closely related areas" (p.5). Interestingly, Martincus and Carballo (2010), examining the case of Colombia, indicate that 'bundled services work better', that is, when services are integrated and combined they tend to be more effective in promoting exports. There is also some evidence that market-oriented export promotion agencies are more effective (Ferreira and Teixeira, 2011) and that "a larger share of board's seats in the hands of the private sector" increases the effectiveness of export promotion agencies [Olarreaga et al., (2015), p.12].

The issue of how different national TSIs work together to promote exporting has recently received substantial attention. For example, the ITC states that there is an increasing concern "about the lack of impact that trade related technical assistance is producing due to the duplication of services by TSIs and other development agencies." As a result, "TSIs are pooling their resources, skills and knowledge to form networks which together provide a complete and relevant range of service offers" (ITC, 2016a).

The rationale behind the effort to coordinate the services and support offered by numerous TSIs in the same country rests on the understanding that it is difficult for a

single TSI to have the full range of resources and capabilities required to efficiently and effectively serve domestic firms in their expansion abroad, and that networking provides several advantages. In addition, lack of coordination among TSIs leads to problems such as an insufficient number of qualified participants in each EPP (GAO, 2001; Williamson et al., 2011), competition among TSIs to attract clients, and confusion. Czinkota (2012, p.15) points out that ‘coordination is crucial’ to the performance of EPPs, since TSIs must organise their efforts to make them easily accessible, “without making it the firm’s task to identify possible support offices.” Therefore, cooperation among public and private TSIs is now considered pivotal for EPPs’ success (ITC, 2014). Nevertheless, there is still a lack of research on how to organise the collaborative efforts among TSIs to develop effective and efficient EPPs.

Networks are conceptualised as ‘a social system of interconnected relationships’ [Campbell and Wilson, (1996), p.129]. There are three main types of networks, according to the lead actors, sometimes named differently by different authors: societal or civic; business or private; and public or government-related (e.g., Dal Molin and Masella, 2016; Scott and Thomas, 2015). However, Oparaocha (2015, p.864) combines NGOs and government networks into one category, institutional networks, and defines the focus of institutional networks as “the interaction between institutions and organizations in order to support market opportunity recognition and the connection of the organization with other resources.”

Some networks develop spontaneously, while others are planned. The literature on networks often calls these two types ‘emergent networks’ and ‘orchestrated networks’ (Dagnino et al., 2016). Orchestrated networks are usually associated to a lead organisation that provides legitimacy, coordinates the process of value creation and organises the operating environment for the network (Paquin and Howard-Grenville, 2013). Network dynamics are also relevant. Some networks expand over time, until they reach a saturation point, while others are constrained in their growth. In the latter case, coordination of the network is more difficult when the number of members (and nodes) expands exponentially (Dagnino et al., 2016).

Ties among network members can be strong or weak, formal or informal. Granovetter (1973) suggests that strong ties are less productive than weak ties, because weak ties have the potential to bring new resources and capabilities to the network. Accordingly, strong ties typically mean redundancy in the knowledge and resource base of network members (Sharma and Blomstermo, 2003). Dagnino et al. (2016) present a comparison of networks based on formal and informal ties. According to the authors, formal ties impose higher costs of cooperation and commitment. Formal tie drivers are interorganisational projects that are ‘deliberately programmed and implemented’, while informal tie drivers are more ‘spontaneous’ and based on ‘serendipity’ (p.360). Networks of formal ties are also characterised by “sharing of complex and highly contextual knowledge,” while networks of informal ties by ‘heterogeneity and breadth’ in their knowledge-sharing processes (p. 360).

One of the basic assumptions of network theory is that “the comparative analysis of organizations must take into account their network characteristics” [Nohria and Eccles, (1992), p.7]. Thus network theory – particularly one of its theoretical approaches, interorganisational theory (Araujo and Easton, 1996; Neghandi, 1980) – can be used to analyse how different network members under the intentional governance of a lead TSI interact. This theoretical perspective holds that independent organisations can benefit from coordinating their activities.

Interorganisational theory has looked often to the interaction of government agencies and non-profit organisations (e.g., Provan, 1984; Provan and Milward, 1995), although several researchers have applied it to for-profit organisations and to multinational corporations (e.g., Ghoshal and Bartlett, 1990; Lechner et al., 2010). Since its origins, authors that have adopted this approach have been concerned with how different social and public agencies can maximise their effectiveness by purposefully working together and “coordinating a range of disparate resources to deliver particular types of services targeted at specific social problems” [Araujo and Easton, (1996), p.76].

Interorganisational coordination has received multiple definitions, varying from a ‘voluntary adjustment’ to ‘systematic control’, depending on the theoretical perspective adopted [Alexander, (2013), p.21]. Such coordination can be carried out using informal or formal structures. Coordination of government programs should be seen as a political process of ‘mutual adjustment’ between the members. In the author’s view, many government programs, such as “a loan guarantee program for selected exporters, [...] is less the result of a rationally coordinated process of interaction between relevant actors” and more often “the result of self-interested bargaining and mutual adjustment in a political market” [Alexander, (2013), p.5].

Alexander (2013, p.16) claims that the complexity and scope associated with delivering most public services “cannot be addressed without deploying multiple agencies and a host of other organisations and institutions.” Resources can include physical facilities, financial resources, personnel, or even the more-intangible capabilities that each entity possesses. The configuration of resources and activities of public agencies needs to be cautiously planned and implemented to be effective.

Networks are classified according to their level of horizontal integration (Mandell and Keast, 2009). The present study focuses on ‘coordination networks’, that is, when several entities have to coordinate their efforts to attain certain results that could not be achieved otherwise. Lecy et al. (2014) call these same entities ‘governance networks’, while other authors (e.g., Emerson et al., 2012; Scott and Thomas, 2015) refer to ‘collaborative governance’. Newig et al. (2010) claim that, because of the complexity involved in the coordination of government activities (and often non-governmental actors), network governance is now a critical issue. In the same token, Dal Molin and Masella (2016), recognising the importance of coordination and integration in networks that combine public, private and societal institutions, observe that the knowledge on the governance of these networks is still fragmented.

Provan and Kenis (2008) and Kenis and Provan (2009) proposed three types of network governance: shared governance (organisations that collaborate without formal coordination), lead organisation governance (one organisation leads the network) and network administrative organisation governance (i.e., a separate organisation leads the network). Herranz (2008, 2010) describes three possible orientations for network coordination: bureaucratic, entrepreneurial, and community-oriented. Bureaucratic orientation works well at serving legal, regulatory and administrative requirements. It is also more interested in maintaining a stable flow of services, and accountability. An entrepreneurial orientation includes both a concern with financial issues (and greater financial performance) and an innovative approach to decision-making. Lastly, a community-oriented approach to network coordination focuses on building trust and promoting reciprocity among network members. Isett et al. (2011, p.1158) suggest that

government networks “may be formal and orchestrated by a public manager or they may be emergent, self-organising, and ad hoc, with many variants in between.”

The number and the heterogeneity of network members affect governance; complexity increases with diversity (Dagnino et al., 2015; Dal Molin and Masella, 2016; Røiseland, 2011). In the case of networks comprising actors from public, private and not for profit organisations, the issue is even more relevant due to the differences in purpose, goals, routines, etc. Rietjens et al. (2007) identify three types of coordination problems that could potentially threaten the success of interorganisational networks: task vagueness, dissimilarity of routines, and lack of local understanding. Fountain (2013) mentions regulatory ambiguity, unclear accountability, and limitations of the budget process to share resources as being restraints on effective coordination by independent government agencies.

A review of the literature thus confirms that coordination issues are crucial to the effectiveness of export promotion networks, whatever their nature. Table 1 synthesises the main issues concerning the coordination of export promotion networks examined in this study.

**Table 1** Issues concerning the coordination of export promotion networks

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Author(s)</i>	<i>Type</i>
Leading actor	Seringhaus and Rosson (1991)	Public or government-related
	Lederman et al. (2009)	Private
	Scott and Thomas (2015)	Public-private
	Dal Molin and Masella (2016)	
	Scott and Thomas (2015)	Third sector, societal
Intentionality	Paquin and Howard-Grenville (2013)	Emergent
	Danigno et al. (2016)	Orchestrated
Orientation	Herranz (2008, 2010)	Bureaucratic
	Danigno et al. (2016)	Entrepreneurial Community-oriented
Organisation	Isett et al. (2011)	Formal
	Danigno et al. (2016)	Informal
Member diversity	Røiseland (2011)	Homogeneous
	Dal Molin and Masella (2016)	Heterogeneous
Governance	Provan and Kenis (2008)	Shared
	Kenis and Provan (2009)	Lead organisation
	Danigno et al. (2015)	Network administrative organisation
	Dal Molin and Masella (2016)	
Coordination mechanisms	Seringhaus and Rosson (1991)	Tight control
		Loose control

### 3 Methodology

The study uses the case method of investigation. This method has been often employed to investigate research phenomena that are complex, multifaceted and holistic. In addition,

case studies are a recommended research strategy when the phenomena need to be understood in their context (Ghauri, 2004; Yin, 2014).

### *3.1 Unit of analysis and case selection*

The unit of analysis is the export promotion network. As mentioned by Ghauri (2004), case studies are often applied to situations in which there is a large number of actors, variables, and interrelationships among them, and when the researcher wants to get a more detailed view of the processes under study. Purposive theoretical sampling was used to identify cases that presented different approaches adopted by different countries to deal with the issue of promoting the international activities of their creative industries. The intention was to generate contrasting results (Ghauri, 2004; Gibbert et al., 2008; Yin, 2014). The choice of cases had the support of specialists from the Brazilian export promotion agency, Apex-Brazil.

Three cases were finally selected: the UK, Colombia and South Korea export promotion networks. The first two cases present situations in which export promotion activities are dispersed among several organisations. The first case deals with the promotion of UK design abroad; the second case looks at the promotion of filmmaking services in Colombia. The third case examines another approach to the export promotion of creative services: South Korea's experience in developing a specific agency to support its creative economy. In addition, the three countries, despite being at different stages of economic development (Table A1), have been quite successful in their export promotion efforts.

The creative industries were selected because "they are at the heart of the global economy" [Peters, (2010), p.69]. In 2013, these industries generated an estimated global revenue of 2.2 billion, and were responsible for the creation of 30 million jobs worldwide (EY, 2015). The selection of specific creative industries was due to the importance given to each sub-sector by the UK and Colombia. In the case of South Korea, the country has a centralised network to deal with export promotion of virtually all creative industries, suggesting a more holistic approach.

The study is based on secondary data, except for one interview with a Korean representative in charge of the promotion of South Korean services exports in the authors' country. The secondary data were obtained from multiple sources, including organisations' own sites, published documents, research reports, institutional booklets and videos, previous studies on the specific countries, and export promotion agencies. The use of a number of sources enabled reconstructing the cases and permitted triangulation (Yin, 2014). Table A2 lists the main institutional sources utilised.

The cases were developed sequentially; each case study was completed (in terms of data collection and data analysis) before starting the next case. Accordingly, a detailed descriptive report for each case was developed and preliminary data analysis performed before proceeding to the next case. Although this process takes more time, it is considered preferable to a simultaneous collection of data followed by an analysis of all the cases because it gives the researcher the opportunity to refine the research question, and even to select cases that are more suitable to the originally envisaged purpose (Ghauri, 2004; Dubois and Gadde, 2002).

The data analysis used within-case and cross-case analysis (Pauwels and Matthyssens, 2004; Yin, 2014). After a preliminary analysis of each case, a detailed

within-case analysis was performed using chronologies and tables (Ghauri, 2004), followed by a comparison of the three cases (cross-case analysis), aiming at identifying similarities and differences. We then made an effort to theorise the different types of export promotion networks identified.

## 4 Case description

This section briefly describes the three cases selected for the study: design in the UK; filmmaking in Colombia, and the creative industries in South Korea.

### 4.1 Design in the UK

The UK is one of the leading countries in the world in terms of design; the country has been consistently ranked among the top six in design over the past few years, according to several world rankings. Furthermore, exports of products in which design was a key characteristic were responsible for more than 7% of total UK exports in 2013, and UK design exports rank fifth in the world (Design Council, 2015). Accordingly, the design industry has received substantial governmental support, as well as support from non-government entities, and it is considered a strategic industry by the UK.

**Table 2** UK organisations and the promotion of the internationalisation of design

<i>Organisation</i>	<i>Date of inception</i>	<i>Goals and activities related to the promotion of the internationalisation of UK design</i>
Design Council (non-profit organisation)	1944	Increase the competitiveness of UK design; encourage UK firms to use design to reach new markets via training and coaching.
British Design & Art Direction (professional association)	1962	Establish standards of excellence for UK design; promote UK design internationally.
Design Business Association (industry association)	1986	Offer export advice and market information.
British European Design Group (trade organisation)	1991	Promote the internationalisation of European and British design overseas (from Asia to the USA) by organising trade fairs and exhibitions, and by offering coaching and consulting services.
British Council (Dept. of Architecture, Design and Fashion)	n.a.	Promote British design through international exchange programs, international and national events, foreign missions, student grants, etc.
British Design Initiative (dissolved on January, 2016)	1993	Offer counselling to foreign firms interested in UK design services; participate in foreign missions and exhibitions; register export design activities, etc.
Design Museum (non-profit)	1989	Organise touring exhibitions of UK design abroad.
Dept. for International Trade (previously UK Trade and Investment)	1999	Enhance the competitiveness of UK firms in international business by offering a broad range of services to firms in general.

*Source:* Sites of the organisations

Some of the institutions that promote UK design internationally are: the Design Council, the British Design & Art Direction, the Design Business Association, the British European Design Group, the Department of Architecture, Design, and Fashion (DADF) of the British Council, the British Design Initiative (dissolved January, 2016), and the Design Museum. Table 2 presents some characteristics of these organisations.

Each of these organisations has a variety of programs aimed at strengthening national capabilities in design, supporting firms and promoting the UK as a leading country in designs. In spite of the number of institutions and initiatives, there is strong cooperation between public and private entities and a common understanding that the development of the UK design industry is associated with the expansion of its international business activities.

The Department for International Trade (DIT) [previously UK Trade and Investment (UKTI)] is the UK's trade and investment promotion organisation. It has 227 foreign offices, serving around 48,000 client firms. The creative industries are among the five key sectors targeted by the DIT (ITC, 2015). There is evidence that the organisation's actions to support UK firms in foreign countries are well-conceived and effectively conducted. The large number of offices permits the development of a network of contacts within specific foreign markets, connecting UK companies with local business and government (Coelho and Rocha, 2013). The DIT is also recognised as "one of the most advanced results-measurement systems" among TSIs worldwide [Prunello, (2014), p.15]. The DIT does not exercise a formal role of coordination; however, because the other institutions are smaller and are focused on one sector – in this case, design without a broad range of foreign offices, the DIT's role is critical for networking and for local business services, thus playing an important coordination role. According to Alexander and Warwick (2007, p.182), to provide 'intermediation service is one of the main roles' of the DIT because of the government's 'wide range of contacts'. The authors report the results of a study that evaluates the performance of the DIT positively.

#### *4.2 Filmmaking in Colombia*

Our second case study is the filmmaking services industry in Colombia. Colombia presently ranks fourth in Latin America in the production of movies. The government's main strategic goals for the industry include: promote Colombia as one of the leading destinations for the production of movies; attract foreign investment; and promote co-productions and international partnerships. The main competitive advantages for Colombia to develop this industry are believed to be its geographic diversity (such as tropical forest, high mountains, and ocean coastline), rich colonial heritage (such as historical sites, mansions, and villas), low-cost services (compared to the US and Europe), skilled professionals and technical staff, and a favourable regulatory environment (CONPES, 2007).

The following government agencies are involved in the promotion of filmmaking in Colombia: the Colombian Ministry of Culture's Film Office, the National Council for Film Arts and Culture (CNACC), Proimagénes Colombia, and ProColombia. In addition, private entities also have a say in this process. To coordinate these efforts among the agencies and with the private sector, the Colombian Film Promotion Committee (CFPC) was created in 2012.

The Committee is composed of the Secretary of Commerce, Industry and Tourism, the Secretary of Culture, the director of the Ministry of Culture's Film Office, the director of Proimágenes Colombia, the president of Procolombia (the Colombian export promotion agency), a representative of the filmmakers in the CNACC, and two other representatives with a broad background in the film industry. The CFPC administers the Colombian Film Fund, created in 2012, which reimburses part of the expenses (up to 40%) to foreign filmmakers for film services delivered in Colombia by local firms, and is responsible for promoting the country as a film location. The CFPC offers an additional list of services to foreign filmmakers, such as: information regarding incentives and services available locally, legal assistance, networking with local organisations, etc. Table 3 presents some additional information on these organisations.

**Table 3** Colombian organisations and the international promotion of the filmmaking industry

<i>Organisation</i>	<i>Date of inception</i>	<i>Goals related to the promotion of Colombia as a filmmaking location</i>
National Council for Film Arts and Culture (CNACC) (government agency)	n.a.	Strengthen and promote the Colombian film industry in cooperation with Proimágenes
Proimágenes Colombia (not for profit)	1997	Organise and coordinate events, exhibitions, and festivals; facilitate international co-productions and joint projects; provide detailed information on sites and services available in Colombia for foreign filmmakers.
ProColombia (export promotion agency)	1992	Promote Colombian exports by offering a broad range of services to firms in general.
Colombian Film Promotion Committee (CFPC)	2012	Offer information, support, and advice to foreign filmmakers interested in Colombia; manage the Colombian Film Fund; organise missions of foreign filmmakers to Colombia.

Note: n.a. = not available.

*Source:* Sites of the organisations

Procolombia (formerly Proexport Colombia) is an export promotion agency with 26 foreign offices, serving around 7,000 domestic companies. Like many other developing countries' export promotion agencies, ProColombia does not target specific key industries, but serves firms from every industry in the agribusiness, manufacturing and services sector (ITC, 2015). Nevertheless, ProColombia has a limited number of offices abroad and most of its budget is spent on activities within the country, which is explained by the fact that firms need to overcome internal obstacles or competitive disadvantages (González, 2009) before they are ready to export. Analysing an EPP conducted by ProColombia in the early 2000s, González (2009) mentioned the lack of coordination between operators and the TPO as one of the key criticisms of participant members. However, ProColombia has made substantial efforts to overcome many of these problems. In fact, in 2014 ProColombia received the ITC award for the best export promotion agency in a developing country for its methodology for developing textiles and apparel exports to the USA, focusing particularly on Colombian firms' ability to meet US buyers' expectations.

In this case, the Colombian government created a specific entity (CFPC) to carry out the coordination and leadership of the export promotion efforts for the audiovisual sector

in the country. Because of its specificities, the audiovisual industry needs extensive coordination due to the different goals and purposes of government institutions, filmmakers, distributors, and other organisations and individuals: whereas some focus on the cultural value of the activity, others emphasise the business side. Therefore, coordination is not only a matter of organising export assistance in an efficient and effective manner, but also getting the commitment and ensuring the cooperation of different stakeholders.

### *4.3 Creative industries in South Korea*

The third case examined herein is the export promotion of creative services from South Korea. In fact, South Korea has promoted a major change in its support to the creative industries. Until 2009, there were several agencies in charge of developing specific sectors of the creative industry, including the Korea Broadcasting Institute, the Korea Culture and Content Agency, the Korea Game Industry Agency, the Cultural Content Center, and the business group for digital content of the Korea IT Industry Promotion Agency. In 2009 these organisations merged into a single new agency, the Korea Creative Content Agency (KOCCA), under the supervision of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (MCST). The purpose was to promote the development and growth of South Korea's creative industries in order for the country to become one of the five leading content providers in the world. The agencies responsible for design and information technology have been kept separate.

KOCCA presently has offices in seven countries: the USA, Japan, China, the UK, Indonesia, the UAE and Brazil. The main functions of KOCCA are: providing support to content development and production; providing support to start-ups, including incubating; providing support to the localisation of content (such as translation, dubbing, and marketing); organising and hosting international trade shows, fairs, exhibitions and other events; providing general overseas services; offering human resource development and education; and developing cutting-edge technology. KOCCA provides support to the following segments of the creative industries: games, broadcasting, cartoons and comics, animation, character licensing, music and fashion. In addition, the organisation runs a laboratory, a training centre and an incubator.

KOCCA works in close connection with the Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA), created in 1962 to support the internationalisation of the Korean economy. Presently, KOTRA has 126 trade offices in 86 countries, with around 14,000 client companies (ITC, 2015). In 2011, KOTRA launched the Service Mundus Programme, aimed at the internationalisation of South Korea's service industries, including a small group of promising exporters from several service industries: animation, design, character licensing, music, smart concept/games and mobile; e-learning, franchising, health services, and engineering services. The initiative was meant to support small and medium-sized world-class firms in their foreign expansion, in order to reduce the typical trial-and-error approach to internationalisation used by entrepreneurial firms in their internationalisation process. The program offers the following services, in addition to other services delivered by KOTRA: a roadmap for the international expansion of SMEs; the development of partnerships and strategic alliances required to enter international markets; customer and partner identification in international markets; customised market research; consulting and coaching for planning

and budgeting; legal advice in terms of copyright and brand protection in foreign countries.

KOTRA's major contribution to the export expansion of South Korea's creative industries probably has to do with its large network of foreign offices, whereas KOCCA only administers seven offices abroad. As past research has revealed (Kang, 2011), KOTRA'S offices in foreign countries have had a positive and significant impact on the growth of the country's exports.

KOCCA has developed close partnerships with other government agencies, such as the Korean Culture and Information Service (KOCIS) and the Korean Film Council (KOFIC), both supervised by the MCST. Other partners are the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Tourism (Tuk, 2012). In addition, KOCCA works in cooperation with the Korea Invention Promotion Agency (KIPA) to support inventiveness in the creative industries.

Interestingly, there is only an informal coordination among the various agencies involved in the promotion (domestically and internationally) of South Korea's creative industries. Although Tijan (2009, p.181) claims that "all these efforts work collectively," Kim and Nam (2016) point out that there is "a lack of systematic integration between the MCST and key national agencies of the tourism and creative industries sector" (p.110), and they suggest that there is a need for "a systematic communication channel to facilitate effective collaboration and cooperation between relevant government organizations" (p.112).

Table 4 presents South Korean organisations involved with the internationalisation of Korean firms in the creative industries. Although some organisations serve multiple industries, the table only includes those activities that directly or indirectly promote the international activities of the firms.

**Table 4** South Korean organisations and the international promotion of the creative industries

<i>Organisation</i>	<i>Date of inception</i>	<i>Goals related to the promotion of South Korea's creative industries</i>
Korea Creative Content Agency (KOCCA) (government agency)	2009	Promote the growth of South Korea's creative industries in order to turn the country into one of the world's leading producers of content.
Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA) (government agency)	1962	Promote South Korea's image, as well as its products and services abroad.
Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (MCST) (government agency)	1968	Support the development of South Korea's creative industries and improve its cultural reputation globally.
Korean Culture and Information Service (KOCIS) (government agency)	1971	Promote South Korea overseas (operates 29 cultural centres outside the country).
Korean Film Council (KOFIC) (state-supported)	1973	Support and promote Korean filmmakers in the domestic and international markets.
Korea Invention Promotion Agency (KIPA) (government agency)	1973	Promote the international competitiveness of Korean inventiveness by offering assistance, training, and patent management support.

*Source:* Sites of the organisations

## 5 Cross-case comparison

The descriptive account of how each country organised its export promotion network to promote the creative industries' exports led to a classification of the three approaches according to previously identified dimensions (leading actor, intentionality, orientation, organisation, member diversity, governance, and coordination mechanisms). Table 5 presents a comparison of the different approaches used.

**Table 5** Comparison of the three export promotion networks

<i>Characteristic of export promotion networks</i>	<i>UK (design)</i>	<i>Colombia (filmmaking)</i>	<i>South Korea (creative industries)</i>
Leading actor	Public-private	Public	Public
Intentionality	Orchestrated	Orchestrated	Orchestrated
Orientation	Entrepreneurial	Bureaucratic	Entrepreneurial and bureaucratic
Organisation	Informal	Formal	Informal
Member diversity	Heterogeneous	Heterogeneous	Heterogeneous
Governance	Lead organisation (DIT)	Network administrative organisation (CFC)	Shared
Coordination mechanisms	Loose	Tight	Tight/loose

The lead actors in the UK's export promotion network are private-public export promotion networks, while both Colombia and South Korea are public. The three networks show a considerable amount of member heterogeneity (Dal Molin and Masella, 2016; Røiseland, 2011). The UK's network presents a combination of public, not-for-profit and private organisations, while Colombia's has public and not-for-profit members, and South Korea's is essentially public, although with several different types of agencies. Interestingly, the literature has only recently emphasised the presence of not-for-profit organisations as part of interorganisational networks (e.g., Scott and Thomas, 2015; Dal Molin and Masella, 2016). In Colombia, the participation of the private sector is limited to seats on a national state-sponsored film council. The three networks can be characterised as orchestrated (Danigno et al., 2016), because they were intentionally created to promote these industries' internationalisation. This characteristic is expected in publicly-sponsored programs.

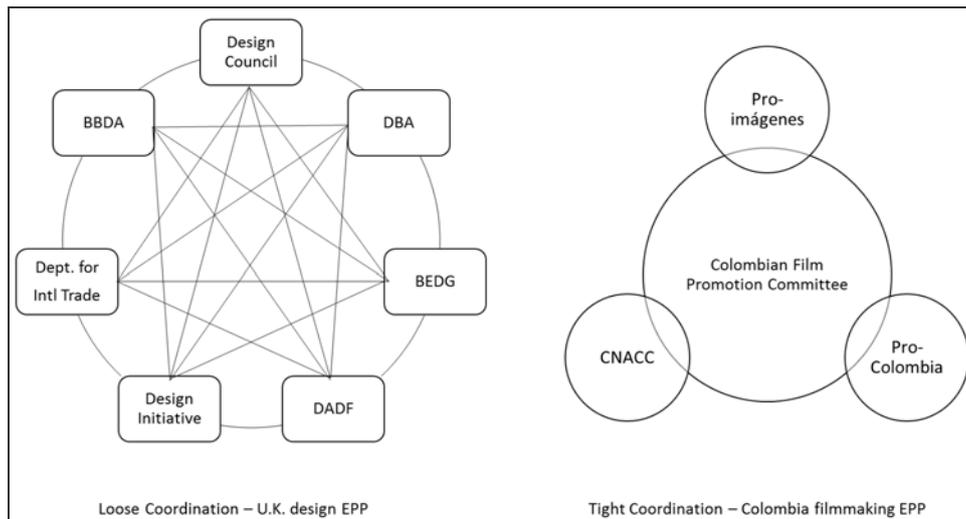
In terms of orientation and organisation, the Korean system more closely resembles the UK's. In both countries the organisation of export promotion networks is informal, and they seem to adopt an approach that is more entrepreneurial than Colombia's. However, the UK system has a clear lead organisation – the DIT, the UK's trade and investment promotion agency whereas in the Korean system, governance is shared by several member organisations. This specific characteristic might explain why there has been some concern about improving the coordination mechanisms of the export promotion network in charge of the promotion of South Korea's creative industries abroad (Kim and Nam, 2016). As for Colombia's approach, it shows a more bureaucratic focus (Herranz, 2008, 2010) and is more formal (Isett et al., 2011; Danigno et al., 2016). It is organised under the direction of a network administrative organisation – the CFPC – designed to bring efforts together and promote cooperation among different stakeholders.

## 6 Discussions

The comparison between different approaches to export promotion in the creative industries shows that both centralisation (as in South Korea) and decentralisation (as in the UK) of activities may work satisfactorily. Indeed, in accordance with the literature, we also agree that defining a unique and optimal setup is not feasible when dealing with different institutional environments (e.g., Belloc and Di Maio, 2011, Gillespie and Riddle, 2004). In addition, whatever the degree of centralisation, countries have adopted a loose, tight (Seringhaus and Rosson, 1991), or loose-tight coordination system, each with advantages and disadvantages. However, regardless of the setup adopted, our study tends to reinforce the belief in the literature that interorganisational networks generate organisational effectiveness by enhancing organisational capacity-building and by contributing to inducing positive effects on EPPs and TSIs, effects such as greater public exposure and increased social capital (e.g., Jones et al., 2017; Oparaocha, 2015; Paarlberg and Varda, 2009).

Figure 1 presents a pictorial representation of the UK and the Colombian cases analysed in this paper.

**Figure 1** Comparison of the UK and Colombian approaches

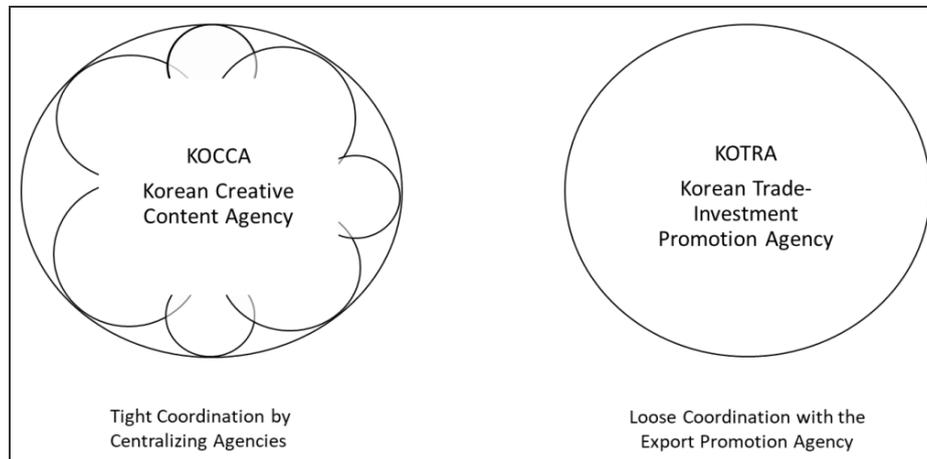


The UK's approach to the promotion of the design industry can be conceptualised as a loose coordination system. This approach seems to work quite well in this case, but the model may not be easily copied by other countries. It is possible that one reason for the smooth functioning of these different institutions' activities is the fact that the UK has a mature design industry and consistently ranks among the leading countries in design. Therefore, efforts are rather incremental and do not require substantial change. However, the loose coordination approach is not the most effective way of dealing with export promotion networks. As depicted in Figure 1, the number of potential linkages between the organisations involved is very high, increasing the risk of duplication of efforts, lack of coordination, problems of communication, etc. (e.g., Czinkota, 2012; Dagnino et al., 2016; GAO, 2001; Rietjens et al., 2007; Williamson et al., 2011).

The Colombian approach addresses the problem of coordination by creating a specific institution to coordinate the export promotion network for filmmaking services. All relevant entities associated with the public or private filmmaking industry have a seat on the Committee, thus permitting easy communication and coordination of efforts and activities. Unlike the UK, Colombia is developing a nascent industry, and the country is not a traditional supplier of pre and post-production services to the global filmmaking industry. Therefore, the approach used – which we call tight coordination – potentially allows for a better use of the country’s resources and avoids conflicts and duplication of efforts. Nevertheless, the creation of a central committee is not enough for a tight coordination; its success depends on effective and efficient implementation (e.g., Belloc and Di Maio, 2011; Alexander, 2013).

Lastly, South Korea has adopted a centralised approach by combining most of its creative industries into one single agency, after having used a decentralised system for many years. Although potentially it can allow for better coordination and control, there are also potential risks of not giving enough attention to different activities and trying to ‘fit all into one’. The cooperation between the agency responsible for the creative industries and the Korean trade promotion organisation is enhanced by the fact that the latter has launched in recent years a program to internationalise South Korea’s services industries, with particular emphasis on the creative industries. Goal congruence appears to be a critical factor in promoting cooperation among Korean TSIs. In spite of this, there has been some criticism regarding the coordination of activities between different entities (Kim and Nam, 2016). Therefore, we consider that South Korea has adopted a tight approach, by combining several agencies into one, but also keeps a loose approach in the relationships between the creative industries agency and the export promotion organisation (Figure 2).

**Figure 2** Korea’s tight/loose coordination



The examination of these three types of export promotion networks and their coordination choices suggests that there are different options that can be followed by different countries. No one model fits any one country specifically. Four factors seem to have an impact on the coordination of export promotion networks: the level of economic

development of each country; the level of development of the target industry; the country's export intensity, and cultural and historical factors.

As to level of economic development, one can hypothesise that fewer resources (typical of a less developed country) invite a tighter coordination system, which tends also to be more bureaucratic. Besides the coordination system adopted, in the case of Colombia the restricted participation of private actors in its TSI is noteworthy, contradicting the literature's prescription that strategic collaboration by the private sector and by all levels of government is paramount for achieving successful export promotion efforts (e.g., Belloc and Di Maio, 2011). Nevertheless, this limitation seems to be offset by the presence of the private sector on the executive board of the Colombian state-sponsored film council. In fact, the literature indicates that private sector participation on boards is related to greater TSI efficiency (ITC, 2016b). The level of development of the industry targeted by the export promotion network, whether nascent, growing, or mature, also seems to have an impact. The UK adopts loose coordination mechanisms probably because the country's design industry is already mature, while Colombia chooses a tighter coordination of the export promotion network to develop a nascent industry. South Korea, on the other side, is an export-oriented economy, with almost 44% of its GDP coming from exports (compared with Colombia, with around 14%) (Table A1), and thus invests much more in the development of exports. The Korean export promotion network for the creative industries is characterised by a combining of pre-existing government agencies into one, which interacts with other agencies, particularly the powerful national export promotion agency. Moreover, in the case of South Korea, cultural and historical factors seem to also interfere; in a collectivist culture, the congruence of interorganisational goals with national goals is easier to achieve (Hofstede, 1980), and therefore does not require tight coordination between different agencies.

In addition to the four factors cited as determinants of the type of coordination adopted by export promotion networks, we agree with the argument in the literature that each specific situation calls for the right combination of partners, participation structures, and coordination mechanisms, and that the network's leading actor must be able to detect and implement the appropriate mix (Russell et al., 2015; Oparaocha, 2015). Indeed, size, governance structure, funding partners, and TSIs' activities will vary fundamentally according to the strategic needs of each country (ITC, 2016b). Lastly, the study leads us to believe that systematically monitoring TSIs' performance is critical for assessing the eventual need to promote changes in their governance structure.

## **7 Conclusions**

Networks of organisations are today an undeniable trend in almost every field of human activity, such as export promotion. While these networks simultaneously allow for the combination of resources and capabilities of different entities, they also challenge the ability to coordinate these efforts in an effective and efficient way. Coordination thus has turned into a critical issue in export promotion activities.

The aim of this research was thus to explore the issue of how different countries have successfully designed and implemented the coordination of export promotion networks to assist their creative industries. The study provides empirical evidence of how different approaches, from the centralisation of an export promotion network to decentralisation,

and from loose coordination to tight, may be used to promote the exports of firms in the creative industries. The results also suggest that each context may require a different approach to coordinating these activities. The degree of economic development of each country, the maturity of the target industry, the resources dedicated to export promotion, as well as cultural and historical issues, may play a role in determining which approach would be a better fit for each country and sector.

Although the study did not cover the issue of network framing, that is, the extension to which these networks are subject to political goals and resource allocation restraints, future studies should examine this issue. The effectiveness of these export promotion networks was also not considered in this study, although their choice was based on the understanding of specialists that they have been quite successful.

This study has its limitations. Firstly, the use of the case method of investigation does not permit the generalisation of the findings to the population of TSIs and export programs directed to the creative industries. The method, however, allows for analytical generalisations. Secondly, the research examined only three cases; other cases could provide additional perspectives to enrich the understanding of the phenomena under study. Thirdly, the three cases portray successful experiences. It is possible that unsuccessful experiences would provide additional insights into the matter. Also noteworthy is that the data required for the research is considered by many TSIs and their managers as strategic, and therefore confidential, thus limiting the access to primary data. Attempts to schedule personal interviews were frustrated, and the only personal interview conducted did not add relevant information beyond that already obtained from secondary sources. Further research is needed to examine this issue in more depth.

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**Appendix 1****Table A1** Comparison between UK, South Korea and Colombia's main social and economic indicators

<i>Indicators</i>	<i>United Kingdom</i>		<i>South Korea</i>		<i>Colombia</i>	
	<i>Value</i>	<i>Position in the world ranking</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Position in the world ranking</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Position in the world ranking</i>
Population (millions)	64.8	22	51.2	27	47.7	29
GDP (official exchange rate) [US\$]	2.57 trillion	-	1.53 trillion	-	307.5 billion	-
GDP per capita (purchasing power parity) [US\$]	43,600	40	39,400	45	14,500	113
% of GDP generated by service sector	80.4	-	59.1	-	61.4	-
Total exports (US\$ billions)	436.5	11	552.3	6	36.8	57
Exports' share of GDP (%)	30.1	-	43.9	-	14.2	-
Human Development Index	0.909	16	0.901	18	0.727	95

Note: 2017 estimates, except GDP (official exchange rate) and Human Development Index (2016).

Source: CIA World Factbook and United Nations Development Programme (*Human Development Reports*)

**Table A2** List of main institutional sources

<i>Country</i>	<i>Institutional sources</i>
UK	Department of International Trade (former UK Trade & Investment) British European Design Group Design Business Association (DBA) D&AD Foundation (former British Design & Art Direction) Design Council UK The Crafts Council British Council British Council's Department of Architecture Design and Fashion (ADF)
South Korea	Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA) Korea Creative Content Agency (KOCAA) Korean Film Council (KOFIC) Korea Invention Promotion Agency (KIPA) Korean Culture Services New York (KCSNY)
Colombia	Procolombia (former Proexport Colombia) Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism Colombian Film Commission (CFC) Proimágenes Colombia and Colombian Film Commission McKinsey & Co. Analdex – Asociación Nacional de Comercio Exterior
General	International Trade Centre (ITC) University of Cambridge, International Design Scoreboard UNCTAD