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***Organizational learning of CSR: collective initiatives and
business strategies in the French agrifood sector***

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Outline

1. Objective
2. What is CSR ?
3. CSR in the French food sector context
4. Network learning: from theories to implementation
5. Managerial implications

Objective

Proliferation of management tools since the nineteenth century (and Teulier Lorino, 2005): lean management, total quality, etc.

Organizations are increasingly exposed to "management practices" pushed by the "outside" and implemented "inside" by the organization

Production and dissemination of new regular "objects / practices" that companies are required to appropriate

Via actors such as consulting firms, standards bodies and certification, university, research centers ..

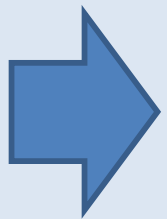
Or through formal structures, trade and inter ...

→ The implementation of practice-related CSR is a concrete and timeliness example of this phenomenon

Context

This issue of CSR is crucial for SMEs:

- Food SMEs constitutes in France (and in Europe as well) the main
- Access to consumer markets is dependent upon an access to retail companies
- Its implementation is often a problem for SMEs, because of their relative isolation, lack of resources, inadequate knowledge of the steps...



In this context the collective initiatives launched to support SMEs in different regions (in France) by local authorities to promote and accelerate the implementation of the CSR practices.

Objective

How to characterize the process of implementation of CSR by food SMEs in the context of collective initiatives, and in particular what are the contributions of the partner network?

Hypothesis

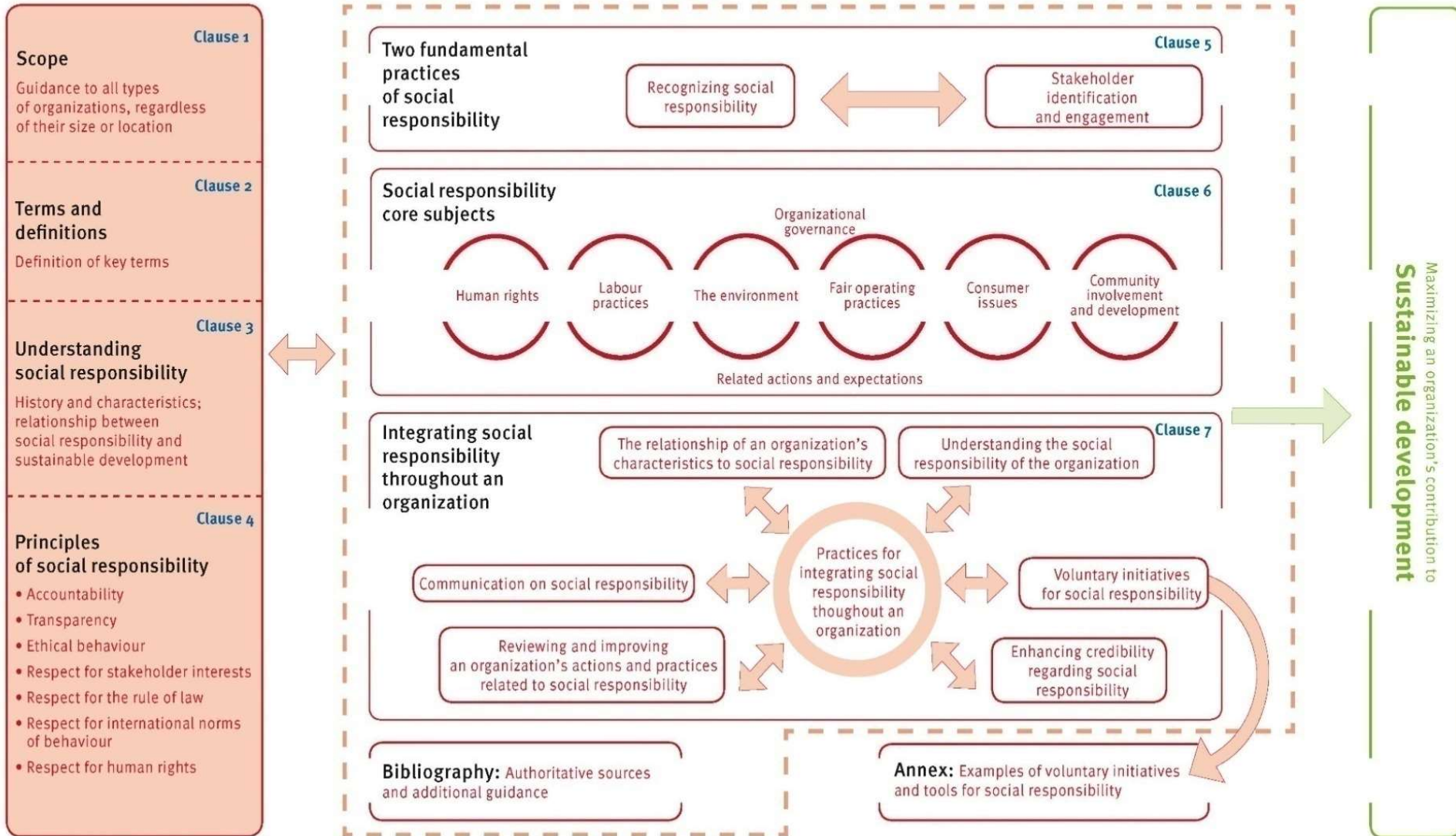
Organizational learning takes place at several levels in this network (detailed points below)

Network learning as a driver for CSR appropriation in food SMEs





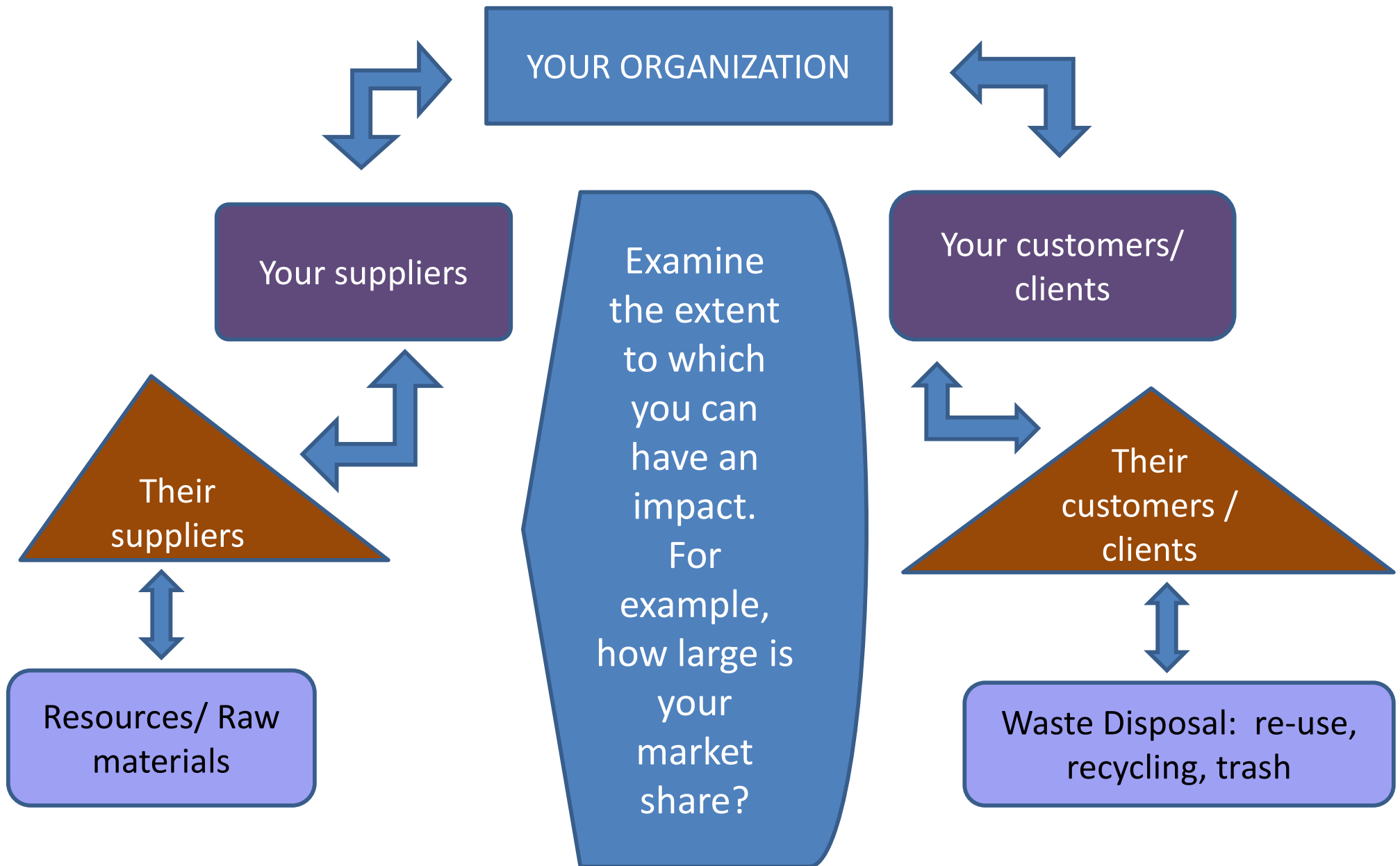
Schematic overview of ISO 26000



The 7 core subjects



Assessing responsibilities in your sphere of influence



Organizational learning of CSR

Definition

Organizational learning is a collective process of acquisition, development and modification of knowledge within an organization

We try to understand how is learning in the context of the implementation of CSR practices with a range of partners

Learning involves a set of phases. Each phase corresponds to a qualitative level in the appropriation of managerial knowledge.

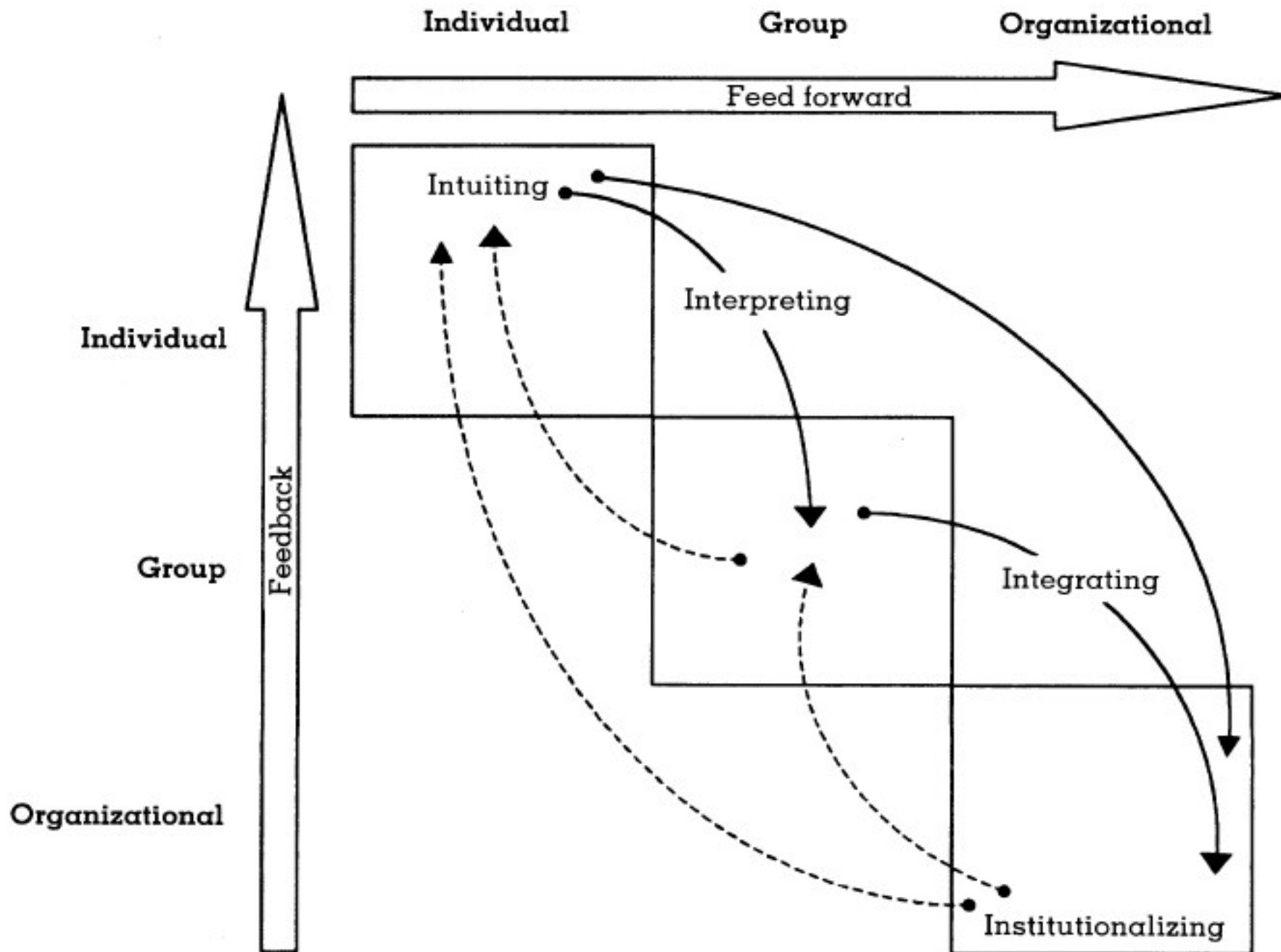
The model of Crossan et al, 1999 defines 4 stages of the learning process (intuition, interpretation, integration and institutionalization).

This model couples the phases with three "levels" of learning: individual, group and organizational

Organizational learning of CSR

1. **Intuiting** is the preconscious recognition of the pattern and/or possibilities inherent in a personal stream of experience (individual level).
2. **Interpreting** is the explaining of an insight, or idea to one's self and to others. This process goes from the preverbal to the verbal and requires the development of a language (individual and group level).
3. **Integrating** is the process of developing shared understanding amongst individuals and the taking of coordinated action through mutual adjustment. Dialogue and joint action are crucial to the development of shared understanding... (group and SME level).
4. **Institutionalizing** is the process of ensuring that routinized actions occur. Tasks are defined, actions specified and organizational mechanisms put in place to ensure that certain actions occur. Process of embedding learning that has occurred by individuals and groups into institutions of the organization including systems, structures, procedures and strategy (SME level).

Organizational Learning As a Dynamic Process

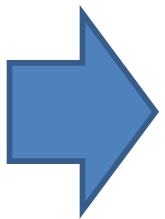


Collective initiative and business strategies

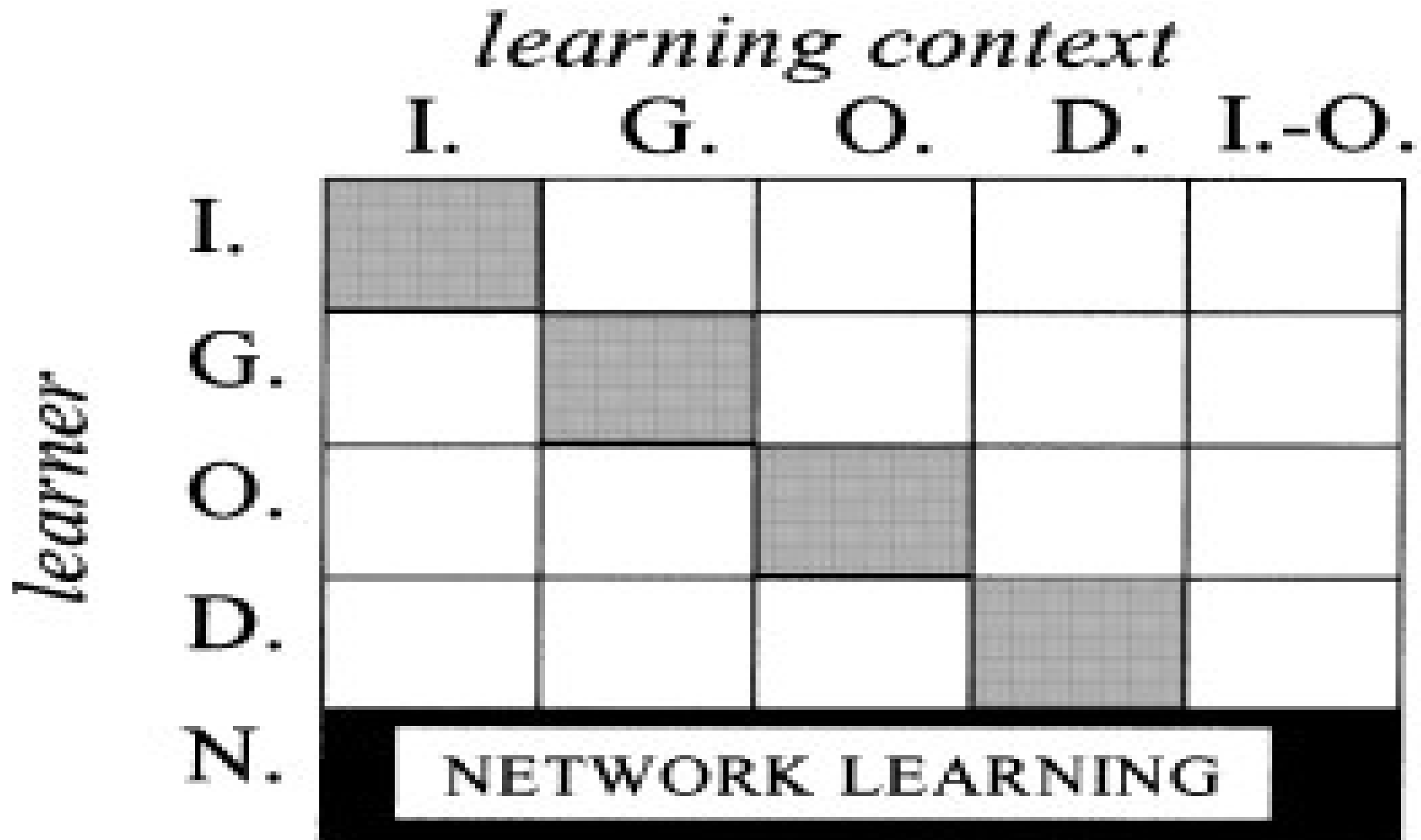
- Intuiting phase in RSE AGRO
 - Sensitization and consolidation (informal discussions, internal workshops)
 - Done at individual level
- Interpreting in RSE AGRO
 - Translation of the formal content (training, formal workshops)
 - Central role of experts (consultants) during diagnosis with the help of a guide book for CSR
 - Done at individual and group levels
- Integration in RSE AGRO
 - Elaboration on an action plan following diagnosis
 - First step towards concrete actions
 - Done at group and SME levels
- Institutionalization in RSE AGRO
 - CSR strategy: procedures, rules, routines
 - Formal evaluation by third party (Afaq 26000)
 - Done at SME level
- **Co-construction in RSE AGRO: emergence of network learning**

Collective initiative and business strategies

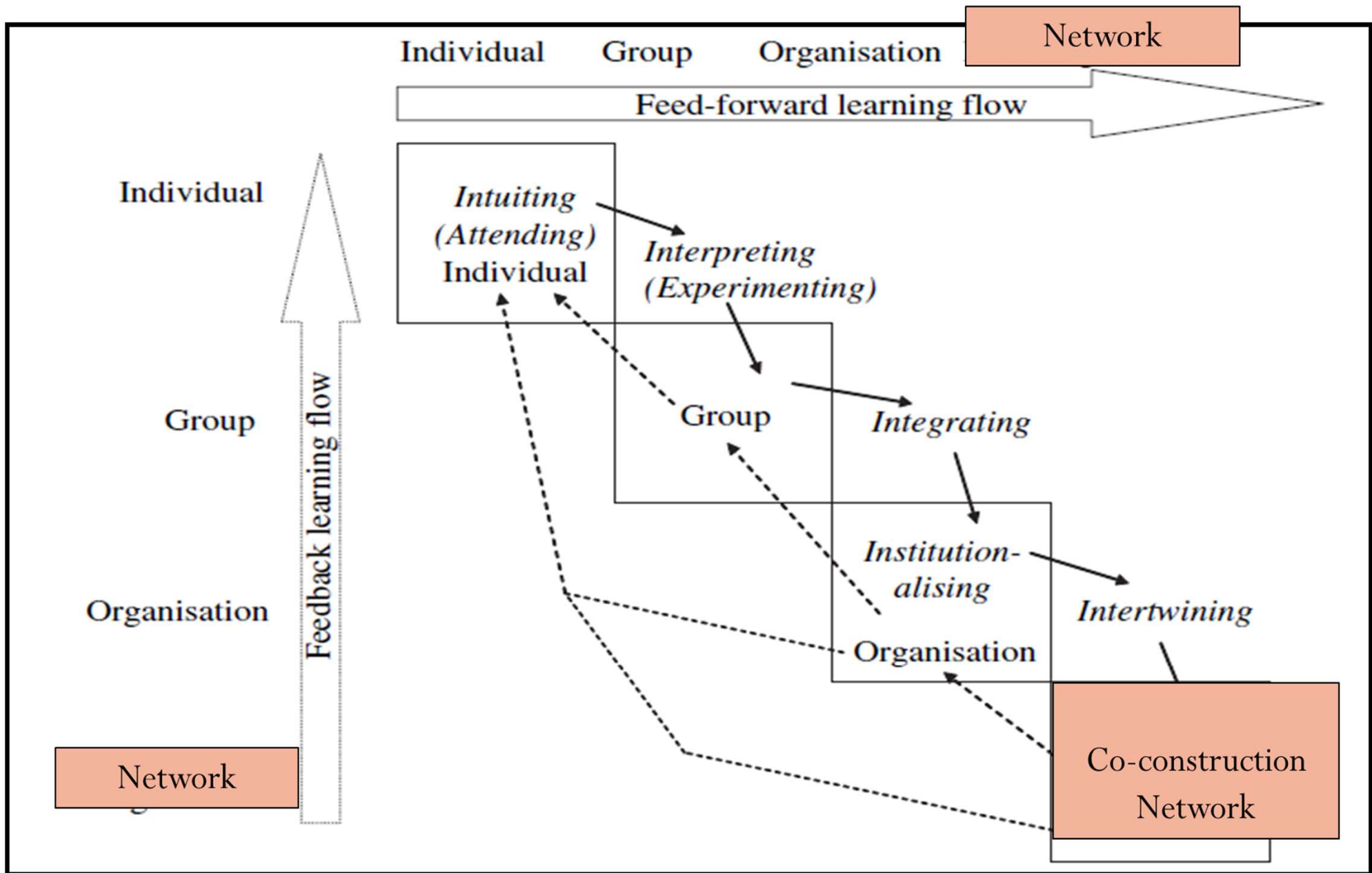
- **Co-creation in RSE AGRO:**
 - Writing and publishing a CSR report on the network site
 - Membership in the network and its charter
 - Development of guides (responsible purchasing, listening to stakeholders, CSR reporting) Toolbox
 - Translation of the ISO 26000 standard (company studied participated in the works)
 - Cross Audits (SME community)
 - Organizational memory at the network level (thanks to digitalization)
- **Organizational conditions**
 - Communities of practice: for SMEs and for consultants
 - Institutional support (regional bodies as well as professional bodies)



Network learning of CSR



CSR and organizational learning



Managerial implications

Organizational learning: extension of a concept

- A conceptual reading of the ISO 26000: as a normative text and as knowledge to interpret, integrate and institutionalize
- Addition of a standard "network" level
- Reconciliation of two approaches: organizational learning and network (or holistic) approaches

Show how the CSR initiative "RSE AGRO" progressively becomes a learning device itself (the concept of reticular or network learning)

Managerial implications

- Identify the interests of collective initiatives that could be *replicated* in other sectors (eg. agriculture in particular the creation of a community of practice, the introduction of collective action and the use of digital, etc. in the reflections on the transition to sustainable agriculture)
- Replications at regional level by regional/professional bodies

Conclusion

The starting point of the initiative:

- the recognition that agrifood SMEs need to differentiate themselves collectively
- a strong support of institutions
- the identification of social responsibility as a possible driver

Organizational learning and innovation for sustainability at the cornerstone of a successful strategy

Creation of a complete and replicable learning device

Thank you for your attention

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