

## PROPOSAL OF A MANAGEMENT MODEL TO PROMOTE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL AREAS OF JALISCO

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### Abstract

*This document presents a management model to support rural producers, designed from the study of the problems faced by producers in rural areas of Jalisco, who traditionally cannot be defined as entrepreneurs because they have very low or almost no sales and in addition, lack resources and entrepreneurial capacities. The first approach to this problem was to evaluate productive development programs in rural areas for a few years, observing considerable challenges and areas of opportunity. For this reason, work began on a management model that includes diagnosis, design, intervention, evaluation and continuous improvement. The objective of this document is to present its design in general and explain the different stages that makeup it, in addition to presenting the theoretical approaches on which it is based, which have been of great help in working with the groups. Some of the conclusions presented are the expected results of the group, the strategic alliances needed for the model to be successful, and the potential to be implemented in other areas of the country.*

### Key words:

*Enterprise Behaviours, Entrepreneurship, Economic Development*

**JEL Classification** D22, L26, O10

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## INTRODUCTION

Jalisco is Mexico's second most populous state, accounting for approximately 7% of the national population with over 8 million inhabitants, according to INEGI (2020). While the state is known for its industrial and technological advancements, particularly in the Guadalajara Metropolitan Area (ZMG), its rural areas face significant socioeconomic challenges. About 30% of Jalisco's rural population lives in poverty, experiencing higher rates of marginalisation and lagging in education, health care, and access to essential services (CONEVAL, 2020).

Economic activity in these rural areas primarily revolves around the primary sectors of agriculture and livestock. However, this sector has low productivity and limited diversification (SAGARPA, 2019). As a result, support programs for rural areas often focus on production and, in some cases, improving productivity within these sectors without adequately addressing their inherent limitations (ANDE, 2021; Aguilar-Gallegos et al., 2015;

Rodríguez & Emanuel, 2018; Aguilar-Gallegos et al., 2016). This oversight results in a neglect of these regions' profitability and broader business potential, which are crucial for generating job opportunities, establishing formal enterprises, creating productive chains, and fostering a multiplier effect in local communities.

It is essential to prioritise business potential and competitiveness in Jalisco's rural areas to promote balanced and sustainable territorial development. The team responsible for this document has been collaborating since 2008 on various rural development strategies. The initial years focused on understanding the issues faced in rural areas, emphasising production. However, it became clear that the programs lacked business vision, leading to repetitive support each year with minimal differences. Although the programs achieved their objectives, significant improvements in the livelihoods of the beneficiaries were not evident.

This observation led to the recognition of the need for a new management model to transform the approach to promoting business in rural development. The goal is to assist producers in becoming entrepreneurs, thereby generating benefits for their localities and, in the longer term, for the region. This document outlines the model's design, the stages involved, and some results derived from its implementation and monitoring among various groups of producers.

### Literature overview

According to INEGI, in Mexico, a population is considered rural when it has less than 2,500 inhabitants, while urban is one where more than 2,500 people live. However, this quantitative approach varies from country to country. In Mexico, 21% of the population lives in rural areas (INEGI, 2010; INEGI, 2020), and 30% of companies are in them (ANDE, 2021).

"In the peripheral countries of Latin America and the rest of the world, a large part of the rural areas shows climates, reliefs, soils or vegetation that are restrictive for agricultural activities, along with restricted accessibility and poor connectivity" (Burgos & Bocco, G., 2020: 222). In the case of Mexico, rural areas can be considered economically vulnerable due to the socioeconomic characteristics that prevent the construction of a competitive business base within them and towards other regions; some of these characteristics are explained below:

They lack access to technology and information (Aguilar-Gallegos et al., 2015), increased migration and population ageing (Arias, 2013), higher prevalence of poverty and inequality (Damián, 2016), food insecurity (Mundo et al., 2013), environmental degradation and climate change (Conde & Saldaña, 2007), limited access to public services (García et al., 2020), weak community organisation and participation (Cernea, 1991; and, Fernández, 2011) by highlighting the role played by community bases in rural areas to carry out collective social enterprises.

The main problems faced by companies in rural areas are the following:

Formality and informality (Aguilar-Gallegos et al., 2015; Rodríguez-Sperat & Emanuel, 2018; Levy, 2008; Loayza & Sugawara, 2009; and

Loayza, 2018) agree that informality is both a cause and a consequence of a low level of economic and institutional development that should be seen as a problem since companies in the informal sector face the costs and risks of not having the protection and services that the law and the State can provide, which generates high levels of inefficiency. It is encouraging to observe a concentration on enhancing business capabilities. Nonetheless, challenges such as identifying qualified human resources and effectively integrating environmental resources can significantly impact organisations. Key areas such as strategic planning, innovation management, commercialisation, and technology adoption offer substantial opportunities for growth. By employing the appropriate strategies, businesses can transform these challenges into strengths, thereby driving success. It is encouraging to observe a concentration on enhancing business capabilities. Nonetheless, challenges such as identifying qualified human resources and effectively integrating environmental resources can significantly impact organisations. Key areas such as strategic planning, innovation management, commercialisation, and technology adoption offer substantial opportunities for growth. By employing the appropriate strategies, businesses can transform these challenges into strengths, thereby driving success.

We are pleased to present our design for a management model intended to enhance business development in rural areas. This model was founded on several important concepts, including rural innovation, associationism, resource and capability theory, and the five-helix innovation theory. Below, we provide a detailed explanation of each of these essential components.

**Rural innovation.** Rural innovation refers to processes in rural areas which involve the generation, dissemination and adoption of innovative ideas, artefacts, procedures, social relations, or institutional agreements to address economic, social, or environmental problems that affect rural territories (Burgos & Bocco, 2020). Innovation in rural areas responds to various problems and needs with new products, services, working methods and social linkages with a view to long-term social, environmental,

and economic development. (Khairullina et al., 2023).

**Associationism.** It refers to creating organisations and cooperation networks between different actors (producers, companies, institutions, government, etc.) to promote rural communities' development and competitiveness. It relates to collaborative work, cooperation, virtuous environments, innovation and knowledge transfer, and advocacy on public policies, among many other actions (Garner & De la O, 2014; Berdegúe et al., 2001).

In this sense, associations become the scene of strategies aimed at obtaining benefits from public institutions and a space for struggles for the capacity to represent and define collective identity (Gadea & Albert, 2011).

**Theory of resources and capabilities.** In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the focus of competitive advantage analysis (Porter (1980) shifted to the internal aspects of the firm, focusing primarily on the exploitation of unique internal resources and capabilities (Penrose, 1958), (Nelson & Winter, 1982), (Wernerfelt, 1984), (Hamel & Prahalad, 1990), (Mahoney & Pandian, 1992), (Peteraf, 1993). These studies conceptualise the company based on resources, organisational competencies, and capabilities. Wernerfelt (1984) points out that resources can be identified as inputs into the company's operations, either in manufacturing or personnel and are identified as the intellectual capital reflected in the capabilities or competencies of employees. The important thing is to recognise that on their own, they do not generate value except through the interaction between them and organisational capabilities if they meet the following characteristics: they are difficult to imitate by the competition, they are valuable, rare and difficult to replace (Barney, 1991).

As for dynamic capabilities, these originate in Schumpeter's spirit of innovation-based competition. While Teece et al. (1997) are the pioneers in proposing this concept, they argue that dynamic capabilities allow the company to reconfigure its competencies, focusing on those capabilities, skills, competencies, routines or processes that organisations carry out to make internal changes, responding to the outside, to adapt to the environment. Thereby generating innovative sources of competitive advantage and

achieving an increase in the value of the company. On the other hand, Rueda et al. (2022) state that their importance is because they are a tool that takes the company from the present to the future.

**The Quintuple Propeller.** This model of the fivefold helix is an updated version of the triple helix model of Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff (1995), which can be identified as industry, academic and government, to which the ecological sensitivity of the population was added. This model describes the interactions between five main spheres: University: Responsible for research and development of new knowledge. Industry: In charge of the production and marketing of innovations. Government: In charge of regulating, financing and promoting innovation. Media and public culture as elements of civil society: Responsible for disseminating and accepting knowledge and innovation. Ecological sensitivity: considers the impact of innovation on the environment and sustainability (Carayannis et al., 2022)

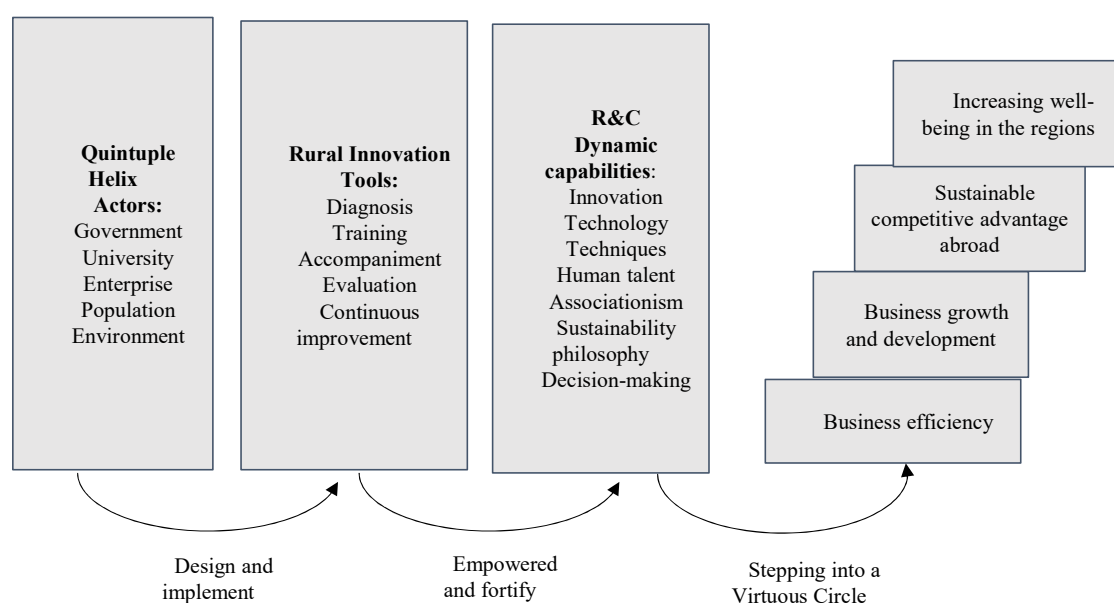
The five-helix innovation model is an exciting approach designed to address today's challenges by harnessing knowledge and expertise while prioritising social exchange and knowledge transfer. This innovative model beautifully intertwines knowledge, expertise, and the natural environment within a collaborative, interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary framework (Barrera & Wilwa, 2018). It displays how rural innovation strategies can flourish through partnerships among diverse stakeholders. This cooperative spirit strengthens business resources and capabilities and emphasises dynamic adaptability. We aim to cultivate a positive feedback loop that enhances business efficiency and enriches community well-being. You can explore this inspiring concept further in Figure 1!

### Goal and Methodology

As mentioned above, a group of researchers began in 2008 to carry out linkage actions with different instances related to rural development. The first actions focused on evaluating different programs implemented in the state. We observed that, in general, there were common problems in terms of the design of the program; an absence was identified towards

the profitability of the producer-entrepreneur, and in most cases, the support in infrastructure or machinery was not carried out thinking about the capacities and resources of the group but was based on a desk design; On the other hand, although most of this support included training for the group, it was not precisely focused on improving their resources or on the profitability of the project. As for those identified in the group, problems related to teamwork, discouragement when participating in a strategy with few results and, in some cases, annoyance

at having to contribute with an economic contribution to cover the maintenance costs of that infrastructure, as in the case of covering public services such as electricity, were detected. We are excited to share our project to create a dynamic intervention model for business development! This innovative approach focuses on empowering rural communities, enhancing yields, and maximising benefits for all members. Check out Figure 1 to explore the model's strong theoretical foundation.

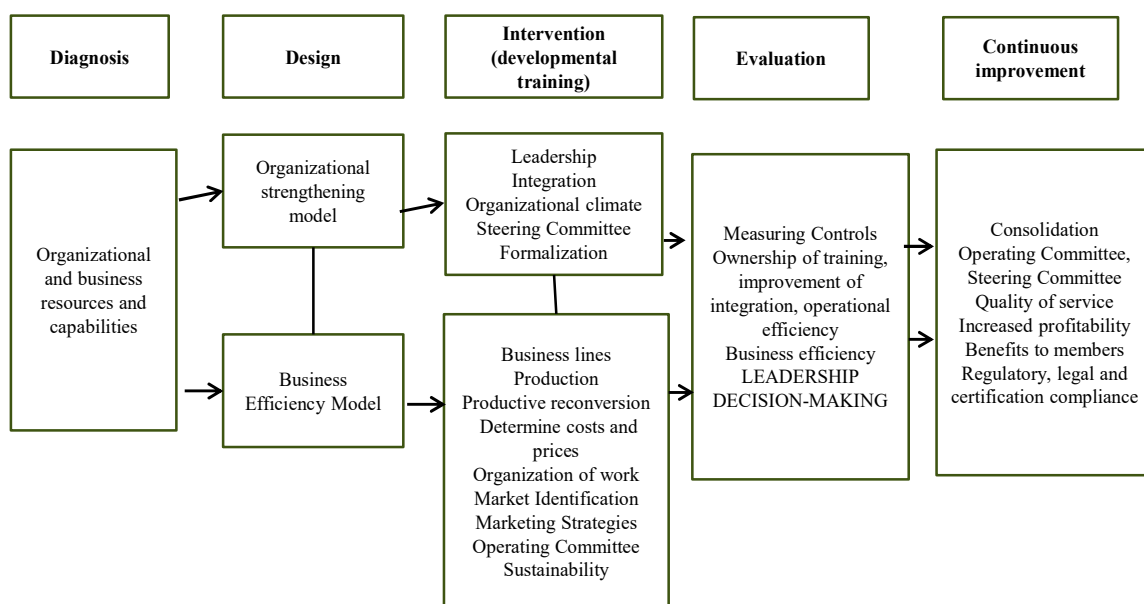


**Figure 1:** Strategy for Business Strengthening in Rural Areas

*Source: Own elaboration*

**Design of the management model.** Five stages were formed (see Figure 2), each with different methodologies, purposes, and goals. The duration of each intervention with the group is

different. It depends mainly on the stage's results and the complexity of implementing and processing all the tools combined with the group's profile.



**Figure 2: Business Development Intervention Model for Rural Producers in Jalisco**

*Source: Authors' elaboration with data from the Model Operating Manual*

Stage 1, which corresponds to the diagnosis, is carried out based on the design and implementation of tools to identify the level of resources and capacities available to the group, both of the organisation (legal entity) and of the company, with these results it is possible to know the level of organisational maturity and the degree of business efficiency, which will also show the areas of opportunity in both directions. In the first section, the level of integration of the group is reviewed, the resources they have (human, economic and infrastructure), if they are formalised and if they comply with their obligations, in addition to validating if they have a group of leaders and identifying their capabilities (steering committee), a diagnosis of the potential for teamwork is also applied. A work environment and satisfaction with the results obtained in the past. Concerning the company, the infrastructure and its level of appropriation are identified, as well as the capabilities of each member, in addition to determining the potential to transform the product, sell it or distribute it. It is identified if they have a company structure, if it is efficient and if they obtain results and profitability from it. In this stage, different questionnaires are given to the entire group and others to the

leaders, and a focus group session is also carried out to determine the level of satisfaction with the project and their expectations for it. After this, all the tools are processed, and the general diagnosis of the project and the group is obtained; with this, the model's baseline is elaborated, presented to the group and the authorities, and stage 2 is designed.

In stage 2, derived from the general diagnosis of the project and the group, an operational manual of the model is prepared with two different approaches, one towards the model of operability and the other towards the model of business efficiency. From the baseline, the expected goals are designed, and from these, the procedures are written in writing. Up to this point, strategic planning tools are used. The main challenge is to determine the business lines to be implemented and identify the productive reconversion necessary to use the infrastructure and machinery owned by the group. From the established business lines, the process of each of them is elaborated: production, transformation, added value, sale or distribution. From there, the business efficiency tools are developed for the next stage.

In stage 3, here we work with elements of rural innovation, quintuple helix and associationism. First of all, the group is separated by work teams for training, for example, the teams of each line of business, the team of managers, and the entire team for the issues of teamwork, integration, and decision-making, as foreseen in stage 2, in such a way, that at the same time, different teams can be attended, as well as the manager for the formalisation of the group, the operational for the implementation of the business lines. At this point, it is important to take up the results of stage 1 regarding the profile of human resources and its capabilities to place them in the most appropriate work team and to obtain the best results. It also requires considerable investment in time and resources on the part of the implementing team (here comes the collaboration and strategic alliances between the actors of the fivefold helix), in addition to developing the market approach to be able to identify the marketing strategies to apply to each of the lines of business. This is where the group is intervened and accompanied, using traditional training tools, mirror training, role-playing, representations and comics; Regarding the operation of the lines of work, the rules and regulations that must be complied with are included and strategies are made to accompany the implementation of the processes of each of the lines until the learning is appropriated by the members of the lines of business; It is important to highlight that at this stage the financial, fiscal and decision-making issues represent a significant challenge for all groups and for the support and intervention team, significant limitations have been found such as the lack of educational training of the leaders, but with a lot of patience and accompaniment it has been possible for those responsible to do what is necessary to report the financial results of the lines of business and at the same time, present to the groups the financial results of the project and that the group can make decisions for the best benefit of the members and their families.

In stage 4, the same diagnostic instruments as in stage 1 should be used to determine growth concerning baseline. Other measures must be identified to ensure members appear more active, happier, motivated, and committed to their initial skills. Based on these outcomes, we can identify improvements to the original design. It is also

essential to acknowledge that growth should occur within annual or operational cycles, allowing for the staggered developments mentioned in Figure 1.

In Stage 5, we kick off an exciting focus group to share the valuable insights from Section 4. This brainstorming session invites everyone to collaborate on refreshing our strategic planning and setting inspiring goals for the next cycle. Together, we will create indicators that align with industry standards, prioritising top-notch service quality, boosting our efficiency, and elevating our external reputation. It is also an excellent opportunity to connect with stakeholders from the fivefold helix to craft action plans for meaningful improvements and devise innovative strategies that enhance our dynamic capabilities. Let us embrace this journey of growth and collaboration!

## Findings and Discussion

It is essential to emphasise that several key factors influence the outcomes of implementing the model. These include the initial working group profile, the available infrastructure, partnerships with various stakeholders (the "n" helixes incorporated into the model), and the resources and capabilities that can be added during the model's implementation.

Over the years of working with various groups and applying the model in different geographical contexts, we have developed capabilities at multiple levels, particularly those defined by Teece et al. (1997) as dynamic. These improvements include:

1. Enhanced organisational skills, teamwork, integration, and collective decision-making.
2. Improved technical and service capabilities across business lines.
3. Strengthen administrative capacities to implement controls, ensuring efficiency within business operations and collaboration with management.
4. Developed leadership capabilities to monitor financial performance, cost management, and profit flows within individual lines of business and on a global scale.

5. Enhanced decision-making skills, particularly in determining investment priorities, reinvestment options, and employee support.

It is important to highlight the incredible advantages of prioritising family members and close friends in the labour force! This strategy strengthens local economies and helps break the cycle of challenges often faced in rural areas. By working together, we can create a positive momentum that leads to even more excellent opportunities for the future. Let us embrace this approach and watch it transform our communities for the better!

## Conclusion

Companies in rural areas face unique yet exciting challenges! They are on a mission to shift their focus from just productivity to achieving actual profitability while positively impacting their communities. Thankfully, the innovative five-helix model offers a fantastic way to foster collaboration among key decision-makers across its five elements. By enhancing resources and capabilities, these companies can build dynamic skills over time, creating an incredible cycle that boosts the quality of life in these regions. From our working group's experience, engaging with producer-entrepreneur groups for about five years is essential to unlocking this virtuous cycle. While hurdles are to overcome, the journey is filled with potential and promise, paving the way for vibrant, thriving communities.

One significant constraint in implementing the model is the time required to establish a precise diagnosis, which is crucial for designing and executing subsequent phases. Additionally, there

is a challenge related to maintaining the sustained commitment of the stakeholders within the five-fold helix model over time. Investment priorities often shift from year to year, and changes in government can further affect this commitment, as new administrations may introduce different goals and initiatives.

The intervention aspects that involve training and support for development provided by university experts also face several limitations. Although involving students in these projects benefits their professional growth, the high turnover rates associated with university programs can disrupt continuity. This requires a substantial investment in resources to manage the training process effectively. Additionally, academics often encounter institutional bureaucracy, which can impede their ability to engage in these projects effectively.

Bringing business development to rural areas poses a significant challenge, particularly for producers. However, promoting strategic alliances among the stakeholders in the fivefold helix can help mitigate these limitations, ultimately leading to a more significant impact in a shorter time frame.

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