Theoretical development of SAM Profile

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Introduction

The world of organisations is changing, as the competitive environment in which they operate changes (Child, Faulkner, Hsieh, Tallman, 2019). The dominant development paradigm at the beginning of the 21st century has become laying the foundations for sustainable socio-economic development, i.e. caring for the natural resources necessary for future generations. In actions taken by organisations operating in the private, public and social sectors, this result is to be achieved by introducing the obligation to comply with the principles formulated by the UN as the Sustainable Development Goals. Expectations are formulated for organisations operating in the private sector, which are obliged to report on the results of their activities by disclosing their impact on the environment, communities and corporate governance (Diwan, Sreeraman, 2023). Creating reports that make visible the environmental, social and governance impact of a company's activities requires the organisation's managers to develop new management competencies. So-called green competences are increasingly identified as competences that determine the success or failure of an organisation (Cabral, Dhar, 2020).

Companies can develop their activities using internal and external resources. Internal expansion is based on the organisation's existing resources and competences. External expansion, on the other hand, can take place through, among other things, mergers (the merger of autonomous entities), acquisitions (through the acquisition of one company in its entirety by another, or the acquisition of more than 50% of its shares), or alliances (Hitt, Ireland, 2012). The new development paradigm or sustainability stimulates organisations to seek opportunities for growth by complementing/enriching the organisation's own resources with those of organisations in joint tasks. The collaboration undertaken between organisations can take various forms, including, but not limited to, alliances.

The benefits of engaging in collaboration were highlighted by respondents to a survey conducted by IBM in the early 2000s (of 765 CEOs of major multinational corporations). In their statements, they emphasised that external cooperation and mainly strategic alliances would be a key phenomenon used by companies (IBM, 2006). We find in the literature many ways of grouping alliances. One of the most used is the division into tactical alliances, understood as short-term action to achieve intermediate goals to implement a broader strategy, and strategic alliances, characterised by a long-term horizon and determining the allocation of

owned resources and the direction of the company's development (Das, Teng, 2015).

In a networked economy, as the dominant characteristic of economic processes in the 21st century, the need for strategic alliances (Adobor, 2011) stems not only from the pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals, but also from the implementation of the concepts of Industry 4.0 and Society 5.0 in the practical operations of companies.

The dynamics of change in today's business environment indicates the need for organisations to build strategies that require a long-term horizon, reaching beyond the current generation. This implies a need for managers to seek opportunities to create modern organisational structures. Cooperation undertaken in various forms and mainly strategic alliances are becoming a way of functioning for organisations that ensures survival in the competitive market (Todeva, Knoke, 2005). Strategic alliances are no longer a platform for development, but are becoming an end in themselves (Das, Teng, 2015), because they facilitate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goal strategy.

There remains a lack of a comprehensive conceptual framework to understand the Sustainable Alliance Manager (SAM) concept. An attempt to contribute to an integrated structure/framework that encompasses a wide range of concepts, interpretations and strategies and supplies theoretical models toward the emergence of Sustainable Alliance Manager as the theory. For this reason, this study investigates the following research question, that is:

RQ1. What are the theoretical interpretations and methodological tools that could be used to assess the sustainable alliance manager competences?

To address this question, this study focuses on the primary dimensions/aspects of collaborative-green skills and on a flexible and adaptable tool to support the SAM role in SMEs and decrease the high ratio of alliances failures in SME's).

1. Research Strategy

The systematic literature review method was applied to collect and synthesize relevant scientific literature from 1957 to 2024 to construct and validate a methodological approach.

In alignment with the overarching objectives of the project, an extensive literature review was meticulously carried out, delving into the multifaceted realm of the Strategic Alliances construct as delineated within the research model. This comprehensive inquiry entailed a systematic exploration of various theories and constructs pertinent to the subject matter, meticulously categorized for thorough examination and analysis.

In our pursuit of a thorough understanding of the Strategic Alliances construct within the context of our research model, our comprehensive literature review meticulously scrutinized a plethora of theories and constructs aimed at elucidating the intricacies of alliance creation and management. This rigorous inquiry was structured around delineating the theoretical frameworks that underpin the justification for forming alliances, as well as the theories governing the effective management and sustenance of these collaborative endeavours.

Within the domain of theories that rationalize the creation of alliances, our analytical focus spanned across a spectrum of perspectives, each offering unique insights into the motivations and drivers behind alliance formation. These included:

- Resource-Based View (RBV): This seminal theory provided a lens through which we examined how strategic alliances serve as vehicles for the strategic deployment and exploitation of organizational resources to attain competitive advantage in dynamic market landscapes.
- Resource Dependence Theory (RTD): By delving into RTD, we sought to unravel the intricate interdependencies between organizations and the imperative for forging alliances as a means of mitigating resource scarcity, enhancing organizational resilience, and securing access to critical resources.
- Transaction Cost Theory: Our exploration of transaction cost economics shed light on the rationale behind forming alliances as a response to transactional uncertainties and inefficiencies, elucidating the role of governance mechanisms in optimizing transactional outcomes and mitigating opportunistic behaviours.

- Competitiveness and Value Creation: Within this framework, we investigated how alliances serve as catalysts for fostering competitiveness and driving value creation through synergistic collaborations, strategic complementarities, and enhanced market positioning.
- Stakeholder Theory: Through the lens of stakeholder theory, we examined the broader socio-economic implications of alliance formation, emphasizing the imperative of stakeholder engagement, alignment of interests, and the pursuit of shared value creation for all involved stakeholders.

Transitioning to the realm of Alliance Management theory, our scrutiny expanded to encompass theories and constructs instrumental in orchestrating the effective governance, coordination, and optimization of alliance activities. Key areas of analysis included:

- Leadership: We delved into the pivotal role of leadership in shaping the strategic direction, vision, and culture of alliances, exploring how effective leadership practices foster alignment, inspire commitment, and navigate complexities inherent in collaborative endeavours.
- Process and Life Cycle of Alliances: Our examination of alliance management theory encompassed a nuanced understanding of the lifecycle stages of alliances, from formation and negotiation to implementation, governance, and eventual dissolution or renewal.
- Alliance Manager: We scrutinized the multifaceted role of alliance managers as orchestrators of alliance activities, facilitators of collaboration, and guardians of alliance performance, emphasizing the importance of specialized skills, competencies, and relational capabilities in driving alliance success.
- Collaborative Culture: Within this construct, we explored the significance of fostering a collaborative culture characterized by mutual trust, transparency, communication, and a shared commitment to collective goals, essential for nurturing synergy and fostering long-term alliance success.

By meticulously dissecting and synthesizing insights from these diverse theoretical perspectives, our literature review endeavours to provide a robust theoretical foundation for understanding the complexities and nuances inherent within the Strategic Alliances construct. Through this systematic exploration, we aim to elucidate the key drivers, mechanisms, and outcomes of strategic alliances, thereby informing the empirical investigation and theoretical advancement of our research model.

Figures 1- 4 illustrate the meticulous procedure undertaken in our quest for comprehensive literature review. Commencing with the initial step, we meticulously determined databases, keywords, and search strategies aimed at casting a wide net across the scholarly landscape. A meticulous curation process resulted in the identification of 16 keywords strategically selected to capture the breadth and depth of relevant literature. The search yielded an initial pool of results, denoted as 14 546, reflecting the scope of our exploration across diverse scholarly repositories.

Subsequently, our focus shifted towards scrutinizing the abstracts of the retrieved articles, evaluating their suitability and relevance to the overarching objectives of our project. This meticulous abstract analysis culminated in the identification of a refined subset of articles, denoted as 7 856, deemed pertinent for further in-depth examination.

The subsequent phase of our rigorous methodology involved delving into the entirety of selected articles, meticulously scrutinizing their full texts to extract nuanced insights and valuable contributions. This exhaustive analysis, conducted with precision and diligence, resulted in the identification of a curated corpus comprising 104 articles deemed paramount in elucidating facets crucial to the attainment of our project objectives.

Through this systematic and iterative approach, we endeavoured to ensure the thoroughness and comprehensiveness of our literature review, thereby laying a robust foundation for the empirical investigation and theoretical synthesis underpinning our research endeavour.

Step 1: To define the search criteria (search in the title, abstract and keywords)

Search words:
Strategic alliances + Leadership
Strategic alliances + Leadership styles
Strategic alliances + Competitiveness
Strategic alliances + Value creation
Strategic alliances + Sustainable value creation
Strategic alliances + Collaborative value
Strategic alliances + Value creation attributes
Strategic alliances + Value creation dimensions
Strategic Alliance + Alliance Manager
Strategic Alliance + Alliance Manager competences
Strategic alliances + Process and life cycle of alliances
Strategic alliances + Collaborative culture
Strategic alliances + Transaction Cost Theory
Strategic alliances + Resource-based view
Strategic alliances + Resource dependence theory
Strategic alliances + Stakeholder theory

Data bases
<u>Main data bases:</u>
Web of Science
Scopus

<u>Additional data bases:</u>
Willey Online Library
Science Direct
SpringerLink
Oxford University Press
Journals

Number of results: 14 546

Step 2: Analysis of articles by abstracts, key words

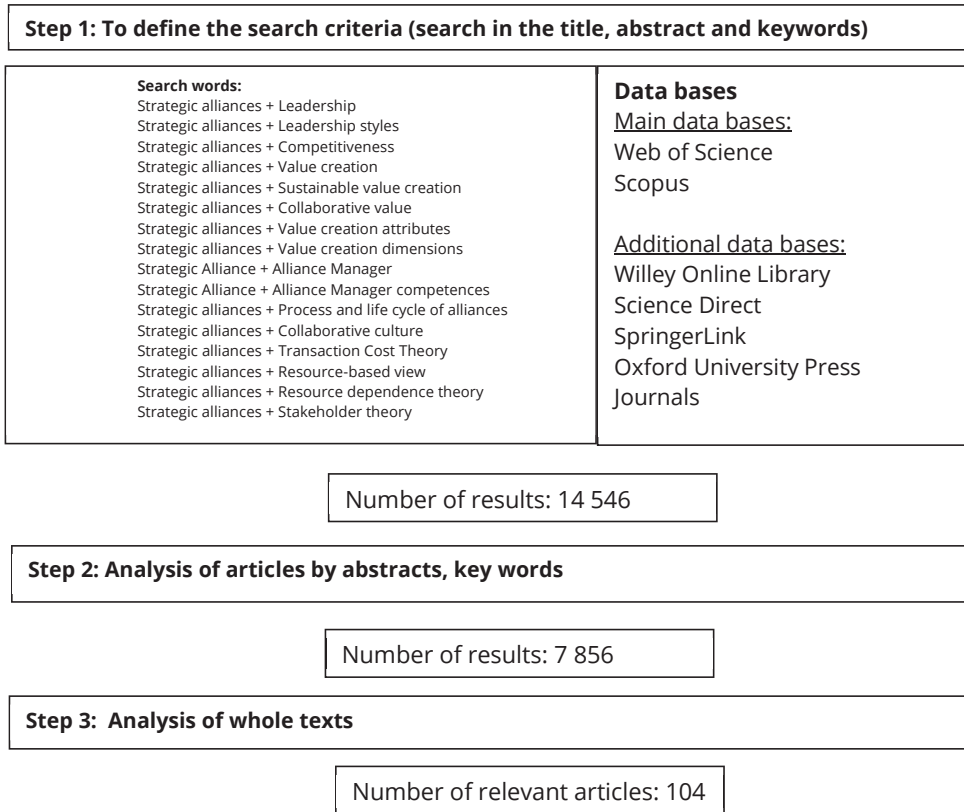Number of results: 7 856

Step 3: Analysis of whole texts

Number of relevant articles: 104

Figure 1: Research strategy for Sustainable Alliance Competencies -
Literature review process - Steps

STRATEGIC ALLIANCE (SA)
Number of articles:

SA+Recource-based view+Resource dependence theory
Number of articles: 5 785
Number of relevant articles: 17

SA+Trasaction Cost Theory
Number of articles: 323
Number of relevant articles: 20

SA+Competati-venness and Value Creation
Number of articles: 123
Number of relevant articles: 5

SA+Stakeholder Theory
Number of articles: 102
Number of relevant articles: 7

SA+Leadership
Number of articles: 305
Number of relevant articles: 12

Collaborative culture
Number of articles: 76
Number of relevant articles: 17

SA+Alliance Manager
Number of articles: 1 063
Number of relevant articles: 9

SA+Process & life cycle of alliance
Number of articles: 79
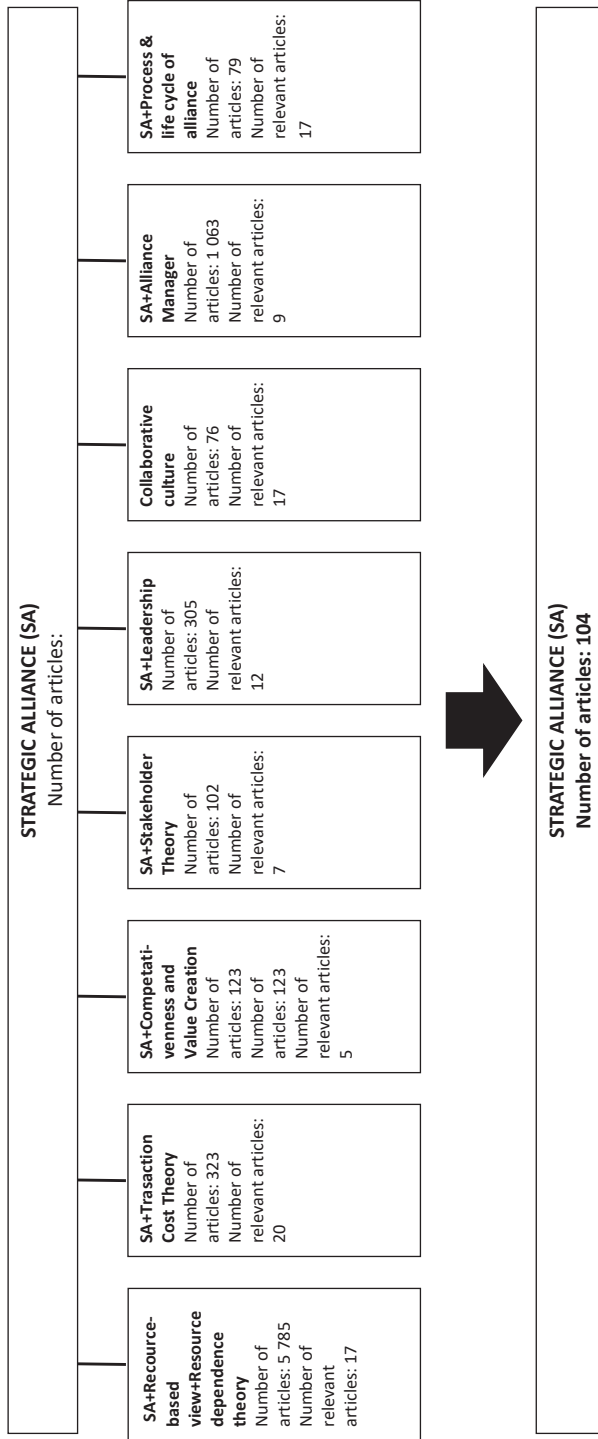Number of relevant articles: 17

STRATEGIC ALLIANCE (SA)
Number of articles: 104

Figure 2: Research strategy for Sustainable Alliance Competencies - Literature review process – Result overview

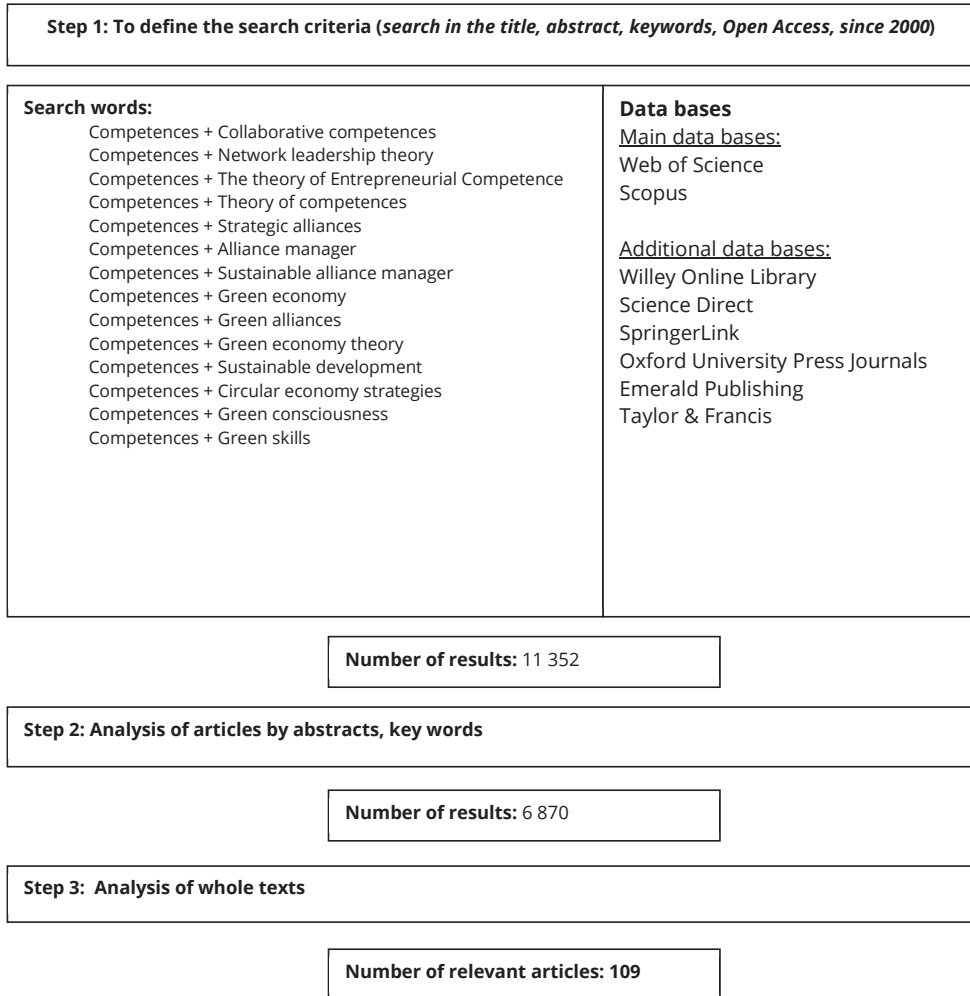Step 1: To define the search criteria (*search in the title, abstract, keywords, Open Access, since 2000*)

Search words:
Competences + Collaborative competences
Competences + Network leadership theory
Competences + The theory of Entrepreneurial Competence
Competences + Theory of competences
Competences + Strategic alliances
Competences + Alliance manager
Competences + Sustainable alliance manager
Competences + Green economy
Competences + Green alliances
Competences + Green economy theory
Competences + Sustainable development
Competences + Circular economy strategies
Competences + Green consciousness
Competences + Green skills

Data bases
Main data bases:
Web of Science
Scopus

Additional data bases:
Willey Online Library
Science Direct
SpringerLink
Oxford University Press Journals
Emerald Publishing
Taylor & Francis

Number of results: 11 352

Step 2: Analysis of articles by abstracts, key words

Number of results: 6 870

Step 3: Analysis of whole texts

Number of relevant articles: 109

Figure 3: Research strategy for Sustainable Alliance Competencies -
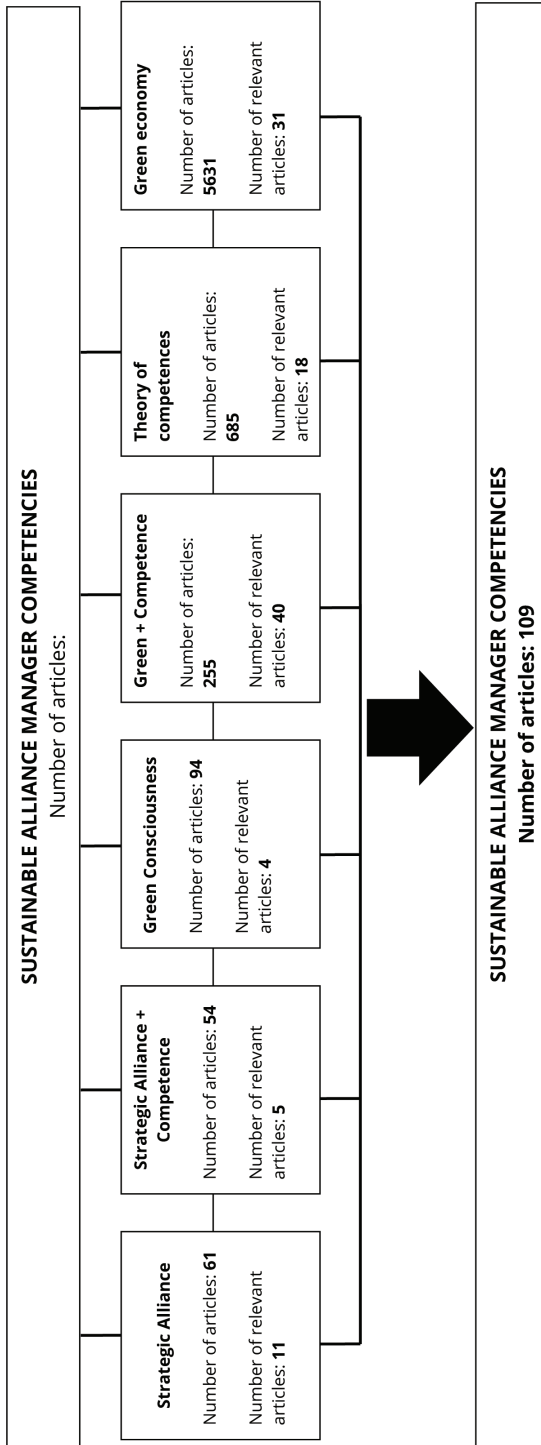Literature review process - Steps Search Criteria / Results

SUSTAINABLE ALLIANCE MANAGER COMPETENCIES
Number of articles:

Strategic Alliance
Number of articles: **61**
Number of relevant articles: **11**

Strategic Alliance + Competence
Number of articles: **54**
Number of relevant articles: **5**

Green Consciousness
Number of articles: **94**
Number of relevant articles: **4**

Green + Competence
Number of articles: **255**
Number of relevant articles: **40**

Theory of competences
Number of articles: **685**
Number of relevant articles: **18**

Green economy
Number of articles: **5631**
Number of relevant articles: **31**

SUSTAINABLE ALLIANCE MANAGER COMPETENCIES
Number of articles: 109

Figure 4: Research strategy for Sustainable Alliance Competencies - Literature review process – Final overview

1.1. Research model (Theoretical framework)

Having reviewed the methodologies in the extant literature about Strategic Alliance, Strategic Alliance and Competences, Green Consciousness, Green + Competence, Theory of Competences, Green Economy, and explored the similarities and differences between them, the authors concluded that the theoretical framework of sustainable alliance manager is the most appropriate for the definition of SAM because of its universality and comprehensive scope. This methodology assesses new perspectives regarding the necessary competences necessary for the sustainable alliance manager (Fig. 5).
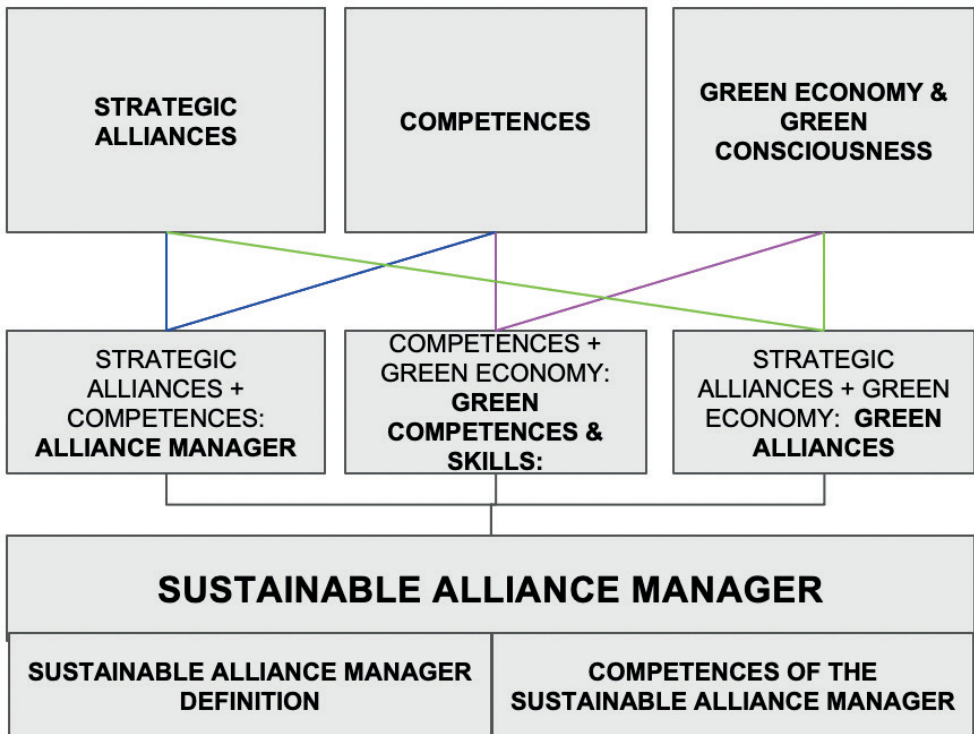
Figure 5: Research model – theoretical framework

1.2. Literature review procedure & identification of practical perspectives

A. PRISMA-based literature review
B. Keywords selected
C. Joint list of keywords, classified by the 3 main construct
D. Quantitative summary table with scientific materials categorised by construct and keywords
E. Synthesis of the literature review: 1) information classification; 2) categorization according to the constructs)
F. Inputs for definitions
G. Inputs for list of competences
H. Collection of "Good practices" in each country
    -   Total of good practices: 41
    -   By country: Spain: 17; Poland: 10; Lithuania: 5; Italy: 1; Romania: 8
    -   By type of practice: Articles: 14; Press releases: 1; Strategic guidelines: 1; Report: 4; Study: 1; Book: 1; Research paper: 4; Thesis: 6; Referent company: 1; Competitive regional projects: 4; Mentoring process: 1; Collaborative project: 1

2. Theoretical development of SAM profile

2.1. Towards a definition of the role of Sustainable Alliance Manager

2.1.1. Definition of the main constructs

Strategic alliances are a tool commonly used by companies in the strategic management process. (He, Meadows, Angwin, Gomes, Child 2020). They primarily consist of a joint action leading to the achievement of a set objective by at least two independent entities (van Gils, Zwart 2009; Roberts, Wallace 2015). Strategic alliances are seen as one of those external growth opportunities for the firm that facilitates adaptation to a changing business environment (Teng, Das 2008). Participation in an alliance allows - among other things - access to tangible and intangible resources necessary for the venture, a reduction in costs and risks associated with undertaking a new activity and an improved competitive position vis-à-vis rivals in the market (Means, Faulkner, 2000; Rahman, Korn 2010; Dickson, Weaver, 2012; Snyman, 2015; Zakaria, Genc, 2017).

Strategic alliance is an umbrella term. The term combines a set of terms referring to a long-term relationship entered for mutual benefit by a minimum of two independent partners (Varadarajan, Cunningham, 1995; Segil, 2008). The parties to the relationship may be suppliers, buyers, or competitors (Crotts et al. 2000; Reichel 2010). R. Gulati (1998; 2007) defines a strategic alliance as a voluntary agreement between autonomous companies to create or develop a particular product in the market. T.K. Das and S. Teng (2000) share this view, adding that alliances are geared towards achieving a competitive advantage for the parties to the arrangement by pooling their resources. Brown and Gutterman (2009) further point out that the parties share project risk by committing venture-specific resources dedicated to management and financial, technological and production processes. The alliance partners may combine complementary resources or substitute resources, which in the case of the latter offers the opportunity to achieve economies of scale in production. Depending on the conditions motivating its conclusion, an alliance has either a shareholding or a non-shareholding dimension. Non-shareholding alliances most often take the form of operating based on simple contracts (e. g. development projects in which all partners share their resources to create a new

product to which each has a right of use; licensing, distribution, marketing service agreements). In contrast, shareholding alliances involve the creation of a more formally advanced relationship. In many cases, they are accompanied by the creation of a new business unit (Gulati 2007; Swaim 2010).

Table 1: Selected definitions of a strategic alliance

Author	Source	Definition
Forrest, 1989	Forrest J. (1989). Management of Technology Innovation; Strategic Alliances in the 'New' Biotechnology Industry (Doctoral Thesis, Cardiff Business School)	Strategic alliance is a short-term or a long-term cooperation among enterprises, which might include partial or contractual property in order to implement strategic goals
Yoshino & Rangan, 1995	Yoshino, M.Y. and Rangan, U.S. (1995). Strategic Alliances: An Entrepreneurial Approach to Globalization. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA	Strategic alliance is a partnership between two or more enterprises, which seek to achieve strategic goals, but they remain independent after alliance formation, and they share benefit created by the strategic activity
Faulkner, 1995	Faulkner, D. (1995). International Strategic Alliances: Cooperating to Compete. McGraw-Hill Book Company	Strategic alliance is a particular regime of organisational relations when partners have to invest into long-term performance based on a mutual effort
Frankel, Whipple, & Frayer, 1996	Frankel, R., Whipple, J.S., Frayer, D.J. (1996). Formal versus informal contracts: achieving alliance success. International Journal of Physical Distribution & Logistics Management, 26 (3), p. 47-63	Strategic alliance might be defined as a process when enterprise members modify basic business and change common business practice in order to decrease duplication of activity and expenses; furthermore, at the same time better conditions for efficiency improvement might be created

Author	Source	Definition
Gomes-Casseres, 1996.	Gomes-Casseres, B. (1996). The Alliance Revolution: The New Shape of Business Rivalry. Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA.	„ (…) open-ended, incomplete agreements with shared control that create value by combining the capabilities of separate firms. An „incomplete" agreement means that the full terms or conditions of the alliance are not fully established at its conception because if they were, the need for a strategic alliance would not exist"
Douma, 1997	Douma, M.U. (1997). Strategic Alliances: fit or failure (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Twente, The Netherlands)	Strategic alliance is conventional temporary relations with some independent enterprises, which seek to remove restrictions while implementing strategic goals. Each partner may influence activities, management, and policy; but they do not share expenses, risk, or profit, i.e. these enterprises remain independent from each other
Gulati, 1998	Gulati, R., (1998). Alliance and Networks. Strategic Management Journal, 19, p. 293-317	Strategic alliance is a voluntary agreement among enterprises including exchange or division of product, technology, or services development
Tsang, 1998	Tsang, E. W. K. (1998). Motives for strategic alliance: A resource-based perspective. Scandinavian Journal of Management, 14(3), 207–221.	A strategic alliance is defined as a long-term cooperative arrangement between two or more independent firms that engage in business activities for mutual economic gain. („long-term" does not refer to any specific period of time, but rather, to the intention of the partners that the arrangement is not going to be a transient one.)

Author	Source	Definition
Crane, 1998	Crane, A. (1998). Exploring green alliances. Journal of Marketing Management, 14(6), 559–579.	Green alliance is used here to refer to any formal or informal collaboration between two or more organizations which is aimed at developing common solutions to the collaborators' environmental problems. Hence a green alliance might be forged between any combination of commercial organizations, government organizations, and non-governmental organizations
Das &Teng, 2000	Das, T. K., & Teng, B.-S. (2000). A resource-based theory of strategic alliances. Journal of Management, 16(1), 31–61.	Strategic alliances are voluntary cooperative inter-firm agreements aimed at achieving competitive advantage for the partners
Das & Teng, 2001	Das, T. and Teng, B.S. (2001), "Trust, control, and risk in strategic alliances. An integrated framework", Organization Studies, Vol. 22 No. 2, pp. 251-83	Strategic alliances involve non-trivial, bilateral cooperation between autonomous firms
Wheelen & Hunger, 2003	Wheelen, L. T., & Hunger, D. (2003). Essentials of Strategic Management (1st ed.). McGraw-Hill: New York.	„an agreement between firms to do business together in ways that go beyond normal company-to-company dealings, but fall short of merger or a full partnership"
Todeva & Knoke, 2005	Todeva, E., & Knoke, D. (2005). Strategic alliances and models of collaboration. Management Decision, 43(1), 123–148.	Strategic alliances are not only trading partnerships that enhance the effectiveness of the participating firms' competitive strategies by providing for mutual resource exchanges (technologies, skills, or products). They are also new business forms that enable the partners to enhance and control their business relationships in various ways

Author	Source	Definition
Yi, 2007	Yi Wei. (2007). Factors influencing the success of virtual cooperation within Dutch – Chinese strategic alliances. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Twente),	Strategic alliance is a partnership that helps to unify power in order to gain mutual benefit and long-term competitiveness in market
Kale & Singh, 2009	Kale, P., & Singh, H. (2009). Managing strategic alliances: What do we know now, and where do we go from here? Academy of Management Perspectives, 26(2), 45–62.	Strategic alliance is "a purposive relationship between two or more independent firms that involves the exchange, sharing, or co-development of resources or capabilities to achieve mutually relevant benefits
Shah, 2011	Shah, K. U. (2011). Organizational legitimacy and the strategic bridging ability of green alliances. Business Strategy and the Environment, 20, 498–511.	Strategic alliances are inter-organizational, collaborative efforts between firms and non-governmental organizations1 (NGOs) that involve sharing or co-development of goods or services, to address problems too complex or too protracted to be resolved unilaterally
Isidor, Steinmetz, Schwens & Kabst 2014	Isidor, R., Steinmetz, H., Schwens, C., & Kabst, R. (2014). Linking transaction cost and social exchange theory to explain strategic alliance performance: a meta-analytic structural equation model. International Journal of Strategic Business Alliances, 3(2/3), 140. doi:10.1504/ijsba.2014.062333	Strategic alliances are any extended cooperative arrangement between two or more firms intended to improve their competitive position and performance by jointly developing, manufacturing, and/or distributing products and services

Author	Source	Definition
Russo & Cesarani, 2017	Russo, M., & Cesarani, M. (2017). Strategic Alliance Success Factors: A Literature Review on Alliance Lifecycle. International Journal of Business Administration, 8(3), 1. doi:10.5430/ijba.v8n3p1 , p. 1	A strategic alliance is an intentional relationship between two or more firms, which remain legally independent, involving exchange, sharing or co-development of resources, competences, and capabilities. Strategic alliances develop through three phases. Alliance success lies on successful management of key factors, involved in each phase.
Al-Gharrawi, 2018	Al-Gharrawi, A. (2018). Strategic alliances. Journal of Business and Financial Affairs, 7(1). https://doi.org/10.4172/2167-0234.1000319.	strategic alliance means two organizations or two or more companies to participate in the resources and activities for the implementation of a specific strategy.
Antelo & Peón, 2021	Antelo, M., & Peón, D. (2021). The Size of Strategic Alliances and the Role Played by Managers. Journal of Industry, Competition and Trade, 21(2), 287–313. doi:10.1007/s10842-021-00355-7, p. 288	Strategic alliances - a powerful mechanism to combine competition and cooperation
Xia i in., 2024	Xia, S., Song, J., Ameen, N., Vrontis, D., Yan, J. & Chen, F. (2024) What Changes and Opportunities Does Big Data Analytics Capability Bring to Strategic Alliance Research? A Systematic Literature Review. International Journal of Management Reviews, 26, 34–53. https://doi.org/10.1111/ijmr.12350	"a voluntary relationship across inter-firm/inter-organizational boundaries"

For the purposes of this research, a definition of strategic alliance was adopted (Cygler 2002), which defines an alliance as a long-term and purposeful agreement between entities, entered based on partnership and adequacy of benefits derived from the alliance, while maintaining the organisational distinctiveness of the parties to the arrangement. The perspective presented here is characterised by its universality, which allows the integration of a wide range of existing strategic alliance models.

Figure 6: Word cloud for the definition of a Strategic Alliance

In summary, the divergence in defining strategic alliances is due to their heterogeneous nature and flexibility in terms of the arrangements used (cf. Table 1). They differ in their motives for entering them, their scope, their structure, their objectives, their governance (Evans et al. 2012). Such determinants affect the number of organisations forming an alliance, the profile of the partners, the type of relationship linking them, the spatial extent, the degree of integration, the direction of integration, the degree of formalisation, the commitment of capital, the motive for formation or the organisational structure (Wright, Carruthers 2000; Kauser, Shaw 2004; Todeva, Knoke 2005; Hilte, Mardjan 2007; Barnes et al. 2012).

Theories that justify the alliance creation

For the purposes of the current research, it was decided to focus on identifying the motives for forming strategic alliances derived from an analysis of the following theories: Resource Based View; Resource Dependency Theory; Transaction Cost Theory; Competitiveness and Value Creation; Stakeholder Theory.

Table 2: Synthetic list of motives for strategic alliances between companies

Name of theory or approach described in the literature	Motives for forming alliances	Key sources
Resource Based View	Create and develop resources considered strategic for creating competitive advantage. Guaranteeing access to strategic resources.	Tsang, 1998; Das &Teng, 2000; Ireland, Hitt and Vaidyanath, 2002; Niesten and Jolin, 2015; Sluyts, 2011; Ziggers and Tjemke, 2010; Bhattacharyya, 2019; Steiner & Lan, 2017; Lin and Darnall, 2015; He et al, 2020; Al-Gharrawi, 2018; Lin and Darnall, 2010; Wassmer and Dussauge, 2011;
Resource Dependency Theory	Resource dependence on other organisations or individuals creates the need to guarantee access to the resources required by the organisation and held by the organisation's stakeholders.	Tokman, Mouse, 2020; Malatesta & Smith, 2014; Tehseen & Sajilan, 2018; Chiambaretto, 2015; Bretherton & Chaston, 2005; Kandemir et al, 2006; Lambe & Spekman, 1997;
Transaction Cost Theory	Companies consider transaction cost theory when assessing the costs and benefits of different organisational structures, including alliances, before deciding whether to enter into a collaboration	Meyer & Wang (2015), Xiong, Wang & Zhao (2021)

Name of theory or approach described in the literature	Motives for forming alliances	Key sources
Competitiveness and Value Creation	The formation of alliances by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is a strategic endeavour aimed at maximizing organizational value, both tangible and intangible. At the heart of this dynamic is the belief that through collaboration, SMEs can overcome resource limitations and exploit synergistic opportunities, which is crucial for achieving sustainable success in a competitive market. Strategic alliances allow for the sharing of knowledge, technology, and access to new markets, contributing to the creation of additional value that is unattainable by a single organization. This process, embedded in dialectical interactions within social structures, underscores how strategic alliances not only facilitate resource management but also initiate the creation and capture of value, which are fundamental for growth and innovation in SMEs.	Bouncken, R. B., Fredrich, V., Kraus, S., & Ritala, P. (2020); Tyll, L., Srivastava, M., & Hromádka, M. (2020); O'Dwyer, M., & Gilmore, A. (2018); Campos-Climent, V., & Sanchis-Palacio, J. R. (2017); Bouncken, R. B., et al. (2020); Zacharias, N. A., Nijssen, E. J., & Stock, R. M. (2016).
Stakeholder Theory	An organisation's engagement with stakeholders who influence the organisation both positively and negatively. Entering an alliance is motivated by the stakeholder's desire to engage with the organisation.	He et al, 2020; Crane, 1998; D'Aunno et al, 2019; Shah, 2011; Wong, 2014; Abuzeinab and Arif, 2014; Aragon-Correa et al, 2008; Norheim-Hanse, 2015

Source: Own research

Resource based view

The origins of the resource school date back to the 1980s. Above all, the earlier analyses of distinctive competencies (Selznik, 1957), Ricardian rent theory and the work of Penrose made an important contribution to building the foundations of the school. Of particular importance should be attributed to Penrose's work published in 1959, The Theory of the Growth of the Firm, in which the researcher

treats organisations as a bundle of resources that provide services for a specific organisational purpose. The growth of the organisation is constrained by the productive capacity that exists as a function of the resources controlled by the firm and the administrative framework used to coordinate the use of these resources (Penrose, 2009). In addition to directing attention to the interior of the organisation, Penrose's research has also drawn attention to the diversity of resources held by firms, even in relation to firms operating in the same sector (Rugman & Verbeke, 2002; Jacobsen, 2013). A milestone in the development of the resource approach was the research of Wernerfelt (1984) and Rumelt (1984), as well as Barney (1991). The novelty of Barney's approach lay in combining themes from the work of E. Penrose, indicated earlier, who argued that firms can be understood as a combination of resources and that different firms have different resource mixes, and from the work of Selznick, who believed that some of an organisation's resources are unique and even impossible to imitate. Achieving sustainable competitive advantage in the view of the resource school is possible using strategic resources that are characterised by strategic value, rarity, difficulty of imitation and lack of substitutes. Resources that are characterised by the indicated features have the potential to build a sustainable competitive advantage for the organisation on their basis and should become the basis for strategy development. Building an organisation's competitive advantage based on resources can also be done by entering strategic alliances and thus providing the organisation with access to the necessary resources. Tsang (1998), based on the resource approach, identifies five motives for entering alliances:

1. creating annuities,
2. expansion of resource use,
3. diversification of resource use,
4. imitation resources,
5. divestment.

Das and Teng (2000) point out that the rationale for alliances is the potential to create value from the potential of a firm's resources that are pooled together. Firms can use alliances to obtain resources held by other firms that are valuable and necessary for competitive advantage. The authors also point out that the resource characteristics underlying the creation of competitive advantage facilitate the formation of alliances and propose a typology of partner matching based on two dimensions - resource similarity and resource utilisation - giving four types of matching: complementary, surplus, complementary, and wasteful. Partner resource fit affects alliance performance through two critical variables: collective strengths and inter-firm conflicts.

Ireland, Hitt and Vaidyanath (2002) point out that alliance management competencies are crucial for an organisation to achieve competitive advantage and value creation in strategic alliances. Effective alliance management starts with selecting the right partner. Alliance management should aim to build social and knowledge capital, while trusting relationships should be developed to maximise cooperation between partners. An article by Niesten and Jolnik (2015) identifies several factors that determine the performance of inter-organisational alliances, including the sharing of information and knowledge between partners, a shared understanding of partners and a focus on common goals as key resources. Sluyts (2011) and his team's research focused on analysing the impact of alliance management capability on alliance performance and analysing factors influencing alliance management capability. Among the factors influencing alliance management capability, organisational culture, top team commitment, alliance experience and alliance function were analysed. The results obtained indicate that top management commitment is the most important factor explaining the success of alliances.

Ziggers and Tjemke (2010) point to important factors after alliance formation that indirectly affect alliance performance such as alliance management and relationship quality. With that said, the management of strategic alliances can be more effective with an integrated perspective (Bhattacharyya, 2019). There is also a need to better understand the differentiated role of resource characteristics and resource heterogeneity in alliance formation, as these can function as a source of competitive advantage (Steiner & Lan, 2017).

In relation to complex environmental problems, Lin, and Darnall (2015) identify two important resource-based motivations for engaging in strategic alliances. The first motivation is the pooling of complementary resources that can be used to develop valuable organisational competencies, particularly competencies related to tacit knowledge or resources that are pooled between alliance partners because of their political nature. Political resources refer to the understanding of non-market, non-market environments, access to decision makers and opinion leaders and the ability to negotiate. When dealing with complex environmental issues, organisations may seek to form a strategic alliance to gain access to political resources that they could not acquire independently. A second motive for forming alliances is to enhance organisational learning capabilities. The development of Industry 4.0 and the associated changes in organisational management, including the pursuit of innovation, necessitate the formation of strategic alliances and the development of new alliance management competencies (He et al., 2020). In Industry 4.0, strategic alliances are driven by new business models focusing on digitisation and decentralisation of information processing.

Ambidexterity is becoming an essential competency in alliance management, more flexible, agile, and even ad-hoc virtual collaborations with shorter lifecycles are required. Advanced ICT solutions such as virtualisation, cloud computing and blockchain smart contracts enable such flexible collaboration. At the same time, changing customer expectations, such as sustainability and social responsibility, require companies to collaborate more widely, including between competitors. Rapid technological change requires updating the ability to manage alliances effectively. Current assumptions about the non-transferability of resources in traditional theories, such as the Resource-Based View (RBV), are being challenged by the dynamic exchange of information and knowledge facilitated by digital transformation. Stakeholder theory, on the other hand, needs to be adapted to reflect the evolving role of stakeholders in open innovation and company ecosystems, considering a broader spectrum of actors and stakeholders beyond shareholders. Traditional measures of strategic alliance performance based on stability and immediate business outcomes may need to be replaced with more dynamic and non-linear metrics due to the changing nature of alliances driven by digital transformation. Through which, future performance of strategic alliances will be measured by agility and adaptation to changing environments and expectations, with a focus on dynamically identifying the right partners and maximising returns from shorter alliances. The new stakeholder management strategy involves aligning stakeholder theory with the changing role of stakeholders in open innovation and organisational ecosystems. In addition, managing the performance of strategic alliances requires a shift to a dynamic approach to performance measurement that considers a wider range of stakeholders and societal expectations.

This requires integrating broader agendas, such as environmental and social issues, into performance measurement models and considering the importance of theories such as NRBV (Hart, 1995) (natural resource-based view). Al-Gharrawi (2018) also points to resource-based motives for alliances: "the need for strategic alliances and partnerships has been triggered by the increase in resource scarcity and the difficulties faced by firms in securing and maintaining access to these resources, whether in terms of raw materials and production requirements, or skilled human resources. whether in terms of raw materials and production requirements, or skilled human resources and combining expertise and technical and managerial technical and managerial technical and managerial capabilities, or other financial resources or information". Strategic alliances have become indispensable to overcome today's problems and challenges, especially in the areas of technology, environment, and finance. In doing so, Al-Gharrawi identifies the following reasons for entering alliances:

- technological progress requires cooperation, also formalised in the form of an alliance, especially in the areas of research and development (R&D),
- Technology production often involves partnerships between universities, research centres, governments, and international institutions; these collaborations help to advance research and innovation,
- Globalisation has led to the integration of markets, requiring cooperation and coordination through alliances also internationally.

Overall, strategic alliances play a key role in facilitating technological innovation, market integration and economic development by fostering cooperation between different stakeholders. Lin and Darnall (2010) relate their research on strategic alliances to social, economic, and environmental issues by explicitly pointing to the resource-based determinants of alliance formation, which offer access to resources, especially tacit knowledge from other organisations increasing competitive advantage. In the face of ambiguity and uncertainty in environmental issues, strategic alliances facilitate valuable information flows and organisational learning. Organisational learning enhances an organisation's ability to recognise and evaluate technological innovations, supporting continuous environmental innovation for sustainable competitive advantage. Strategic alliances enable organisations to change existing practices towards environmentally friendly technologies and business models, promoting 'creative destruction' and radical improvements. Some strategic alliances focus on social goals alongside economic goals, fostering collaboration between like-minded actors. These alliances may establish industry codes of conduct, work with regulators to improve environmental performance or advocate for more stringent environmental policies, resulting in a competitive advantage. Strategic alliances motivated by resource-based considerations lead to decentralised, company-specific, knowledge-based, and socially complex partnerships, referred to as competence-oriented alliances. Strategic alliances are formed because of the organisation's motivations to increase resources and capabilities and to cope with institutional pressures (legitimacy-oriented alliances). Competence-oriented alliances tend to be associated with more proactive environmental strategies, while legitimacy-oriented alliances tend to be associated with less proactive strategies. The creation of network resources through strategic alliance as a source of organisational competitive advantage is found in the work of Wassmer and Dussauge (2011). For the authors indicated, the value-creating potential of network resources should not only be assessed based on each individual alliance, but also from the perspective of a portfolio of alliances. It is also important to match network resources with the organisation's own resources and other network resources, which is crucial for value creation. In doing so, it is necessary to identify partners that provide network resources with high value creation potential.

The indicated authors emphasise that organisations can maximise value through resource selection (selecting network resources with optimal fit) or capacity building (developing organisational capabilities to use network resources effectively). Alliance capability includes the ability to select appropriate network resources and build appropriate capabilities to manage alliances and optimise portfolio value.

Resource dependency theory

Another theoretical strand indicating the motives for alliances is Resource Dependency Theory, for which Pfeffer and Salancik (2003) are considered to be the originators. Resource Dependency Theory views firms as entities that rely on their external environment to obtain valuable resources, and alliances are seen as enablers of resource exchange between firms (Tokman et al., 2020). Resource dependency theory is based on the belief that resource providers (stakeholders) can influence an organisation's activities and decisions in order to realise their own expectations (Stańczyk-Hugiet, 2017). It is the manager's responsibility to identify the interest groups, the resources the organisation needs to acquire from the group and the importance of the group (its resources) to the organisation's activities. The organisation forms peculiar coalitions with individual interest groups, whose task is to satisfy the participant supporting the organisation with resource streams. In assessing the resource dependence of an organisation on a social actor, three factors are critical - the relevance of the resource to the organisation's activities, the extent to which interest groups have discretion in allocation, and the determination of resource use and choice (Pfeffer &. Salancik, 2003). The importance of a resource to an organisation's operations is determined by two variables - the volume of its use as measured by its share of the total resources that the organisation uses or the criticality of the resource to the organisation's operations regardless of the volume of its contribution to the production process. The criticality of a resource should be understood as its importance and fundamentality to the production process, i.e., its strategic importance to the organisation. The characterisation of resources in terms of their criticality is also particularly difficult because of the possibility that the importance of a resource for the organisation's operations may change over time, which occurs, among other things, during crisis situations (Pajunen, 2006). The power to decide on the allocation and use of resources increases with the rarity of the resource in question held by the social actor. The resource dependence of an organisation as a source of stakeholder power increases the uncertainty of the conditions in which the organisation operates. In general, organisations attempt to influence dependency relationships by minimising their own dependence on other organisations and increasing their dependence on each other (Pajunen, 2006). To

reduce uncertainty and ensure the organisation's favour with stakeholders, Nien-hüser (2008) proposes the following strategies of action: satisfying stakeholders' expectations, creating the appearance of satisfying stakeholders' expectations, avoiding dependency by using alternative resources, managing stakeholder rela-tionships to reduce strong resource dependency. Malatesta and Smith (2014), on the other hand, identify three options - merger, alliances, or coopetition - as strate-gies for managing stakeholder relationships in the area of resource dependence. To do so, it is essential to build and develop relational competencies (network com-petence) in order to establish, maintain and develop strategic alliances to acquire the necessary resources for the organisation (Tehseen & Sajilan, 2018). In strategic alliances based on resource dependency, there may be power imbalances between partners. One of the power-balancing strategies proposed by Chiambaretto (2015) is the conscious redefinition of markets, which reduces dependence on power-ful partners while offering organisations new strategic partnership options. Re-search in the small and medium-sized wine industry indicates that organisations engaged in strategic alliances to source missing resources at different stages of the value chain achieve better performance and sustainable competitive advan-tage Bretherton and Chaston (2005). The work of Tokman et al. (2020) presents the results of a study that aimed to analyse how entrepreneurial orientation (EO) and alliance orientation (AO) of top SME management leads to functional diversity in the organisation's alliance portfolio configuration. The survival of the small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) largely depends on its ability to access critical re-sources through alliances, facilitated by top management's relationships with alli-ance partners. As the authors indicated, SMEs seek partners with critical resources for their survival, and their choice is influenced by the worldviews and experiences of their top managers. For example, SMEs may form marketing alliances to access partners' loyal customer and promotional resources, while operational and logisti-cal alliances provide access to physical resources such as production facilities and warehouses. Joint ventures and equity investments provide access to financial re-sources and managerial expertise. With that said, companies configure alliance portfolios based on their strategic orientation. Firms with higher entrepreneurial orientation (EO) are more likely to use strategic alliances and build more diverse alliance portfolios compared to firms with weak EO. EO reflects the methods, dis-positions and decision-making styles used by managers to act entrepreneurially, including innovation, proactivity and risk-taking. Innovative firms are more likely to engage in diverse portfolios of alliances because innovation is an important source of competitive advantage. Similarly, highly innovative firms are better equipped to enter diverse alliances, benefiting from complementary assets and synergies. Risk-taking, another dimension of EO, refers to managers' willingness to make large and

risky resource commitments. SMEs with a higher entrepreneurial orientation are more open to the risks associated with coordinating functionally diverse alliance portfolios, as they can hedge the risks associated with coordination by increasing access points to critical resources and reducing the power of specialised alliance partners over their firm. Overall, SMEs with higher entrepreneurial orientations are more likely to engage in diverse alliance portfolios, leveraging their access to critical resources and increasing their competitive advantage in the marketplace. In contrast, Kandemir et al. (2006) define alliance orientation as the propensity of a firm's top management to proactively scan the environment for attractive partnership opportunities and coordinate alliance activities based on the knowledge gained. Similarly, Lambe and Spekman (1997) suggest that alliance experience, alliance manager development and alliance identification are capabilities that enhance the resources available to the alliance.

Transaction cost theory

Transaction cost theory is discussed as an economic approach to organisations, with researchers highlighting the theory's attempt to explain why certain institutional structures, outside of markets, may be more effective in managing business activities. That is, firms take transaction cost theory into account when assessing the costs and benefits of different organisational structures, including alliances, before deciding to enter a collaboration (Meyer, K. E., & Wang, Y. 2015); (see Encyclopaedia of corporate social responsibility).

The text by Klaus E. Meyer and Yi Wang discusses the distinction between equity joint ventures (EJVs) and contractual alliances, highlighting the difference in control mechanisms or governance structures. Before entering a collaboration, companies are likely to conduct cost-benefit analyses to determine which governance structure best suits their objectives and resources. This means that the costs and benefits associated with each governance structure influence the decision to start a collaboration (Meyer, K. E., & Wang, Y. 2015). These researchers point out that the empirical literature on strategic alliances focuses on industry- and firm-level factors that explain why firms enter strategic alliances. These factors include competition in the market, stage of market development and uncertainty related to demand and competition. Companies are likely to evaluate these factors through cost-benefit analyses to assess the potential benefits and risks of collaboration, thus influencing their decision to enter a collaboration.

Although strategic alliances are established to share resources, the text suggests that the nature of resource alignment in alliances is not straightforward. This

means that companies conduct cost-benefit analyses to assess how effectively resources can be combined and shared in the context of different alliance structures. Such analyses are likely to influence decisions to enter collaboration based on the perceived benefits and costs of resource alignment.

In summary, the arguments presented in the text by the authors suggest that cost-benefit analyses of alliances play an important role in influencing decisions to enter collaborations. Before entering strategic alliances, firms consider transaction cost theory, governance structures, empirical research on alliance formation and resource alignment issues (Meyer, K. E., & Wang, Y. 2015).

An article by Chen, H., & Chen, T.-J. (2003) also suggests that the transaction cost model is effective in explaining the choice decisions between joint ventures and contractual alliances. This implies that cost-benefit analyses, which are central to the transaction cost model, play a significant role in determining the governance structure of international strategic alliances. Specifically, firms would conduct cost-benefit analyses to assess the advantages and disadvantages of each governance structure option (joint ventures versus contractual alliances) in terms of transaction costs such as coordination, monitoring and opportunism.

David Camino and Juan Ramón Trecu (1996) are tempted to make two arguments suggesting that cost-benefit analyses of alliances influence decisions to cooperate:

- Market imperfections: the article mentions that alliances arise as a rational, economic solution to market imperfections caused by high ownership costs and information asymmetries. This means that firms engage in alliances to mitigate the costs associated with full ownership and to address information disadvantages. Cost-benefit analyses are likely to be carried out to assess whether the benefits of cooperation outweigh the costs associated with market imperfections.
- Economic efficiency: the article questions whether collaborative agreements, such as strategic alliances, are economically efficient. This suggests that firms consider the economic impact of alliances, including the associated costs and benefits. Cost-benefit analyses would be necessary in assessing the effectiveness of alliances compared to other forms of organisation or competition (Camino, D., & Trecu, J. R. 1996).

A study by Ming Ning Xiong & Tao Wang & Peng Zhao also demonstrated the moderating effects of social embeddedness and social reputation on the relationship between cultural distance and alliance formation. These moderating effects suggest that the costs and benefits of alliances may vary depending on the social context. Cost-benefit analyses would help companies assess how these mitigating factors affect the economic viability of alliance formation.

Overall, the text shows that cost-benefit analyses play a key role in assessing the economic feasibility and viability of forming strategic alliances, especially in the context of cultural distance and its impact on transaction costs (Xiong, M. N., Wang, T., & Zhao, P. 2021).

Since the 1980s, there has been a significant increase in the number of technology alliances, driven by the rapidly evolving nature of technology and products. As technology lifecycles shorten, high-tech companies feel a constant need to innovate. To meet this demand, they often collaborate with other companies to exploit complementary opportunities and foster innovation. Researchers make extensive use of theories such as transaction cost economics (TCE) and the resource-based view (RBV) to gain insights into the formation of alliances between firms. However, it is uncertain which theory - TCE or RBV - offers a more effective explanation of alliance formation. Some researchers have attempted to compare the explanatory power of TCE and RBV in understanding the dynamics of alliance formation (e.g., Buvik & Anderson, 2002; Hitt, Dacin, Levitas, Arregle, &Borza, 2000; Lee, Yeung, & Cheng, 2009; Lin, Yang, & Arya, 2009; Park, Chen, & Gallagher, 2002; Santoro & McGill, 2005; Song, Droge, Hanvanich, & Calantone, 2005; (cited by Kim, H. J. 2016).

In the report presented here, it is also worth mentioning that research conducted to date (Hwan Jin Kim 2016) suggests that TCE and RBV theories complement each other in explaining the formation of alliances between firms. That is, firms consider both transaction costs (from TCE) and resource capabilities of potential partners (from RBV) when assessing the benefits of alliance formation, indicating the importance of conducting cost-benefit analyses.

The study found that both TCE and RBV variables have a positive impact on alliance performance. This suggests that companies compare the potential benefits of alliances as indicated by RBV with the associated transaction costs as indicated by TCE to determine whether collaboration is economically beneficial.

Although the study did not find a significant impact of TCE and RBV in determining the governance structure of an alliance, this implies that the decision to form alliances is driven by factors related to partner characteristics and capabilities, rather than governance structure. This means that companies prioritise finding partners that offer the greatest potential benefits in terms of resource complementarity and capacity enhancement, which is consistent with the results of cost-benefit analyses.

The considerations adopted by the author suggest that firms consider the costs and benefits of alliances when making decisions to enter into collaborations, in

line with TCE and RBV theories. Cost-benefit analyses arguably play a key role in assessing the economic viability and impact of forming alliances with potential partners (Hwan Jin Kim 2016).

Candace Young-Ybarra and Margarethe Wiersema's analysis of cost theory has also drawn attention to social exchange issues. In the text, they presented arguments suggesting that cost-benefit analyses influence decisions to enter into alliances. In particular, the use of a model derived from transaction cost economics and social exchange theory highlights how determinants from both perspectives affect strategic flexibility in alliances. Transaction cost economics emphasises economic constraints that are positively related to trust between partners. This suggests that partners can consider the costs and benefits of cooperation based on economic factors such as resources required and potential gains. Furthermore, social exchange theory factors such as trust, dependence and quality of communication have been shown to influence strategic flexibility, indicating that the perceived benefits of cooperation, including trust and shared values, play a key role in alliance decisions. Therefore, consideration of costs and benefits, reflected in both economic and social factors, influences decisions to enter into alliance cooperation. (Candace Young-Ybarr and Margarethe Wiersema 1999).

When conducting a cost-benefit analysis, firms need to consider factors such as the cost of monitoring and enforcing contracts, as well as the potential for opportunistic behaviour by alliance partners (Jiang, X. 2011). The resource-based view and the knowledge-based view also contribute to understanding the benefits that alliances can provide in terms of access to complementary resources and knowledge. The integration of these perspectives allows firms to assess the potential costs and benefits of forming alliances and helps them to make informed decisions about entering collaborations. Therefore, the literature indirectly suggests that cost-benefit analyses of alliances influence decisions to enter into collaboration by providing a comprehensive framework for understanding the rationale behind strategic alliances (Jiang, X. 2011).

Competitiveness and value creation

The strategic significance of interorganizational alliances in bolstering organizational performance across diverse functions is increasingly acknowledged. These cooperative engagements among firms aim to enhance competitive advantage by sharing resources while preserving their distinct identities (Dyer & Singh, 1998; Hoang & Rothaermel, 2005; Ireland, Hitt, & Vaidyanath, 2002). Such alliances, be they horizontal or vertical, play a pivotal role in resource exchange critical for in-

novations in processes, products, or services (Gulati, 1998; Pangarkar, Yuan, & Hussain, 2017). The value inherent in these collaborations is determined by the price consumers are willing to pay, which motivates companies to form strategic partnerships to augment value creation, as evidenced by a multitude of studies (Brandenburger & Nalebuff, 1996; Garcia-Castro & Aguilera, 2015; Das & Teng, 2000; Madhok & Tallman, 1998).

These partnerships aim to generate relational rents through the leveraging of complementary strengths and sustained cooperation, a concept central to the relational view (Dyer et al., 2008; 2018). Nevertheless, the path to innovation is fraught with uncertainties, necessitating expertise in navigating the challenges of product, technology, and service development (Bodas Freitas & Fontana, 2017; Evanschitzky et al., 2012). In the context of uncertain alliances, particularly in new product development (NPD), firms assess value capture and the dynamics between partners, managing the complexities arising from disparities in innovation capabilities and efficiencies in capturing value (Ritala & Hurmelinna-Laukkanen, 2009; Gavetti et al., 2012; Bouncken et al., 2019; Lavie, 2009).

Gulati (1998) underscored critical areas including the formation, governance, evolution, performance, and consequences of alliances, with a focus on the formation processes in SMEs. Yet, despite progress in understanding alliances at dyadic and temporal levels, there remains a gap of contemporary engagement and partnership selection (Capaldo, 2007; Schildt, Keil, & Maula, 2012; Haider & Mariotti, 2016). The management of contributions and processes can engender opportunistic behavior, underscoring the importance of distributive justice for the success of partnerships (Ariño & Ring, 2010; Luo, 2007). Equity in alliances is crucial for balancing value creation and capture, mitigating the risk of free-riding, and ensuring equitable value distribution (Fernandez et al., 2014; Lavie et al., 2007; 2012).

The literature on alliance portfolios is divided between studies focusing on individual alliances and those examining firm performance variability in creating and capturing value from such partnerships (Kale et al., 2002; Sarkar et al., 2008). Coopetition, or partnering with competitors, facilitates product innovation by merging resources, despite potential tensions in value creation and capture (Gnyawali & Park, 2011; Fernandez et al., 2014). Managing the collaborative and competitive aspects of coopetition is essential for the stability and success of alliances (Dyer et al., 2008; Ritala & Tidström, 2014).

The resource-based view posits that strategic alliances enable firms to find the optimal combinations of resources to maximize value, crucial for SMEs dealing with resource scarcity (Das & Teng, 2000; Franco & Haase, 2015). Some firms are

adept at creating and capturing value from alliances, addressing the dual challenges of optimizing value and capabilities in dynamic markets, which is particularly challenging for SMEs (Zacharias, Nijssen, & Stock, 2016). The literature explores the interplay between value orientation and capabilities in alliances to aid SMEs in effectively leveraging alliance opportunities, emphasizing the critical role of value creation and capture capabilities in market positioning, competitive advantage, and sustainable success (Hannah, 2016; Heimeriks and Duysters, 2007; Kale, Dyer, & Singh, 2002; Sarkar, Aulakh and Madhok, 2008; Sirmon, Hitt and Ireland, 2007).

Value creation is fundamental in strategic management, accentuating the role of interfirm alliances in leveraging strategically critical resources for value generation (Brandenburger & Stuart, 1996; Eisenhardt & Schoonhoven, 1996). This approach involves analyzing both the benefits and costs of such alliances (Zajac & Olsen, 1993; Madhok & Tallman, 1998), extending the resource-based view to include interconnected firms engaging in alliances (Dyer & Singh, 1998; Lavie, 2006). These firms can secure competitive advantages and generate value through specific conditions and types of rents (Lavie, 2006).

In their insightful study, O'Dwyer, M., & Gilmore, A. (2018) delve into the intricate relationship between value orientation and alliance capabilities within small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), illuminating the critical roles played by resource optimization and customer orientation in the formation of alliances. Building upon previous research that examined SME alliances and the opportunities these alliances present (Dickson, P. H., & Weaver, K. M. 2011; Mukherjee, D., Gaur, A. S., Gaur, S. S., & Schmid, F. 2013) the authors extend their inquiry to explore the varying intentions behind SMEs' approach to alliance formation, whether to create or capture value. This exploration is influenced by SMEs' unique blend of capabilities, resources, and customer relationships, underscoring the assertion that an SME's inclination towards either value creation or capture is significantly influenced by its alliance capabilities, resource endowments, and engagement with customers. Empirically, the research reveals that SMEs endowed with individual alliance capabilities predominantly focus on value creation, utilizing direct, one-on-one alliances as a strategic tool for growth and value expansion. Conversely, SMEs with dyadic or portfolio capabilities are more inclined towards value capture, capitalizing on the resources and market access afforded by alliances to bolster competitiveness and foster innovation in response to customer needs. This delineation between alliance capabilities and value orientation underscores a strategic alignment wherein the nature of an SME's alliance capabilities could signify its approach to value within strategic alliances.

Moreover, the study affirms the pivotal role of strategic alliances in enabling SMEs to transcend resource limitations and secure a competitive edge through access to complementary resources, thus facilitating economies of scope, scale, and synergies. It draws a connection between customer orientation, alliance opportunities, and the dichotomy of value creation and capture, to organizational success, emphasizing the importance of judicious partner selection, alliance structuring, and relationship management to amplify the advantages of such collaborations.

By elucidating the linkages between value orientation and alliance capabilities in the SME sector, O'Dwyer, M., & Gilmore, A. (2018) enrich the theoretical discourse on alliances, accentuating the necessity for a balanced fusion of resource optimization and customer orientation in alliance formation. The study ventures into the dynamics between value orientation and alliance competencies, aiming to equip SMEs with insights to maximize alliance potential. It uncovers the variance among SMEs regarding value orientation in alliance formation, pinpointing a correlation between alliance capabilities and value orientation that suggests a predisposition towards value creation in SMEs with individual allying competencies, as opposed to a focus on value extraction in those engaging in dyadic or portfolio contexts.

Bouncken et al. (2020) merge the dynamic relational view with the phenomenon of alliances for new product development (NPD), emphasizing the importance of complementarities and positive externalities among firms to achieve a balance in value creation and capture (VCCE). This research builds upon the foundational theories and empirical insights of Dyer et al. (1998, 2008, 2018), highlighting the relational dynamics that foster innovation and value generation in collaborative conditions. It extends this perspective to the realm of NPD alliances, where the synergy between partners' capabilities and their collective efforts towards innovation is crucial (Cui et al., 2018; Schleimer & Faems, 2016; Wagner & Goossen, 2018). The empirical study focuses on understanding how coopetition – a blend of cooperation and competition – influences VCCE in NPD alliances. Findings indicate that coopetition intensity facilitates a more balanced VCCE, particularly when the NPD alliance holds significant financial relevance from the perspective of the central firm. Contrary to initial assumptions, a partner's expert power does not directly impact VCCE but positively moderates the effect of coopetition, strengthening VCCE in highly competitive alliances (Gnyawali & Park, 2011; Czakon & Rogalski, 2014). However, if the central firm deems the NPD alliance too critical, the positive impact of coopetition on VCCE diminishes, suggesting a complex interaction between the strategic importance of the alliance and the dynamics of internal competitiveness. This highlights the delicate balance firms must strike between cooperation and competition, especially in alliances where innovation and value creation are key (Fredrich et al., 2019; Fernandez et al., 2014).

Stakeholder theory

Another theoretical approach to strategic alliances is stakeholder theory, which addresses the problem of individuals and people who can influence or are influenced by the organisation. In the traditional view of the company, the key assumption is that only owners or shareholders are important Stakeholder theory argues that there are other parties involved, including employees, customers, suppliers. The impact of stakeholders on the organisation raises the need to manage the relationship with them appropriately. One strategy for managing the relationship may be to establish collaboration through strategic alliances (He et al., 2020). In the case of so-called green alliances, issues identified as critical to the alliance formation process include the compatibility of ties between different alliance actors, resources and activities, and cultural mediation between different stakeholder factions (Crane, 1998). The findings of D'Aunno (2019) and team indicate that alliance participants are more likely to perceive their alliances as sustainable when they (a) share a common vision, goals, and strategies for the alliance and (b) perceive that the alliance has worked effectively in the past. By which I mean, leaders of multi-stakeholder alliances may need reassurance that alliance action is a collective effort that builds success step by step: to the extent that participants perceive that they share a common vision and strategies and have had some previous success in working together, the more likely they are to perceive the alliance as sustainable. As Shah (2011) points out, managing stakeholder relationships through alliance formation is one strategy for gaining the legitimacy needed for an organisation to operate. The cited author focuses on green alliances that are formed between companies and environmental NGOs. This form is increasingly popular, especially among multinational corporations that deal with uncertainty in developing countries in this way, where inappropriate relationships with local communities and stakeholders can lead to the loss of a licence to operate and reduce the organisation's chances of survival Green alliances are seen as part of stakeholder relationship management and part of a corporate social responsibility strategy. Through alliances, an organisation shares risks and gains access to a partner's skills or resources, including reputation. Strategic alliances also serve as strategic bridging mechanisms, fostering links with distant stakeholders. The credibility and legitimacy of alliances are therefore crucial to their success, as socially accepted alliances are more likely to survive. Acquiring social legitimacy through alliances with relevant stakeholders is identified as an essential resource for an alliance's ability to achieve its mission. Strategic bridging, a core function of an alliance, involves bringing together stakeholders with different characteristics and interests to solve common problems. With that said, the success of strategic bridging depends on the stakeholders' acceptance of the alliance as a trusted and legitimate entity.

Through which, the paper emphasises the need for careful alliance management during alliance expansion and resource allocation to build legitimacy valued by target stakeholders. Wong's (2014) article, on the other hand, raises the issue of power imbalances in multi-stakeholder initiatives, including strategic alliances while pointing out strategies for restoring this balance. These strategies include formalising monitoring tools, enhancing evaluation capacity, improving complaint-based systems, engaging mediators, using both incentives and sanctions, building strategic alliances between non-market stakeholders and better engagement in public campaigns. Above all, these strategies aim to increase the accountability of transnational corporations, reduce their influence within alliances, and increase the decision-making power of other stakeholders to ensure a more equitable representation of interests. Abuzeinab and Arif's (2014) article combines resource-based approaches and stakeholder theories as motivations for strategic alliances by pointing to stakeholder engagement competencies as competencies of the future especially in relation to green business models. Green business models have the potential to deliver significantly better performance compared to conventional business models in the sustainability era, and stakeholder engagement is considered one of the key elements to facilitate increased uptake of green business models. Research conducted by Abuzeinab and Arif (2014) indicates that stakeholder engagement is a contributing factor to an organisation's success and can assist in the implementation of green business models. A green business model is the implementation of changes in an organisation aimed at creating environmental improvements combined with economic benefits. It focuses on creating and capturing green value, with an emphasis on stakeholder engagement.

Among the benefits of stakeholder engagement identified by the authors are - positive sustainability impact, improved image and higher motivation, easier access to financial support and increased innovation. A strategic alliance with key stakeholders can be one method of engaging them. As pointed out by Aragon-Correa et al. (2008), the urgency of global environmental problems, such as climate change, has led to an increased awareness of the environmental impact of business activities and the emergence of so-called environmental strategies in organisations. For the effective construction of environmental strategies, the authors of the article identified three key capabilities - shared vision, stakeholder management (through alliances, among others) and strategic proactivity. These capabilities are believed to be essential for SMEs to develop proactive environmental strategies. A study conducted showed a positive relationship between proactive environmental strategies and SME performance. Eco-efficient practices are highlighted as beneficial for both environmental impact reduction and cost savings. Environmental issues in stakeholder management also appear in the work of Norheim-Hanse (2015), who

indicates that an organisation's environmental performance influences its attractiveness to different stakeholders in the process of forming a strategic alliance and at the same time points to environmental reputation and trust as factors in assessing the attractiveness of a partner when deciding strategic to enter an alliance.

Alliance management theories

For the purposes of the current research, it was decided to focus on identifying the following theories that help explain alliance management: Leadership and Strategy of Alliances; Process and life cycle of alliances; Alliances Manager; Collaborative culture.

Table 3: Synthetic list of factors in managing alliances between companies

Name of theory or approach described in the literature	Management of alliances	Key sources
Leadership and Strategy of Alliances	In the complex landscape of strategic alliances, leadership emerges not merely as a facilitator but as a cornerstone for sustainable success and innovation. Effective alliance management is underpinned by leaders who embody transformational qualities, inspiring their teams and partner organizations towards a shared vision and mutual goals. These leaders possess the unique ability to navigate the intricate dynamics of collaboration, leveraging their interpersonal and influencing skills to foster an environment of trust, reciprocity, and collective endeavour. The pivotal role of leadership in alliance formation and success extends beyond traditional managerial competencies to encompass digital savviness, global vision, and a profound understanding of cross-cultural dynamics. In today's digital and globalized business environment, leaders must harness technological advancements to enhance collaboration and innovation,	Toylan, N. V., & Semecioz, F. (2012); Rodríguez, C. M. (2005); Potter, A., & Paulraj, A. (2020); Schweitzer, J. (2014); Mihardjo, L. W. W., Sasmoko, Alamsjah, F., & Elidjen. (2019); Chandler, J. A., Petrenko, O. V., Hill, A. D., & Hayes, N. (2021), Kaulio, M. A., & Uppvall, L. (2009); Chen, Y.-S., & Chang, C.-H. (2013); Afsar, B., Maqsoom, A., Shahjehan, A., Afridi, S. A., Nawaz, A., & Fazliani, H. (2020); Pham, H., & Kim, S.-Y. (2019); Jang, Y. J., Zheng, T., & Bosselman, R. (2017); Boiral, O., Baron, C., & Gunnlaugson, O. (2014).

Name of theory or approach described in the literature	Management of alliances	Key sources
	ensuring their alliances remain competitive and relevant. Furthermore, the capacity to manage and mitigate the complexities arising from cultural differences and conflicting management styles is crucial. This requires a deep appreciation for diversity and an adaptive leadership style that can bridge gaps, align interests, and cultivate a culture of inclusivity and mutual respect among alliance partners. As strategic alliances continue to play a vital role in organizational growth and market expansion, the selection and development of alliance leaders become paramount. Organizations must prioritize the cultivation of leadership traits that align with the demands of alliance management, such as visionary thinking, strategic networking, empathy, and adaptability. By doing so, they can ensure that their alliances are not only strategically advantageous but also sustainable and resilient in the face of changing market dynamics and emerging challenges. The motives behind building and creating alliances are intricately tied to leadership. The success of these endeavours hinges on leaders who can effectively merge diverse organizational cultures, navigate the complexities of inter-firm collaborations, and drive their alliances towards innovation and market leadership. As we move forward, it is imperative for organizations to recognize and nurture the critical role of leadership in forging and sustaining strategic alliances, thereby unlocking new avenues for growth and competitive advantage.	

Name of theory or approach described in the literature	Management of alliances	Key sources
Process and life cycle of alliances	Resource Allocation and Prioritization Ensure alignment with the company's strategy	Wittmann (2008)
Alliances Manager	Cost Synergies Competitive Pressures Opportunities for Growth Market Saturation Risk Mitigation Economies of Scale Knowledge Sharing Value Addition Research Opportunities Survival Over Competitive Advantage Reciprocity and Mutual Benefit Operational Purpose Market-Related Reasons	Antelo i Peón (2021) De Aro (2016) Ghisi, Silveira, Kristensen, Hingley, Lindgreen (2008)
Collaborative culture	Organisational culture refers to the shared values and beliefs that help individuals understand how an organisation function. Values and beliefs become the basis for formulating norms and creating an organisation's way of life. The norms that organisations develop from their experiences help them cope with the challenges presented by the environment in which organisations operate. The presence of a collaborative culture in an organisation is treated as a key prerequisite for success in strategic alliance formation activities. A key managerial competency is therefore Understanding how context, partner, and alliance cultures interact and co-evolve is crucial for managers to foster effective collaboration, build trust, and ensure the success of strategic alliences.	Acquah 2023; Acquah et al. 2021b; Acquah, 2020; Acquah, Naude, & Sendra-García, 2021b; Adobor 2006; Ahmadi, Salamzad, Daraei, Akbari 2012; Cao, Zhang, 2013; Khairuddin et al., 2021; Kumar 2015; Kumar et al, 2016; Kumar et al, 2021; Lei et al, 2017; Lei et al, 2017; Mintzberg 1971; Mintzberg 1989; Nikol'chenko and Lebedeva, 2017; Sihite et al, 2022; Van Dijk, 2016; Wohlgezogen 2017; Zhang, Cao, 2018

Name of theory or approach described in the literature	Management of alliances	Key sources
	The existence of convergent expectations supports the development of trust and cooperation and reduces the transaction costs associated with such relationships. It can therefore be concluded that organisations in which the organisational culture creates similar values are more likely to have an effective alliance. Key competences and skills for successful alliances include partner selection and relationship management. The ability to design the principles of cooperation and management in a network of organisations forming a strategic alliance is a measure of the effectiveness of managers. It influences not only the performance of individual organisations, but above all determines the success or failure of the established strategic alliance. Effective managers create competencies that enable them to sustain the desired behaviours in the organisation reinforcing each of the dimensions of collaborative culture.	

Source: Own research

Leadership

Leadership is fundamentally conceived as a process in which an individual inspires and mobilises others to achieve common goals, integrating strategic planning and promoting a collective vision (Northouse, 2007; Yukl, 2010). According to Yukl (2006), leadership is the art of persuasion, influencing the vision and path of an enterprise that results from interactions both inside and outside the organisation. This process requires a leader's ability to formulate a clear vision, set goals and instil values and principles that guide collective action. Leadership is not limited to management, but is about shaping an environment of support, dedication and collective efforts that lead to the achievement of desired goals (Nicolescu,

2007; Nastase, 2007). Taylor et al. (2011) sees this as a dynamic that shapes the future of the firm through leader-subordinate interactions. The leader is required to be able to emotionally engage with team members, which contributes to the transformation of the group from dependence to interdependence and supports professional development within the organisation (Staub, 1996; Kouzes and Posner, 1995). Northouse (2007) suggested that flexible leaders adapt their approach based on team members' requirements and project needs. In later work, Northouse (2010) highlighted the role of leadership in encouraging individuals to set aside personal gain for the success of the group.

Leadership styles vary, each with specific implications for organisational and environmental sustainability. Transformational leaders inspire change through a compelling vision and innovative approaches to problem solving, strengthening stakeholder engagement by empowering stakeholders and aligning change with their long-term needs, in contrast to transactional leaders who emphasise the achievement of goals through assistance, rewards and corrective interventions for mistakes, as noted by Bass and Avolio (2000). Charismatic or visionary leaders, like transformational leaders, create shared values through their vision, integrity, and determination, motivating innovation and overcoming challenges, earning respect, and harnessing their charisma, as noted by Waldman, Siegel and Javidan (2006).

Effective leadership is characterised by outstanding communication skills, a deep understanding of the economic and social context, a genuine commitment to the well-being of team members, strategic foresight, and openness to change that leads to future success. Leaders play a key role in developing an organisational culture that promotes continuous adaptation, the active involvement of employees in change processes and the effective allocation of resources to support new initiatives, thereby overcoming resistance and ensuring that employees support organisational progress (Cannella and Monroe, 1997).

Participative or shared leadership approaches treat organisational visions, such as shared value creation, as collective endeavours, encouraging stakeholder participation in decision-making through dynamic consultation and interaction (Ogbonna and Harris, 2000). According to Bowen (2015), Sims (1991) and Wu et al. (2015), ethical and responsible leaders place importance on authenticity and moral values in their leadership, influencing organisational culture and ethical practices, leading by example in decision-making and communication. These leaders play a key role in promoting environmental sustainability and pro-environmental behaviour among employees by focusing on social and environmental goals and creating a shared ecological vision and organisational commitment, which reinforces pro-environmental behaviour among employees.

Responsible leadership is identified as a key factor in shaping an organisational culture that supports environmental sustainability by addressing the psychological needs of employees and thereby encouraging pro-environmental behaviour consistent with organisational goals, based on social identity theory (Hogg and Terry, 2000; Afsar et al. (2020). For such leaders, environmental sustainability and fostering pro-environmental behaviour is a priority, as indicated by the work of Miski, Hilbe and Mayer (2014) and Székely and Knirsch (2005). Research by Afsar et al. (2020) confirms that responsible leadership effectively contributes to employees' green initiatives and behaviours by promoting sustainability and environmental awareness. Leaders who prioritise sustainable values not only motivate employees to pro-environmental actions, but also create a supportive work climate, which reinforces commitment to sustainable practices. The effectiveness of leadership in promoting pro-environmental behaviour is also influenced by the interaction of social contexts and individual differences, as suggested by Kim et al. (2017) and Steg and Vlek (2009).

Strategic leadership theory emphasises the key role of transformational leadership in guiding an organisation's success in environmental and social responsibility. Chang and Chen (2012) highlight how organisations thrive in this area when transformational leadership prevails. Y.S. Chen et al (2014) introduce the concept of green transformational leadership, which focuses on motivating employees to achieve environmental goals. According to Jia et al. this form of leadership fosters adherence to strict environmental standards and encourages innovation in green product development, inspiring employees with a vision of caring for the environment. (2018). In their work, Chen, and Chang (2013) prove that there is a positive correlation between green transformational leadership, dynamic capability and creativity, and green product performance. They recommend that companies develop these areas to improve performance and respond to environmental needs. Transformational leadership that promotes creativity and motivates people to exceed environmental standards is essential for better performance. However, Singh et al (2020) point to barriers to implementing green practices, such as high costs and a general reluctance to share knowledge about green initiatives. Transformational leadership is valued for its positive impact on environmental sustainability and innovation, as Çop et al. (2020) found.

Literature research indicates that transformational leadership - defined by Bass in 1985 as a combination of intellectual stimulation, personalisation, charisma, and motivational power - plays a key role in promoting creativity within organisations. Leaders who possess these qualities, as identified in the work of Halbesleben and co-authors (2003) and Andriopoulos (2001), stimulate innovation and creative processes while fostering a culture of openness to new ideas. Such

a management method not only increases the level of innovation, but also improves productivity and fosters creative thinking, as confirmed by studies by Jung and colleagues (2003) and Sarros and others (2008). Furthermore, the literature accentuates that transformational leadership, through intellectual and motivational stimulation, drives R&D teams to be more creative and to create an environment conducive to innovation, as documented by Shin and Zhou (2003, 2007) and Keller (2006). This is corroborated by several empirical studies that explicitly link such leadership to increased creativity and innovation in groups, as demonstrated by the work of Gumusluoglu and Ilseva (2009) and Wang and Rode (2010). Additionally, the notion of ‹green transformational leadership› (Chen, Y. S., & Chang, C.-H. 2013) distinguishes leaders committed to environmental protection and the promotion of sustainability, building on the work of Bass (1998) and Gardner together with Avolio (1998).

Mittal and Dhar (2016) and Mi et al. (2019) examine transformational leadership in detail along four key dimensions - intellectual stimulation, individualised approach, charisma, and inspirational motivation - that significantly influence employees› environmental management behaviour. Intellectual stimulation encourages creativity and problem solving, personalised approach provides tailored support to foster group creativity, charisma provides a clear and energising vision and inspirational motivation increases enthusiasm for environmental initiatives. Together, these aspects enhance organisational creativity and environmental management, highlighting the transformative potential of leadership in achieving sustainable environmental management.

Furthermore, the role of leadership is critically highlighted in the context of strategic alliances, where it influences the success of collaborative efforts by setting performance standards, promoting a collaborative vision, and alleviating concerns about risk and resource sharing (Bollinger and Smith, 2001). Transformational leadership is viewed positively for its effectiveness in managing alliances because it inspires followers, fosters a shared vision, and empowers team members, thereby enhancing collaboration, resolving conflicts, and aligning interests with collective rather than individual goals (Hallin and Mamburg, 2008).

In the realm of strategic alliances, leadership behaviour significantly influences information sharing, trust building, cultural integration, and organisational commitment, thus affecting alliance outcomes (Chen and Barnes, 2006; Whipple and Frankel, 2000). Leadership facilitates an environment conducive to knowledge transfer, meeting employee expectations, and building trust and partnerships, which are essential for the success of cross-border knowledge sharing initiatives and strategic alliances (Willem and Buelens, 2007; Hall et al. 2004).

As Toylan, N. V. and Semecioz, F. (2012) point out, leadership styles are fundamental to the effective formation and management of strategic alliances, with transformational leadership at the forefront as a key predictor of success in forming such alliances. This leadership model, coupled with value-creation strategies, is key to building strong and effective partnerships that are critical to organisational success and industry progress. The ability of leaders to manage alliance processes, particularly in the context of sharing information, building trust, adapting to cultural differences, and strengthening commitment to the organisation, is essential. By fostering a culture of knowledge sharing, mutual trust and collaboration, alliance leaders ignite greater engagement among members. Transformational leadership, crucial for creating a shared vision and inspiring action, motivates higher performance, strengthens trust, and promotes collective goals. Such leadership fosters knowledge sharing, which is extremely important in international collaborations, highlighting its role as a key success factor in strategic alliances.

As indicated by Jang, Y. J., Zheng, T. and Bosselman, R. (2017), core management and leadership values play a key role in driving environmental commitment and achieving sustainability goals requires strategic people management. Their research suggests that emphasising the importance of environmental values among managers and promoting environmentally focused leadership can have a positive impact on all-party engagement and sustainability in organisations. Managers with a deep belief in the importance of environmentalism are inclined to align company strategies with environmental requirements and develop stakeholder collaboration to support corporate sustainability.

According to Rodríguez, C. M. (2005), the success of international alliances depends on the implementation of self-organised management and organisational characteristics, with a key role for senior managers in inspiring changes in thinking, attitudes, and behaviour among employees. The characteristics and management style of managers have a direct impact on business performance. Strategic leadership theory shows that the behaviours and approaches of outstanding managers, shaped by the personality, national culture, and characteristics of the management team, reflect the effectiveness of the organisation. Cultural values define leaders› goals, strategies, management methods, decision-making, problem-solving and interpersonal skills. Despite cultural differences, managers can achieve consistency in preferred leadership styles, indicating a move towards a common management style in alliances. Leadership values have a significant impact on organisational performance and success, determining the choice of goals, strategies, and policies. Cultural differences between managers from different countries affect planning, control, work organisation, remuneration systems and ethical orientation. These differences in goals, management styles and strategy

implementation stem from different assumptions about the nature of organisation, work, and remuneration. Cultural differences in leadership requirements lead to diversity in management and leadership models. Traits such as motivation, leadership readiness, integrity, self-confidence, cognitive competence, business knowledge, dominance and moral conviction distinguish leaders. The personality of outstanding managers influences leadership strategy and style, and traits such as risk appetite, perception of control, cognitive complexity and resilience to stress shape their approach to management. Understanding the impact of cultural experience on leaders is crucial for effective leadership in strategic alliances. Alliance managers play an important role in creating the bonds that underpin trust and commitment, thereby strengthening relational resources.

Research by Potter, A. and Paulraj, A. (2020) highlights the importance of inter-firm leadership relationships maintained by leaders with various stakeholders as a key element in the new product development process. These relationships, both internally and externally, have the potential to increase leaders› social capital by enabling them to effectively collect and distribute early, unique and differentiated knowledge. In addition, these relationships strengthen credibility, solidarity, and reciprocity in the supply network. Therefore, leaders should take strategic action in managing their portfolio of strategic alliances, focusing on collaborating across the supply network and sustaining strong personal relationships, which allows them to foster innovation without over-reliance on formal alliances. Alliance managers with networking skills should actively develop and nurture inter-firm leadership relationships both within their organisation and with external partners. Effectively building relationships with key customers and suppliers and developing strategic alliances is key to promoting collaboration and innovation across the supply network.

Schweitzer›s (2014) research shows that effective leadership in alliances is fundamental to developing collective capacity and achieving goals. Leadership is not only about vision and resource allocation, but also about motivation and skills development. Leadership has a significant impact on collaboration and the joint pursuit of goals. Full-spectrum leadership theory emphasises the importance of transformational and transactional behaviour for innovation and performance. Transformational leadership is particularly important for developing an organisation›s adaptive capacity. Selecting alliance leaders who demonstrate a wide range of leadership skills is key to promoting entrepreneurship, learning and knowledge sharing. Flexibility to adapt leaders› skills to the specifics of the relationship, the strategic context and the characteristics of the team is important. Leaders should foster learning and innovation by eliminating obstacles.

A study by Mihardjo et al. (2019) highlighted the importance of digital leadership that combines technology with the development of digital and social competencies. Visionary, creative, extended networks, collaboration and deep knowledge are key for digital leaders, which fosters alliance management and adaptability. In the digital age, effective leadership, leveraging skills and technology, is key to adaptation and innovation. Alliance leaders with leadership and influence are essential to inspire collaboration and success.

In today›s global economy, leadership within strategic alliances is challenged by a dynamic, complex, and highly competitive business landscape. This environment requires not only a focus on achieving financial goals, but also a strong commitment to corporate social responsibility and incorporating ESG elements into management strategies. The concept of leadership in strategic alliances has evolved to include CSR principles, emphasising the importance of creating sustainable relationships with diverse stakeholder groups, including alliance partners, customers, investors, and the environment. This form of leadership supports ethical decision-making, trust-building, sustainability, and environmentally friendly initiatives.

This leadership approach positively influences various aspects such as alliance effectiveness, stakeholder satisfaction and cooperative supportive behaviour. Additionally, it plays a central role in motivating alliance members to take environmental action by fostering a shared commitment to ecological stewardship. Despite its central importance, the exact impact of this leadership style on sustainability within strategic alliances remains under-researched.

The development of leadership in strategic alliances aims to both fill theoretical gaps and practical challenges in alliance management, emphasising the importance of maintaining relationships with stakeholders and fulfilling social responsibilities. This leadership model is characterised by ethical, relational and socially conscious interactions between companies and their stakeholders, striving to balance economic and normative goals, achieving profit while meeting social expectations and contributing to the well-being of society. Leadership in strategic alliances thus goes beyond the mere coordination of business strategies; it involves a comprehensive responsibility towards society and the environment, calling on organisations to take a more holistic and conscientious approach to their partnerships and societal contributions. In essence, leadership - especially transformational leadership - plays a key role in building trust, facilitating knowledge sharing and nurturing engagement within strategic alliances, contributing significantly to their success.

Process and life cycle of alliances

When it comes to the role of lifecycle phases of strategic alliance it turns out that alliance lifecycle phases do indeed affect the success of cooperation (Witmann, 2007). Firstly, strategic alignment throughout the alliance's lifecycle is crucial, ensuring that alliances remain in line with the company's overarching strategy. Effective resource allocation and prioritisation during the planning stage enhance cooperation success by providing necessary resources throughout the alliance's lifecycle. Additionally, proper partner identification and management throughout the alliance's lifespan mitigate blind spots and contribute to cooperation success. Lastly, managing the alliance termination phase is critical, as it can influence cooperation outcomes; clear exit strategies and performance metrics are essential for successful cooperation Witmann, 2007).

From another point of view according to Chao (2011) alliance lifecycle phases indeed affect the success of cooperation, as they demonstrate how decision-making processes, influenced by behavioural uncertainties and biases, play a crucial role in alliance outcomes. In compliance with Chao (2011) it is also possible to define the competencies of Alliance Manager. Alliance Managers require competencies in understanding, identifying, and managing decision-making biases, utilising dyadic frameworks for process research, implementing governance designs, and effectively addressing the antecedents and consequences of decision-making biases to ensure the success of alliances (Chao, 2011).

Arguments shown by Murray, D'Aunno and Lewis (2018) suggest that alliance lifecycle phases indeed affect the success of cooperation, as they highlight the importance of partnership formation, growth, internal capacity development, tension management, and the role of management partners in shaping alliance outcomes. When it comes to the alliance Manager competencies it turns out that Alliance Managers require competencies in understanding partnership formation dynamics, managing critical issues, addressing tensions, building trust, identifying suitable management partners, and navigating alliance development processes to ensure the success of healthcare alliances (Murray et. al, 2018).

Furthermore, Shi and Jiang (2023) provide arguments suggesting that understanding alliance lifecycle phases and their influence on post-formation dynamics is crucial for predicting and enhancing the success of cooperation. According to Shi and Jiang (2023) alliance managers need competencies related to understanding, managing, and influencing post-formation dynamics, as well as strategic thinking and decision-making skills to succeed in their roles.

The Guo, Cooper, and Wang (2019) research provides proof that alliance lifecycle phases influence the success of cooperation by shaping the depth and efficiency of collaboration mechanisms, such as strategic collaboration, process collaboration, and patent collaboration. Additionally, it implies that government support and policies also play a role in influencing the success of cooperation within technology standard alliances. In case of Alliance Manager competencies, based on the Guo, Cooper and Wang (2019) alliance managers require competencies in strategic collaboration, process collaboration, patent collaboration, resource integration and sharing, strategic goal achievement, government relationship management, and scientific management to effectively lead and manage technology standard alliance collaborative innovation in the emerging industry.

Alliance's manager

According to Lee (2007) managers may start thinking about building alliances when considering factors such as market penetration speed, partners' technical capacities, organisational structures, knowledge systems, technological and market-related capabilities, specialisation, access to complementary know-how, learning networks, competitive disadvantage, and technology transfer opportunities. These factors collectively influence their decision-making regarding alliance formation to enhance new venture success and competitiveness in the biotech industry (Lee, 2007).

Based on Lee (2007) research it is possible to define the alliance manager competencies as well. Alliance manager competencies include understanding market dynamics, assessing technical capacities of potential partners, strategic decision making, recognizing opportunities for vertical integration, understanding different types of alliances, facilitating communication and coordination, and assessing the absorptive capacity of alliance partners (Lee, 2007). These competencies are essential for effectively navigating alliance formation and management to drive new venture success and enhance firm competitiveness in the biotechnology industry (Lee, 2007).

Pursuant to Antelo and Peon (2020) managers may consider building alliances for various reasons, including the potential for cost synergies, competitive pressures, opportunities for growth, market saturation concerns, and risk mitigation. The decision to enter an alliance is influenced by factors such as the organisational structure of the firm, economies of scale, prevailing market conditions, competitive dynamics, and the policy environment. Professional management, economies of scale, market atomization or saturation, competitive dynamics, and

policy factors all play a role in shaping managers' decisions regarding alliance formation. Overall, alliances are viewed as strategic tools to enhance competitiveness, achieve growth, mitigate risks, and capitalise on market opportunities. The Antelo and Peon (2020) article discusses how the behaviour of firms regarding alliance formation can be significantly influenced by their organisational structure, whether they are run by their owners (entrepreneurial firms) or by professional managers (managerial firms). Alliance managers need to understand how different organisational structures impact alliance dynamics and decision-making processes. Based on Antelo and Peon (2020), it can be indicated that alliances among managerial firms consistently yield profits, highlighting the need for alliance managers with strong strategic decision-making skills. Negotiation skills are essential for navigating collaborations effectively, especially with competitors. Strong networking abilities are crucial for identifying and engaging potential partners. Collaboration is vital for small firms, requiring alliance managers to exhibit collaborative leadership. Understanding industrial policies is essential for leveraging subsidies and regulations to promote cooperation.

In conformity with De Aro (2016) managers may contemplate forming alliances when considering factors such as knowledge sharing, value addition, and project/program analysis. They recognize the importance of strengthening know-how sharing and specialised knowledge exchange between organisations through alliances. Managers also acknowledge the challenges in creating new competencies and improving internal climates within organisations, seeing alliances as facilitators for learning exchange and knowledge transfer, fostering trust. Additionally, they emphasise the need for governance mechanisms in alliances to enable joint monitoring and evaluation of indicators, thereby strengthening partnerships and enhancing alliance performance.

Moreove,r De Aro, (2016) provides insights into the competencies required for alliance managers. Alliance managers are tasked with facilitating knowledge sharing among participating organisations, ensuring the dissemination of know-how and specialised knowledge. They must also possess the ability to create new competencies and cultivate a culture of learning and knowledge transfer within each organisation involved in the alliance, thereby enhancing value addition (De Aro, 2016). Additionally, alliance managers are responsible for overseeing the monitoring and evaluation of projects and programs within the alliance, necessitating effective governance mechanisms to improve alliance performance. In summary, alliance managers require competencies in knowledge sharing, value addition, and effective governance to elevate the performance and competitiveness of organisations engaged in alliances (De Aro, 2016).

Analysing the Shah and Swaminathan (2008) research it can be confirmed that managers contemplate building alliances when strategic objectives could be better achieved through collaboration, leveraging complementary resources or expertise. Resource gaps within an organisation may prompt managers to seek partnerships to fill technological, financial, or market access needs. Alliance formation can serve as a means of risk mitigation, allowing for the sharing of risks associated with strategic initiatives. Market dynamics, including emerging competitors or regulatory changes, may prompt managers to consider alliances to adapt more effectively. Intense competition may drive managers to seek alliances to strengthen their competitive position through synergies (Shah and Swaminathan, 2008).

Furthermore, from a manager's perspective, trust between potential partners is crucial, as they prioritise forming alliances with reliable and committed partners. Assessing complementarity in terms of resources and capabilities is essential, as partners with complementary strengths enhance the overall value proposition (Shah and Swaminathan, 2008). Financial payoff, while significant, is weighed against factors like trust and commitment, with non-financial benefits sometimes outweighing financial considerations. Process manageability and outcome interpretability, influenced by management-control theory, impact partner selection by considering ease of alliance management and clarity of expected outcomes. Depending on the project type, these dimensions may alter the relative importance of partner characteristics such as trust, commitment, and financial payoff (Shah and Swaminathan, 2008).

The Shah and Swaminathan (2008) research sheds light on the competencies required of alliance managers. It emphasises the importance of understanding how alliance project types influence the relative impact of partner characteristics such as trust, commitment, complementarity, and financial payoff on partner selection. The findings suggest that alliance managers need to possess skills in evaluating partner characteristics based on process manageability and outcome interpretability dimensions. They should be adept at assessing the ease of managing alliances and the clarity of expected outcomes to make informed partner selection decisions. Additionally, the research highlights the significance of a unified conceptual framework that incorporates multiple factors influencing partner selection in strategic alliances. This underscores the need for alliance managers to have a comprehensive understanding of trust, commitment, complementarity, and financial payoff, and their relative importance in different alliance project types. Overall, the study contributes to enhancing the competencies of alliance managers by providing guidelines for navigating the complex landscape of partnering based on project context and partner characteristics (Shah and Swaminathan, 2008).

According to Das and Kumar (2011) managers start thinking about building an alliance and consider the negotiating strategies. The article highlights the relevance of negotiating strategies in partner management within alliances. It suggests that firms possessing certain characteristics are likely to consider building alliances based on specific types of negotiation strategies. This implies that managers may start thinking about building alliances when they perceive the need to engage in strategic negotiations to achieve their objectives effectively. Das and Kumar (2011) research demonstrate the implications of different negotiation strategies at various stages of alliance evolution. For instance, firms pursuing a problem-solving strategy at the formation stage may find it more successful in forging partnerships, thus prompting managers to consider alliance formation as a strategic option. Das and Kumar (2011) suggest that negotiation strategies and their implications for trust building are significant factors that managers consider when contemplating alliance formation. From Das and Kumar (2011) research it can be stated that alliance managers require competencies in understanding negotiation strategies, adaptability across alliance stages, facilitating trust building, navigating complexities, and possessing emotional intelligence to effectively manage partnerships and alliances.

In compliance with Dadashian, Shakibfar and Fazel Zarandi (2013) factors that prompt managers to consider building alliances include the need to improve core competences and capabilities, achieve strategic competitiveness, and earn above-average returns. This realisation typically arises when a firm lags its competitors and seeks to enhance its position by leveraging complementary assets through alliances. Additionally, uncertainty reduction strategies may lead managers to pursue alliances to increase flexibility and survival in the face of uncertain market conditions.

The decision to enter an alliance from a manager's point of view is influenced by various factors, including the potential for achieving competitive advantage and above-average returns (Dadashian, Shakibfar and Fazel Zarandi, 2013). Complementary alliances, which leverage synergies and create new capabilities, are more likely to result in strategic competitiveness and enhanced performance. In contrast, alliances aimed at reducing competition or buffering uncertainty may yield only average returns (Dadashian, Shakibfar and Fazel Zarandi, 2013). Managers must assess the alignment of potential alliances with their firm's objectives and customise their strategies, accordingly, focusing on improving core competences and addressing uncertainties in the market landscape (Dadashian, Shakibfar and Fazel Zarandi, 2013).

Additionally, Dadashian, Shakibfar and Fazel Zarandi (2013) suggest that alliance manager competencies include the ability to identify and leverage complementary capabilities between firms. Managers need to recognize the potential for creating competitive advantage through alliances, particularly by forming complementary alliances that enhance performance and lead to above-average returns. Additionally, managers should be adept at assessing the strategic motivations behind alliances and customising objectives, accordingly, focusing on improving core competences and capabilities rather than solely pursuing financial gains. They should also possess skills in negotiating and managing uncertainty, as alliances aimed at reducing uncertainty can increase a firm's flexibility and survival in the market (Dadashian, Shakibfar and Fazel Zarandi, 2013).

Wittmann (2007) added that the factors determining the decision to enter an alliance from a manager's point of view include strategic alignment, resource allocation, partner selection, and termination planning. Managers start considering alliances primarily to ensure alignment with their company's strategy, avoiding situations where alliances dictate strategy. They also weigh alliances as a strategic resource allocation option, prioritising those that contribute most to their strategic goals (Wittmann, 2007). Furthermore, managers contemplate alliances when they identify partners aligning with their objectives and seek to utilise resources efficiently. Lastly, they approach alliances with a holistic view, including clear exit strategies, understanding that termination can be a strategic choice rather than failure (Wittmann, 2007).

Moreover Witmann's (2007) research identifies several competencies essential for alliance managers. Firstly, they must demonstrate strategic alignment, ensuring alliances support the company's overarching objectives rather than driving strategy. Competent alliance managers excel in resource allocation and prioritisation, effectively distributing resources based on strategic importance. They possess the skill to identify and select partners aligned with strategic goals, mitigating potential blind spots in resource allocation. Additionally, they ensure resources allocated to alliances serve a clear purpose and are utilised efficiently. Lastly, alliance managers excel in managing alliance termination, recognizing it as a strategic decision and developing clear exit strategies guided by performance metrics (Witmann's, 2007).

Overall, alliance managers require competencies in strategic alignment, resource management, partner selection, resource utilisation, and alliance lifecycle management (Witmann, 2007).

Collaborative culture

Interaction between organisations is seen as a useful direction for their development. From a long-term perspective, the most effective form of cooperation is the strategic alliance. It is a way for those organisations that recognise the need to pool their resources to create new lines of expansion. The complex nature of the strategic alliance formation process requires it to be analysed from a variety of research perspectives. An important aspect of gathering knowledge about this phenomenon and identifying the managerial competences necessary to create this type of cooperation is to assess the nature of the organisational culture of the organisations entering a strategic alliance.

The issue of organisational culture is often addressed in management research. The term 'organisational culture' was first used by E. Jacques. E. Schein defined the term in the field of management science (Furmanczyk, 2011). E. Jacques (1951) in the early 1950s stated that culture is (…) a customary or traditional way of thinking and doing things, shared by all its members and which new members must learn and at least partly accept to be accepted in the company. E. Schein (1985) defined organisational culture as (…) the totality of the fundamental assumptions that a given group has invented, discovered, or created while learning to solve problems of adaptation to the environment and internal integration.

A.L. Wilkins (1983) sees the essence of organisational culture as the shared assumptions that people have about how employees in an organisation are related to each other and how their work should be performed and evaluated. The works of H. Schenplein, G. Hofstede and P.M. Blau L. Smircich, R. Deshapande, R. Parasurman and J.M. Kobi, H. Wüthrich were also significant in the development of research on organisational culture. Organisational culture as knowledge shared by members of an organisation, expressed in artefacts, norms and underlying assumptions is characterised by J. van Maanen. Organisational culture influences the behaviour of people in an organisation. On the one hand, it can encourage them to be fully committed to the organisation's goals, but on the other hand, it can demotivate them (Sokro 2012).

Leading culture researcher G. Hofstede (2000) argued that organisational culture, apart from being a set of values, norms and organisational rules shared by the members of an organisation, is in fact a specific programming of the minds of the members of the organisation. L. Zbiegień-Maciąg (1999) emphasises that this pre-programmed way of thinking and acting must also be learnt and accepted by new members of the organisation if they themselves want to be accepted as employees.

Modern definitions of organisational culture emphasise its relationship with the functioning of the organisation, its effectiveness and efficiency. It is pointed out as a factor

that can stimulate not only pro-efficient employee behaviour, but also serves to re-alise the company's mission, vision and strategic goals. The latter aspect, among others, has been highlighted in research conducted by S.A.A. Ahmadi, Y. Salamzad, M. Daraei, J. Akbari (2012). The results of their study support the assumption that there is a relationship between the nature of organisational culture and the design and implementation of activities aimed at creating strategic alliances.

Organisational culture refers to the shared values and beliefs that help individuals understand how an organisation function. Values and beliefs become the basis for formulating norms and creating an organisation's way of life (Kumar et al., 2016). The norms that organisations develop from their experiences help them cope with the challenges presented by the environment in which organisations operate (Nikol'chenko and Lebedeva, 2017; Acquah, 2020; Sihite et al., 2022). They also influence the competencies of managers. Organisational culture is a dynamic element that can change in response to external and internal factors affecting the organisation.

Of the many types of organisational culture described in the literature, only the culture of collaboration is referred to in this discussion. The literature repeatedly emphasises its importance for the formation of strategic alliances. The presence of a collaborative culture in an organisation is treated as a key prerequisite for success in strategic alliance formation activities (Wood, Gray, 1991; Ring, de Ven 199; Acquah 2023; Kumar et al, 2021; Cao & Zhang, 2013; Zhang & Cao, 2018; Kumar et al., 2016; Acquah, 2020; Acquah, Naude, & Sendra-García, 2021a, Acquah, Naude, & Sendra-García, 2021b). Indeed, she is a key organisational context to help understand the reasons why organisations choose to share resources, risks, information, and joint decision-making (Nauman, S., Bhatti, S. H., Imam, H., & Khan, M. S. (2022).

F. Wohlgezogen (2017), because of his research on the importance of the organisational culture of organisations forming a strategic alliance, noted that the selection of partners is important. In a strategic alliance, value can only be created if the partner entities fit together. Cultural fit is one of the most used dimensions of fit. F. Wohlgezogen (2017) noted that a high degree of cultural differences or cultural distance causes tensions between partners and low alliance performance. A key managerial competency is therefore Understanding how context, partner, and alliance cultures interact and co-evolve is crucial for managers to foster effective collaboration, build trust, and ensure the success of strategic alliances.

H. Adobor (2006) points out that converging expectations and behavioural patterns, similar management practices, shared beliefs, and ways of thinking-typical of collaborative culture-are partly responsible for the occurrence of alliances. Their presence in organisational culture provides four key benefits: they reduce the transaction

costs associated with partnerships, foster collaboration, trust and ensure bond for-mation. Then, referring to the findings in the work of J.C. Spender (1989), the refer-enced researcher adds that convergence of expectations arises when organisations develop similar attitudes and expectations, including similar norms. The existence of convergent expectations supports the development of trust and cooperation and reduces the transaction costs associated with such relationships. It can therefore be concluded that organisations in which the organisational culture creates similar values are more likely to have an effective alliance. Key competencies and skills for successful alliances include partner selection and relationship management.

Currently, the role and importance of cooperation is increasing, as it is becoming in-creasingly difficult for individual organisations to succeed in a complex, dynamic, and turbulent environment (Krupski 2010). The ability to design the principles of coopera-tion and management in a network of organisations forming a strategic alliance is a measure of the effectiveness of managers. It influences not only the performance of individual organisations, but above all determines the success or failure of the estab-lished strategic alliance. Of particular importance for the future of the cooperation is the manager's initial assessment of the nature of the organisational culture preva-lent in the organisations that express a willingness to join the strategic alliance. The cultural fit that results in the formulation of rules for cooperation between partners requires the manager to make a thorough diagnosis of the antecedents of inter-or-ganisational links. Knowledge of the antecedents of inter-organisational links, includ-ing the content of the relationship, the management practices used and the value system characteristic of the organisations entering the strategic alliance contributes to the correct design of the cooperation architecture (Frączkiewicz-Wronka 2014). In the indicated scope, an indispensable skill of the manager becomes a competence that can be identified as a consensus builder. In this role, the manager is responsible for listening to the diverse interests of the organisations entering the strategic alli-ance and ensuring that all interests find expression in the relevant decision-making process (Mintzberg 1989; Mintzberg 1971; Kumar 2015).

If we consider the statement that the architecture of cooperation is a synthesis of form in response to function, then when extending this concept to complex systems and organisations, it can be defined in relation to strategic alliances (i.e., the archi-tecture of cooperation) as the basic structure of the system, including its elements, their interrelationships and the rules governing cooperation and its development (Maier, Emery, Hilliard 2001). The description presented above includes the assump-tion, understandable even to a layman, that the structure must be consistent with the purpose for which it is created ("form serves function") because an organisation, regardless of its organisational form, is a goal-oriented system (Aldrich, Ruef 2006). C.J. Barnard (1938) argued that an effective organisation is one that is designed in a

coherent way, so partners in a strategic alliance should share the same values. The last statement implies that we expect the managers involved to be competent in ensuring that all potential strategic alliance partners respect ethical conduct (bearer of ethical standards) (Mintzberg 1989; Mintzberg 1971; Kumar 2015). A.D. Chandler emphasises that if an organisation changes its development strategy, it must also change its organisational structure to achieve the goals of the new strategy (Chandler 1962). Often, however, the values that are the glue of the organisation remain unchanged. R.E. Miles and C.G. Snow (1984) emphasise that it is the values that facilitate the transition through the adaptation cycle and the business, technical and administrative challenges that arise with the need to change the organisational structure because of the strategic alliance process. During the adaptation process, successful organisations maintain internal alignment (strategy and structure), external alignment (strategy and environment), and dynamic alignment (maintaining and improving internal and external alignment over time). In summary, forming a strategic alliance means sharing and integrating resources into structures and processes through which activities can be controlled and coordinated (Lawrence, Lorsch, 1967; Mintzberg, 1983; Perrow, 1967). Organisations create and integrate individual units and processes to respond to emerging opportunities and constraints in the internal and external environment. Effective managers create competencies that enable them to sustain the desired behaviours in the organisation reinforcing each of the dimensions of collaborative culture.

The literature points to four dimensions characterising collaborative culture, namely: collectivism, long-term orientation, uncertainty avoidance and power symmetry. Cao and Zhang (2013) note that the dimensions describing collaborative culture are an adaptation to the organisational level of the concept of national cultural dimensions formulated by Hofstede (1991).

Collectivism refers to a component of collaborative culture signifying the degree to which an organisation adopts a collective rather than individualistic attitude when dealing with other organisations (Acquah, 2020). Organisations characterised by high levels of collectivism value communal characteristics and emphasise collective and collaborative efforts (Seo et al., 2016; Yılmaz & Pardalos, 2017; Kumar et al., 2021). The preference for collective rather than individualistic interactions with partners contributes to the development of managerial competencies that include a holistic view of the environment and the ability to identify opportunities and threats within it (Mintzberg 1989; Mintzberg 1971; Kumar 2015; Kumar et al., 2016; Lei et al., 2017).

Long-term orientation as a dimension of collaborative culture refers to the extent to which organisations are willing to make efforts to build sustainable relationships

with other organisations (Acquah et al. 2021b). Long-term orientation defines the boundary to which organisations are interested and motivated to work towards forming a strategic alliance (Van Dijk, 2016; Nguyen et al., 2022). It also signifies an organisation's willingness and commitment to build long-term inter-organisational relationships that benefit all parties. A manager considering the challenges of this dimension of collaborative culture should have strong leadership competencies, including especially the ability to create a vision and surround themselves with people who share their need for change (Seo et al., 2016; Khairuddin et al., 2021).

Power symmetry as a dimension of collaborative culture means that organisations accept the principle that the scope and conditions of collaboration are the same for all organisations and all potentially collaborating organisations have an equal voice in decision-making (Cao & Zhang, 2013). Relationships between organisations with a balance of power between partners are described as having a low power distance (Van Dijk, 2016). Relationships characterised by an unequal distribution of power and influence between collaborative partners are described as having a high-power distance (Lei et al., 2017; Le, 2021).

The last dimension of collaborative culture described in the literature is uncertainty avoidance. This dimension signifies the degree to which an organisation feels threatened and seeks to avoid ambiguity in its relationships with other organisations with which it may form strategic alliances (Zhang, Cao, 2018; Seo et al, 2016; Villena-Manzanares et al, 2020; Porcu et al, 2020; Le, 2021).

Competences

The concept of employee competence can be traced back to McClelland's article, where the author does not directly define the word competence but uses the term as "a symbol for an alternative approach to traditional intelligence testing" (McClelland, 1973, p. 7, citing Horváthová et al., 2019). From this point of view, McClelland advocates the use of skill sets related to performance based on criteria based on criteria selection. The term competency was introduced to human resource management in the early 1980s. In 1982 American researcher Richard Boyatzis wrote his book "The Competent Manager: A Model of Effective Performance", which greatly influenced human resource management specialists. For more than three decades, competency and competency models have become an integral part of human resource management and are widely used as a tool to increase personal and organisational effectiveness. In most corporate organisational contexts, the goal of system development is to identify competencies that truly impact business outcomes. Competency models are very useful in ensuring

that employees do the right things by explaining and clearly articulating what is required to perform effectively. Such models help organisations align internal behaviours and skills with the strategic direction of the company.

In general, competencies can be defined as the ability to successfully perform tasks and solve problems in relation to real-world problems, challenges, and opportunities at the individual level (Dale & Newman, 2005; Barth et al., 2007). Competence has also been used as an umbrella term to cover almost anything that can affect work (Xue et al., 2020). Competence consists of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that enable one to perform a task successfully. Three dominant approaches to the concept of competence can be distinguished (Ploum et al., 2018):

- In a behavioural-functionalist or job-oriented approach, individual competencies are derived from detailed job descriptions that are critical to performing specific job tasks and then translating these activities into personal attributes. One of the main criticisms of the behavioural-functionalist approach is that a list of job activities does not adequately reflect the basic knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to perform those activities effectively.
- As a reaction to this criticism, a generic or employee-oriented approach to the concept of competence emerged. A common view of competence is a set of attributes possessed by employees, typically represented as knowledge, skills, attitudes, and personal characteristics required for effective job performance. According to this approach, competence is defined as "core human characteristics" that are "causally related to effective or better performance", are applicable "in a variety of situations" and "endure over a sufficiently long period of time" (Boyatzis, 2008).
- Recent research on the concept of individual competence includes the context-dependent nature of professional practice and thus provides a more comprehensive conceptualization (Delamare Le Deist & Winterton, 2005; Wesselink et al., 2010). This comprehensive or multi-method approach to competence can be seen as an integration of the functionalist and generic approaches. Following a comprehensive approach, competence is defined in this study as an integrated activity-oriented ability of a person to achieve specific achievements. "Integrated" refers to a coherent and complex set of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and their embedding in the context in which successful performance must take place (Mulder, 2014).

D. Marković et al., (2015) proposed a special methodology based on which highly educated personnel are expected to develop at least five general competence areas:

1. Professional competence: highly educated persons are expected to be experts in their professional fields.
2. Functional flexibility: it is understood that highly educated employees must be able to respond to new challenges and quickly acquire new knowledge.

3. Innovation and knowledge management: in addition to the ability to perform their tasks effectively, highly educated people should create an environment where innovation management is based on knowledge.
4. Mobilisation of human resources: higher education is expected to mobilise all available human resources and direct them in the desired direction.
5. International orientation: considering the processes of globalisation, highly educated individuals should have a strong orientation towards others.

Over the past decade, a framework of thinking has emerged in the two supposedly related fields of management theory, competency development, and network theory. The development of the resource-based view (RBV) and the concept of the company's core competence emphasised the company's significant ability to actively manage its assets, not just meekly adapt to the industry. This, in turn, has led to a strong interest among strategic management scholars in the concepts of competence and competence development (O'Driscoll et al., 2000).

The concept of core competencies emerged from the resource-based view of the firm, which emphasises the fact that competitive advantage depends on whether a firm has unique skills, knowledge, resources, and competencies that are difficult to imitate (Makhloufi & Al-Erjal, 2017). In addition, competence must create value, as well as the ability to exploit their resources and the unique ability to manage resources for productive use. Core competence can also be the human knowledge or skills of the company's employees. The theoretical resource-based view (RBV) and knowledge-based view (KBV) suggest that knowledge is a resource that can be managed to improve managerial competence and innovation. Organisational development can be based on knowledge; knowledge-based organisations must be able to combine practices focused on knowledge exploration and exploitation and talent-based human resources to maintain the skills of these workers (Fachrunnisa et al., 2018; Sukoroto et al., 2023). In addition, knowledge can be used to facilitate communication and market understanding, which is the orientation of the company's development. Market orientation and good leadership skills can drive innovative activities to increase sustainable competitive advantage.

Knowledge, according to the Knowledge-Based View (KBV), is the company's most important resource from a strategic point of view. Superior knowledge is the basis of the ability to produce exceptional or reasonably priced goods and services. With information, companies can make better use of their limited resources. Due to the rapid transition to a knowledge-based economy, this approach is gaining more attention. The strategic management literature explains that the Knowledge-based view is developed by extending the resource-based view (RBV) of the firm (Sukoroto et al., 2023).

M. Aung & R. Heeler, (2001) distinguished three main schools of competence: "all resources", "one of the resources" and "determining resources". The first defines the term "core competencies" to include "all the resources available to the organisation." Thus, core competence can include tangible assets as well as intangible skills and practical experience possessed by the organisation.

The second term "core competencies" is defined as covering only the skills and knowledge possessed by the organisation, seeing them as just "one of the resources available to the organisation". From this point of view, a successful company has many resources – tangible and intangible assets, such as a unique history and development and unique competencies. This emerging school of thought, called the resource-based approach, argues that it is important to examine all resources, including competencies, to identify the sources of an organisation's competitive advantage. The resource advantage theory of competition recognizes this perspective and proposes that competition is an ongoing process in which relative advantages and disadvantages lead to better financial performance.

The third core competencies are also defined as pure skills but emphasise that they are "critical resources" for a company's competitive advantage. Prahalad and Hamel (1990, p. 82, citing Aung & Heeler, 2001) define core competencies as "collective learning within an organisation, especially how to coordinate various production skills and integrate multiple technology streams", which gives it a competitive advantage over competitors. In this third school of thought, some researchers use the terms "competence" and "ability" interchangeably. This school of thought focuses on the skills and knowledge an organisation possesses. Tangible assets, such as firm size, have been argued as important factors in understanding firms' competitiveness, but intangible assets, such as competencies, have continued to be identified as key determinants of a firm's competitive advantage.

As noted by L. Ploum et al., (2018), the concept of sustainable development has gained global importance in the last 10 years. In response to this global focus on sustainable development, institutions of higher education have moved to incorporate and institutionalise sustainability in their curricula, research, and activities to develop future sustainability professionals as change agents for sustainable development. These change agents develop sustainability as a success factor in their work environment, integrate sustainability criteria into business processes and transfer the vision of sustainable development to society.

2.1.2. Definition of combination of constructs

Green economy

The fact is developing and developed economies are facing some biggest challenges in the form of environmental pollution and climate change in the way to attain sustainable economic growth (Liu et al., 2022). Against this backdrop, and the uncertain recovery of the global economy, governments of mature and emerging economies; many international organisations, including the UN; and actors from civil society and academia have all contributed to build a case for 'a green economy', or 'green growth', to address both crises. The two terms are used often interchangeably, referring to a range of ideas also linked to low-carbon development (Barbier, 2012, quoting: Bina, 2013) from the narrow frame of the eco industry and environmentally friendly production to a redefinition of a country's (ROK-PCGG, 2009; World Bank and DRC, 2012) or a region's (EC, 2010; EUCO, 2010; OECD, 2009a; UNESCAP, 2008) entire economy. Between these two extremes are policies varyingly aimed at promoting 'low-carbon economies' or simply 'efficiency and productivity' gains, which have often been found to overlap (UNEP and CSIRO, 2011). These, in turn, emphasise to varying degrees the well-rehearsed notions of dematerialisation, decoupling of resource use (UNEP, 2011a), valuing ecosystem services, or simply energy efficiency (IEA, 2012), all driven by technological innovation (quoting: Bina, 2013). The increasing emphasis on environmental protection and adherence to the 2030 Agenda is profoundly shaping consumer behaviour. Within this framework, sustainable consumption emerges as a strategy aimed at mitigating the adverse environmental and social effects associated with consumption. Green consumers prioritise environmental considerations when making purchasing decisions, seeking out products and brands that minimise their impact on the environment and society (Lopes et al., 2024).

As noted by O. Bina (2013), in the green economy, scarcity becomes an attribute of "the kind of future we want", paradoxically acting as an engine of (GDP) growth and a constraint, as it locks systems to economies of scale and globalisation. Resource-efficient growth is unlikely to meet the global environmental and social challenges discussed at Rio+20, and the UN's claim that a green economy is a means of sustainability needs to be validated against the limitations of a weak interpretation of the latter. But this is a rehash of the old debate between technological optimism and ecocentric concerns. However, the choice to focus on greenness at Rio+20 represents a systematic convergence of industrial and/or economic policies with environmental issues justified by scarcity. It is believed that solutions to the current crises should be sought not in the pursuit of ends, but in

fine-tuning the means, including technical solutions, valuing ecological services, and seeking a better balance between market fundamentalism and Keynesian solutions.

According to N. M. P. Bocken et al., (2016) and L. C. Malabi Eberhardt, M. Birkved and H. Birgisdottir (2022), the circular economy (CE) concept promises an alternative to the current take-use-dispose linear economy. CE is a restorative and regenerative system where resource use, waste and emissions are reduced by narrowing (resource efficiency), slowing down (temporarily extending use) and closing (cycling) material loops. CE is used in CE strategies such as reuse, repair, renewal, recycling, and recovery (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, World Economic Forum, and Boston Consulting Group, 2016).

Over the past ten years, the concept of a green economy has become increasingly attractive to policymakers. However, the green economy encompasses many different concepts and its links with sustainability are not always clear. In ecological economics, the economy is defined as the subsystem of nature that limits the physical growth of the economy. Economic systems are ultimately constrained by the Earth's biophysical limits, and society must adapt its economic system accordingly to operate within a safe operating space (Loiseau et al., 2016).

Ecological economic concepts emerged in the late 1980s, inspired by earlier multidisciplinary research based on the natural and social sciences. This school of ecological economics attempts to model social-ecological systems by analysing cause-effect relationships and dynamic processes with the environment. These integrated and biophysical perspectives on environment-economy interactions aim to contribute to solutions to environmental problems (Ekins et al., 2003; Loiseau et al., 2016). Among these solutions, there is a strong emphasis on structural changes in the economy and society, such as the development of smaller scale decentralised lifestyles based on greater self-reliance, in order to create social and economic systems that are less destructive to nature (Williams and Millington, 2004). To this end, physical or ecological indicators (e.g. material consumption per unit of service, ecological footprint and critical natural capital) are developed based on the concept of dematerialization and conservation of irreplaceable natural capital. Accordingly, the concept is more based on physical measurements and ecological knowledge to assess critical thresholds, but it also includes the study of institutions, property regimes and environmental governance mechanisms (Loiseau et al., 2016).

Circular Economy refers to an industrial economy that is restorative and regenerative by intent and design (Blériot, 2013; Lieder & Rashid, 2016: quoting Górecki et al., 2019). It is intended to rely on renewable energy, minimise the use of energy,

eliminate the use of toxic chemicals and wastes eradicated through careful design. According to J. Górecki et al. (2019) the main feature of CE is that the production system is regenerative of inputs used, diminishing the negative externalities of the process. In a generic term, it could be said that it is regenerative by design. Furthermore, the main energy during production is renewable, looking for the reduction of chemical waste. The concept is supported by several key factors. Thus, to sell the use of the products and not the material, so, the consumer just uses the product, and the supplier is responsible to recycle the material. Customers can purchase the use as a service, and when the product becomes obsolete, recovers and renews. In such a sense, reuse is a symbol of good management. The 3R principle (reduce, reuse and recycling) contributes to reducing the press over the global resources stock (Reh, 2013). According to Walter Stahel (Stahel, 2013) in the past, reuse was a strategy of shortage and poverty. Today, they are signs of efficient management of resources.

Several factors contribute to the success of the Circular Economy. Key among these are modularity, versatility, and adaptability, which are crucial attributes enabling products or systems to integrate seamlessly into the production chain. Advancements in technology, particularly through the emulation of biological systems, hold promise for enhancing the sustainability of production systems. Biomimetics presents a significant challenge in translating natural life cycles into technological contexts. The concept of "cradle to cradle" is central to the Circular Economy, aiming to replicate nature's biological recycling processes using industrial materials. However, a thorough analysis of both processes and products amenable to biomimicry is essential. A circular economy reduction policy network facilitates subsidiary access to vital knowledge and resources, enabling them to obtain high-value-added products and engage in value-creating initiatives like acquiring franchising licences. Offshore subsidiaries that cultivate robust strategic alliance network capabilities through circular economy reduction policies can gain a competitive advantage that competitors find challenging to replicate (Lin & Chang, 2023).

As noted, N.M.P. Bocken et al., (2016) incorporating circular economy considerations during the initial stages of product design is paramount, as significant alterations become challenging once product specifications are set. Once resources, infrastructures, and activities are committed to a particular design, making substantial changes becomes impractical. The primary design strategy is the development of long-lasting products to decelerate resource cycles. This strategy focuses on extending the lifespan of products, aiming for prolonged utilisation. Within this framework, "Designing for attachment and trust" entails creating products that foster long-lasting emotional connections with users, promoting

sustained appreciation, liking, or trust. This concept, also known as "design for emotional durability," emphasises enduring empathic relationships between users and products. "Design for durability" addresses physical robustness, ensuring products withstand wear and tear without deterioration. Material selection plays a crucial role in achieving durability during the design phase. "Design for reliability" involves engineering products with a high probability of uninterrupted operation over a specified period when maintained according to the manufacturer's guidelines. Testing products under simulated real-world conditions aids in evaluating their reliability.

The Circular Economy (CE) concept aims to diminish structures, waste, and the demand for finite primary materials, advocating for a shift away from viewing the environment solely as a dumping ground for used materials. Additionally, it strives to minimise resource loss and destruction, thereby mitigating pollution and preserving biodiversity in ecosystems affected by resource extraction (Hennemann Hilario da Silva & Sehnem, 2022). This approach presents a sustainable solution to waste disposal issues and reduces the reliance on raw materials for manufacturing. Globally, CE has garnered widespread acclaim for addressing the imperative of a more environmentally sustainable economy and enhancing the efficient utilisation of natural resources. Various aspects of CE conceptions are detailed in the accompanying table.

Table 4: CE Conceptions

No.	Author	Conception
1.	Kouhizadeh et al., 2019	ReSOLVE model, a CE system that uses processes that apply recycling, reusing, and remanufacturing within a closed system, which incorporates six guiding principles to this transition: regenerate, share, optimise, loop, virtualize and exchange
2.	Sehnem et al., 2019	Industrial symbiosis, a structure that is based on industrial ecology to perform mutually beneficial cooperation among organisations, sharing water, resources, energy, by-products and residual material, so all agents profit from it; the industrial symbiosis projects material flows in which materials and energy consumption are optimised, residue generation is minimised, and one process's effluents serve as input for other processes
3.	Bag, Gupta, & Kumar, 2021	10 R's: refuse, rethink, reduce, reuse, repair, refurbish, remanufacture, repurpose, recycle and recover may help companies to get competitive advantage

No.	Author	Conception
4.	Ma et al., 2020 ; Lu et al., 2020	Cleaner production, which aims at being sustainable through energy conservation, emission reduction and higher production efficiency, is a basic approach that seeks to optimise process environmental management
5.	Wang et al., 2020	Product-service system, which encompasses products, services, agent networks and support infrastructure, working with a continuous flow with the objective of becoming competitive, meeting customer needs, and minimising environmental impact in comparison to traditional business models

Source: adopted by T. Hennemann Hilario da Silva & S. Sehnem (2022)

CE necessitates the adoption of numerous sustainable practices, reflecting global agendas that emphasise the integration of social and environmental considerations into economic development (Sehnem, Provensi, Silva, & Pereira, 2021). As a result, CE may encompass the three main dimensions of sustainability: economic prosperity, social equity, and environmental preservation. Consequently, significant transformations are imperative across social, industrial, and consumption sectors to facilitate CE implementation. CE emerges as a promising approach for achieving sustainable development, with manufacturing companies playing a crucial role in its industrial-level execution due to their influence on defining product life cycles. Within industrial production, CE assumes a critical function by advocating for practices such as resource recycling and minimising material and energy usage. In essence, CE proposes a systemic shift from open linear production cycles, which are inefficient and generate waste, to closed cycles where waste is minimised or transformed into valuable inputs, thereby enhancing productivity, and optimising the utilisation of natural and human resources. By its nature, CE is restorative and regenerative, aiming to maintain products categorized as technical and biological components, and materials at a high level of utility and value.

Green consciousness

SMEs account for around 90% of businesses, create 60-70% of formal jobs in developing countries and up to 50% of employment worldwide. Thus, SMEs are key market entities that accelerate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Pastran, et al., 2021). We need to understand that sustainable entrepreneurship (responsible production) is changing the dynamics of the current market, and this is the opportunity we have in front of us. Sustainability

thinking is a philosophy and a way of being (i.e., behaviour or action) that results from a broad understanding and impact of the ecosystem (Aghajani et al., 2023).

A sustainable business incorporates aspects of environmental impact into the business idea at its earliest stages. In general, sustainable entrepreneurship can be understood as a specific variety of social entrepreneurship focused on over-consumption and climate change. For example, a sustainable entrepreneurship company will analyse the sustainability of the products used in production (that is, whether the materials are ecological, non-plastic and/or biodegradable), the impact of the products and their business on the ecosystem and ecological re-sources, the social value and profitability of the business (Pastran, 2019c).

There has also been a need for tools and techniques to incorporate sustainabil-ity into day-to-day business operations while maintaining important attributes of successful entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship. Since the mid-1990s, many authors have explored ways to integrate sustainability into corporations and en-trepreneurship. The focus has also shifted from environmental management and regulatory compliance to sustainability, initiative, and environmental leadership. Therefore, a pragmatic and integrated approach was developed that combines the 3Ps with the main elements of the business plan, which also relate to the main functions or activities of the business. This approach can be seen as a prac-tical framework since each core business activity or relevant part of the business plan should be replaced by a sustainable substitute (Bonnet et al., 2006; Ashby et al., 2009; Maaßen et al., 2023). The business community, public interest groups, policy makers, academics and researchers are increasingly interested in the topic, resulting in new concepts, approaches, definitions, tools, and competencies.

H. Bonnet et al., (2006) noted that sustainable business aspects must be inte-grated into: the organisation's mission and strategy; stakeholder engagement; generating a product idea and developing a marketing program; to the manage-ment of the organisation as a whole and financial accounting and reporting.

Inevitably, the aspects of sustainable and green business must be applied when creating new structural formations (alliances) based on organisational partner-ship and providing a management mechanism whose manager would respond to the concept of sustainable competencies.

Sustainable entrepreneurship

D.S. Bakry et al., (2022) noted that sustainable entrepreneurship has become a vital part of the innovation ecosystem with increasing attention on a global scale. The term sustainable entrepreneurship can be seen as an overarching concept

that examines the contribution of entrepreneurs to social, environmental, and economic aspects (Schaltegger & Wagner, 2011). M. Johnson and S. Schaltegger (2020) modified the term sustainable entrepreneurship and defined it as a multi-level phenomenon that combines social, environmental, and economic dimensions between business processes, market transformations and large-scale societal development. Sustainable entrepreneurs initiate those activities and processes that help identify, evaluate, and exploit business opportunities to contribute to sustainability and profitability. From this point of view, sustainable entrepreneurship is seen to create a competitive advantage by identifying new business opportunities that create new products, new production methods, new markets, or new ways to organise business processes more sustainably. Thus, opportunity recognition can be seen as an important element of (sustainable) entrepreneurship. Therefore, sustainability is not only something to do, adhere to or engage in, but also a major source of change and opportunity (Ploum et al., 2018).

In this context, several strands of literature have been developed by scholars in economics, sociology, psychology, and management. They use terms such as "ecopreneurship", "green entrepreneurship", "environmental entrepreneurship" and even "social entrepreneurship" and "sustainable entrepreneurship" as synonyms to refer to and broadly categorise the activities of environmental innovators, manufacturers, and entrepreneurs, reduce negative social and environmental impacts of their companies, basing them on the principles of sustainability (Haldar, 2021).

In examining the principles of sustainable entrepreneurship, an important role is played by the stakeholder theory, which proposes a paradigm shift from business responsibility to shareholders (those who have a financial interest in the company's activities) to all stakeholders (Freeman, 1984, citing Indarto et al., 2022). Identifying relevant stakeholders focuses on the relationships of individuals and groups with the company, including customers, suppliers, employees, shareholders, and government. Stakeholders can be defined as those who can affect or be affected by the achievement of the organisation's goals. In addition, the current trend is for companies with business models that are committed to increasing profits and are socially responsible. Businesses have a role to play in protecting public interests, the environment, and the well-being of stakeholders. Business sustainability includes five dimensions, viz. i.e., management commitment, stakeholder commitment, workplace commitment, mentality, and performance monitoring (Indarto et al., 2022; EL-Chaarani et al., 2023).

According to B.J. Gray et al., (2014) suggests that a sustainable market orientation requires organisations to balance the satisfaction of customer needs with the

environmental, social, and economic interests of wider stakeholders. Sustainable entrepreneurship is a holistic approach that includes a combination of social, environmental, and economic interests. Some researchers refer to sustainable entrepreneurship as a comprehensive field, including environmental and social entrepreneurship (Schaltegger and Johnson, 2021; Maaßen et al., 2023).

Entrepreneurial activity is considered sustainable, for example, when it integrates holistic economic, social, and environmental goals that persist over time, thus emphasising the triple bottom line. This means that sustainable entrepreneurship (table 1) is a solution to societal and environmental problems such as poverty, hunger, and global warming (Godswill, 2021).

Table 5: Typology of sustainability-driven entrepreneurship

Type of entrepreneurship	Core principles
Green entrepreneurship	Creation of economic value and offering solutions to environmental challenges
Social entrepreneurship	Profit/ non-profit oriented; creation of social value and societal problem solving
Sustainable entrepreneurship	Catering to social and environmental challenges while creating economic value through commercially viable ventures

Adapted from: S. Haldar (2021)

Analysing the concept of sustainable entrepreneurship, H.T.T. Nguyen et al., (2023) in addition to economic, social and environmental sustainability, proposed to include a cultural aspect in the SE system and noted that the cultural dimension cannot be outside the elements of sustainability, as culture affects lifestyle, individual behaviour, consumption patterns and values, related to environmental management and human interaction with the natural environment, and that it can stimulate ideas for addressing ecological challenges and other sustainable issues, including biodiversity loss, land degradation, climate change and poverty. It is argued that culture should be seen as a central pillar of a multidimensional approach because "culture shapes what we mean by development and determines how people operate in the world" (Nurse, 2006, p. 37). The scope of SE should be expanded beyond economic, social, and environmental aspects to include aspects of cultural sustainability.

The literature review shows that in the *first stage* (opportunity recognition), sustainable entrepreneurs recognize an opportunity. However, it is suggested that opportunities for sustainable entrepreneurs not only exist but are pursued and consciously implemented. This is because environmental and social problems arise outside the market and are usually seen as negative externalities or market "failures" (Schaltegger et al., 2018a). Therefore, sustainable entrepreneurs create opportunities to solve specific social and environmental problems. Indicative characteristics of sustainable entrepreneurial organisations involved in this first stage of the entrepreneurial process are the intentional creation of opportunities, the reaction to market failure, and at the same time the adoption of a "gap-filling" function.

In *the second phase* of feasibility assessment and development, sustainable entrepreneurs can fulfil a social-/environmental mission while pursuing economic sustainability. This hybridity or "dual mission" is a characteristic of social enterprises (Doherty 2018), while sustainable enterprises adhere to the triple bottom line (Belz and Binder 2017; Sarkar & Pansera, 2017).

In the third stage (capability development and commercialization), sustainable entrepreneurs demonstrate their persistence over time. As C. Maaßen et al., (2023) notes, an inclusive management model is important at this stage. Sustainable entrepreneurs adopt an "inclusive and participatory management model that involves the various parties affected by their activities." In addition, they limit the distribution of their profits to ensure the social or environmental purpose of their organisations and base their decisions on democratic values rather than capital ownership. Through this management dimension practice, sustainable entrepreneurial organisations can survive over time.

A.M. Ruiz-Ruano & J.L. Puga (2016) systematised that sustainable entrepreneurship is a compatible alternative to the current production system, promoting a system that responsibly uses the natural and social resources of our planet; in other words, it respects the social, economic, and natural balance of systems. Economically sustainable entrepreneurs are defined as those who can identify market imperfections or weaknesses and turn them into economic opportunities to benefit the environment. However, from an ecological point of view, these are individuals or organisations that try to give importance to ecological innovations in their economic activities. Finally, from a social perspective, entrepreneurship seeks to alleviate social needs and acquire social assets by discovering and exploiting opportunities to create businesses or innovatively manage existing opportunities.

E. Crals and L. Vereeck (2005) summarised the advantages of sustainable entrepreneurship as follows:

- positive image and reputation.
- reduced dependence on depleted resources.
- greater employee motivation and attractiveness to new employees.
- efficient production due to the highest quality technologies and qualified employees.
- excellent understanding of market needs and opportunities.
- effective risk control.
- lower burden due to changes in environmental and social legislation.
- business partnership with other sustainable entrepreneurs.
- business partnership with global players.

Despite the advantages of sustainable entrepreneurship, problematic areas of sustainable development faced by SMEs are also distinguished (Hilton 2000):
- lack of resources, time, and money.
- lack of abilities, skills, and knowledge.
- lack of understanding of issues, risks, and regulation.
- lack of training needs analysis (TNA).
- ignorance of tools and techniques.
- insufficient awareness of provisions and their benefits.
- lack of strategic and holistic thinking.
- lack of internal communication and integration.
- lack of flexibility and fear of change.
- lack of external communication (networks).
- lack of trust in other groups of companies.

Definition of combination of constructs

Operating in what constitutes a boundary-spanning role, AMs (*Alliance Managers*) act as strategic sponsors that must adapt various alliance management processes as they seek to manage the various risks inherent in alliances. In response to the aims of this special issue, we argue that several constraining factors not only create role conflicts in these collaborations but also complicate the role decisions AMs make. These constraining factors include the role expectations of their own and their partner firms, as well as the influences created by AMs' levels of entrepreneurship and the alliance's governance structure (Luvison & Cummings, 2017). When examining the concept of Strategic alliances + competences: the head of the alliance in the scientific literature, the following aspects emerged in the table 2.

Table 6: Strategic alliances + competences: Alliance Manager

AUTHOR	STRATEGIC ALLIANCE	EMERGENT TRAITS-/-ASPECTS
Todeva, E., & Knoke, D., (2005)	✓ Strategic alliance might be referred to as common, for some enterprises – partners, intention to plan future activity to achieve the strategic goals	✓ Cooperation for strategic goals.
Yi, W., (2007)	✓ Strategic alliance is a partnership that helps to unify power to gain mutual benefit and long-term competitiveness in markets	✓ partnership - mutual benefit - long-term competitiveness
Dadashian, F., et al., (2007)	✓ Successful alliances are typically coalitions that combine the unique capabilities of each partner to enhance their collective business value. A strategic alliance works when a wholly owned subsidiary or acquisition is not possible, when an evolutionary approach is desired, or when each partner recognizes that it needs access to critical capabilities that it cannot develop on its own.	✓ Combine the unique capabilities of each partner
Išoraitė, M., (2008)	✓ Strategic alliance is an agreement between two or more organisations to cooperate in a specific business activity, so that each benefit from the strengths of the other and gains competitive advantage.	✓ An agreement to cooperate using the strengths of the partnership members
O'Dwyer, M., et al., (2011)	✓ A strategic alliance can be defined as 'an agreement between two or more partners to share knowledge or resources which could be beneficial to all parties involved'.	✓ An agreement to cooperate using the strengths and knowledge of the partnership members
Albers, S., et al., (2016)	✓ Strategic alliances, purposive relationships between firms that share compatible goals and strive for mutual benefits.	✓ Purposive relationships to strive for mutual benefits
Russo, M., & Cesarani, M., (2017)	✓ A strategic alliance is an intentional relationship between two or more firms, which remain legally independent, involving exchange, sharing or co-development of resources, competences, and capabilities.	✓ Sharing or co-development of resources, competences, and capabilities

AUTHOR	STRATEGIC ALLIANCE	EMERGENT TRAITS-/-ASPECTS
Logožar, K., (2022)	✓ Strategic alliances can be categorised according to the number of parties engaged as either dyadic partnerships, in which only two parties are involved, or multiple relationships, in which three or more parties are involved. ✓ An alliance is an interorganizational cooperation between two or more organisations that are still separate from one another but work together on a particular project - each partner's strategic objectives are to: 1. Maximise the joint net value or net benefits emerging from the co-operation. 2. Appropriate a sizable portion of the net benefits generated. 3. Reduce each partner's expenses and risk.	✓ The basis of cooperation is to maximise the value created
STRATEGIC ALLIANCE + COMPETENCE		
Gray, D.M. (2004)	✓ The competences of the strategic alliance are divided into two groups: **1. Operational competence** (communication behaviour, communication quality, information sharing, participation in planning and goal setting); **2. Coordination behaviour** (partnership boundaries, operational linkages, partner adaptation, legal bonds, cooperative norms, conflict resolution). ✓ An analysis and synthesis of the empirical and conceptual business partnering literature identifies four key competency domains which can be used to explain business partnering performance: (1) market orientation (organisation culture that most effectively and efficiently creates the necessary behaviour for the creation of superior value for buyers and, thus continuous superior performance for the business), (2) relational competence (the characteristics of	✓ Cooperation is based on the use and improvement of each partner's competencies

AUTHOR	STRATEGIC ALLIANCE	EMERGENT TRAITS-/-ASPECTS
	the individual that facilitate the acquisition, development, and maintenance of mutually satisfying relationships), (3) joint alliance competence (the organisational ability for finding, developing and managing alliances) and (4) operational competence (the ability to successfully manage the day-to-day operational activities of business partnerships).	
Janczak, S. (2008)	✓ Strategic alliances may provide firms with a unique opportunity to leverage, strengthen, and diversify their competencies with the help of partners. Successful learning outcomes would depend on how initial conditions (partners' intent, previous experience, receptivity or absorptive capacity, modes of learning and nature of learning) and the configuration's interface would affect each partner's relative rate of learning and its impact on the evolution of the collaborative agreement. Some propositions must be made by drawing relations between the nature of knowledge to be transferred, interpartner interdependence, and organisational structure and knowledge management processes (or transfer mechanisms).	✓ Cooperation is based on the use and improvement of each partner's competencies for greater involvement
Prasad Kanungo, R., (2015)	✓ Strategic alliances usually focus on the partners' competencies aiming to bridge the symmetries and asymmetries inherent in both the sides. Firms attempt achieving competitive advantage by accessing more dynamic markets, capabilities, core competence through collaboration, compromise, and accommodation through strategic alliances.	✓ Leveraging partners' competencies to overcome symmetry and asymmetry

AUTHOR	STRATEGIC ALLIANCE	EMERGENT TRAITS-/-ASPECTS
Serrano, R. M., et al., (2018)	✓ The creation of strategic alliances can be viewed as hybrid and plural sourcing of core competencies shaping competitive advantages of collaborative firms.	✓ Cooperation is based on the use and improvement of each partner's competencies
Čirjevskis, A., (2021)	✓ The process of creating strategic alliances must be focused on: Identifying the advantages of core competencies; Establishing the relationship between core competencies; Interactive communication; Formation of mutual trust and obligations; Preparing a plan for the integration of core competencies; Establishing a cultural fit of core competencies - Common orientation to competency-based synergy.	✓ Common orientation to competency-based synergy.

AMs are individuals designated by their organisations to perform the various tasks required to steer alliances to a successful end.1 As boundary-spanning relationship managers, AMs are called upon to exhibit a broad range of non-traditional skills to develop business with the partner or control the alliance's project elements. Scholars have suggested that this role changes somewhat predictively over the life cycle of the alliance: Prior to formalisation of the alliance agreement, AMs should act as the visionaries, strategic sponsors, and advocates for the alliance while afterward they perform in an operational capacity (Luvison & Cummings, 2017).

Alliance managers also need to have appropriate interaction processes to manage the collaboration in the post formation stage, because problems of cooperation and coordination cannot be fully resolved ex ante, but persist throughout the entire relationship (Schreiner et al., 2009).

A manager's involvement directly influences the preference of response strategy. Trust and commitment are necessary; without trust and commitment, alliance managers often opt for an exit strategy by the alliance manager in an adverse situation. When the involvement of managers in the alliance is high, managers prefer to voice their opinions in a creative way (i.e., creative voice strategy).

"The goal of the alliance manager is not to create harmony but to create a sense of dynamic tension", said one CEO whose company was built around alliances.

"Think of the cathedral at Notre Dame with its flying buttresses. It is the equal and opposing pressure that keeps it up. That is the basic architecture inside the alliance. An alliance manager must create a situation where all the different forces push inward and they are so strong that they create stability, provided, of course, they are all vectored in the right direction" (Ranf & Todăriţa, 2009).

Top performing alliance managers always (Ranf & Todăriţa, 2009):

- Are extremely positive about the alliance, focusing most of their time on how to do it the right way.
- Provide their team with specific stimulus and ideas for actions designed to enhance the performance of the overall alliance.
- Check for mutual understanding, pausing frequently to ask all parties to feed back their understanding of the discussion and agreements to date.
- Aggressively require each team member to apply positive energy, ideas and understanding to their own situation until a comprehensive, highly detailed action plan is developed.
- Continuously monitor the actions and behaviours of the alliance partners to ensure adherence to the plan and provide quick responses to emerging problems.

As the head of the function, the chief alliance manager (who should hold a prominent position reporting to the top management team) occupies the most central position in the firm's network of alliances and is responsible for its success (Duane Ireland et al., 2002)

Strategic alliance managers are individuals who represent the interests of alliance firms and who interact with counterparts from alliance partner firms daily. They live a precarious existence, trying to advance and maximise the interests of their respective parent firms while attempting to make the complex alliance relationship work (Zoogah & Peng, 2010).

In addition to exercising strategic and operational responsibilities, alliance managers are relationship managers who require skills rarely covered in the traditional business school curriculum, which tends to emphasise competition over collaboration (Goerzen, 2005).

Table 7: Green strategic alliance + Green consciousness

AUTHOR	GREEN STRATEGIC ALLIANCE	EMERGENT TRAITS-/-ASPECTS
Bouncken, R.B., et al., (2020)	✓ **Strategic environmental alliances**, where firms collaborate to leverage and explore environmental technologies to address market opportunities and generate positive environmental and social impacts, have become a common response to the demand for sustainability	✓ Collaborate to make a positive social and environmental impact
Huang, Y.-C., & Chen, C.T. (2022)	✓ **Green strategic alliance** embodies a green culture and embrace a mission focused on energy conservation, emission reduction, the development of a low-carbon economy and innovative responses to emerging green societal needs	✓ Collaborate to make a positive social and environmental impact
Lopes Cancela, B., et al., (2023)	✓ **Green strategic alliance** prioritises environmental protection and assist enterprises in achieving green development and green management. These alliances can be formed among commercial organisations, government organisations and non-governmental organisations. For companies, green alliances represent new business opportunities, improve environmental performance, and enhance reputation.	✓ Achieving green development and green management
GREEN CONSCIOUSNESS		
Kollmuss, A., & Agyeman, J., (2002)	✓ Green awareness is defined as - knowing of the impact of human behaviour in the environment.	✓ Human behaviour in the environment

AUTHOR	GREEN STRATEGIC ALLIANCE	EMERGENT TRAITS-/-ASPECTS
Wu, M. H., et al., (2016)	✓ Green awareness is a significant dimension in GC and has several advantages, especially increasing efficiency in the consumption of wastage and materials, reducing the cost involved in such practices and ensuring environmental performance in an organisation.	✓ Ensuring environmental performance in an organisation
Zareie, B., & Navimipour, N.J., (2016)	✓ Green awareness is - the ability to perceive, to feel, to be conscious of events, objects, thoughts, emotions or sensory patterns about the natural environment and its problems.	✓ To perceive patterns bout the natural environment and its problems
Mendis, M.V.S., & Welmilla, I., (2021)	✓ **Green consciousness** is aimed at changing human consciousness to undertake environmentally friendly initiatives. **Green HR** is an employee who is aware of environment friendly activities, committed to solving environmental issues by practising green habits both in his personal and work lives.	✓ Knows environmentally friendly activities and applies it in the working and personal space.

Table 8: Competences + Green competence

AUTHOR	COMPETENCES	EMERGENT TRAITS-/-ASPECTS
Murray, P. (2003)	✓ Competencies can be depicted as the exhibition of individual skills, operational knowledge and behaviour regarding a particular task that enhances job performance.	✓ A set of individual skills, operational knowledge, and behaviour
Hill, T., et al., (2014)	✓ Competencies are the measurable knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviours necessary for successful job performance	✓ The measurable knowledge
Marković, D., et al., (2015)	✓ Competence is the ability of a person, confirmed by a written document and confirming that this person can perform a certain job. It is important to note that while learning, a person develops their competence according to the standards set for that job.	✓ Validity of existing competences

AUTHOR	COMPETENCES	EMERGENT TRAITS-/-ASPECTS
Glinkowska, B. A., (2017)	✓ The concept of competence primarily refers to the actions of people and organisations. A person is generally said to be competent to perform a task or activity. ✓ Modern managerial competencies are identified with professional knowledge, the ability to make the right decisions, cooperation and partnership, respect for ethics, and experience.	✓ The ability to make the right decisions, cooperation and partnership, respect for ethics, and experience
Makhloufi, L., & Al-Erjal, H. M. E. A. (2017)	✓ These are skills that enable companies to gain the foundations for customer benefits by creating, improving, renewing, and using resources that create a sustainable competitive advantage. **Three main competences:** 1. *Technological competence* is defined as a variety of practical or theoretical knowledge, methods, experience, procedures, and physical equipment. 2. *Market competence* is defined as the robust process of applying and combining one's collective knowledge, skills, and resources in a target market to meet customer needs and wants, preferences, factors affecting them, and the actions and reactions of competitors. 3. *Integrative competence* is a competence that enables an organisation to integrate the various abilities, knowledge and skills required to create products or services based on customer preferences and needs.	✓ A set of technological competence, Market competence and Integrative competence
Ploum, L., et al., (2018)	✓ Competencies are defined as enabling the successful completion of tasks and problem solving in relation to real-world problems, challenges and/or opportunities.	✓ The ability to make the right decisions, cooperation and partnership, respect for ethics, and experience

AUTHOR	COMPETENCES	EMERGENT TRAITS-/-ASPECTS
Xue, J., et al., (2020)	✓ Competence is an umbrella term that covers almost anything that can affect the performance of an effective job.	✓ Ability to make the right decisions, cooperation, and partnership in solving emerging challenges
Sukoroto, Tjahjono, H. K., & Wahyuningsih, S. H. (2023)	✓ These are the activities, knowledge, skills or attitudes and personal qualities needed to improve management outcomes.	✓ Skill set for improving management performance.
GREEN + COMPETENCES		
Wiek, A., Withycombe, L., & Redman, C. L. (2011)	✓ Knowledge, skills, and attitudes that enable successful task completion and problem solving in relation to real-world sustainability issues, challenges, and opportunities.	✓ Skill set for solving problems related to real-world sustainability issues
Brown, M. (2013)	✓ Green skills, or skills for sustainability, are the professional and vocational skills, as well as the generic skills (such as sustainable approaches, innovation and problem solving) required for new green jobs and the greening of existing jobs across all industry sectors as a response to climate change and sustainability imperatives.	✓ Skill set for solving problems related to real-world sustainability issues
Lans et al. (2014)	1. *Systems-thinking competence*: the ability to identify and analyse all important (sub)systems in various fields (people, planet, profit) and disciplines, including their boundaries. 2. *Embracing diversity and interdisciplinarity competence*: the ability to structure relationships, notice problems and recognize the legitimacy of other points of view in business decision-making processes; be it environmental, social and/or economic issues	✓ A set of 7 core competencies guiding aspects of sustainability

AUTHOR	COMPETENCES	EMERGENT TRAITS-/-ASPECTS
	3. *Foresighted thinking competence*: the ability to jointly analyse, evaluate and create „pictures" of the future that assess the impact of local and/or short-term solutions on environmental, social, and economic issues in a global/cosmopolitan environment. scale and in the long term. 4. *Normative competence*: the ability to identify, apply and align sustainability values, principles, and goals with internal and external stakeholders, without adopting any specific norm, but based on the good character of the person involved in solving sustainability issues. 5. *Action competence*: the ability to actively engage in responsible actions, improving the sustainability of social-ecological systems 6. *Interpersonal competence*: the ability to motivate, enable and facilitate collaborative and participatory sustainability activities and research 7. *Strategic management competence*: the ability to jointly create projects, implement interventions, transitions, and strategies for sustainable development practices.	
Dlimbetova, G., et al., (2015)	• Personal qualities, skills, knowledge, abilities, and activities, aimed at reducing energy consumption, protecting ecosystems and biodiversity or minimisation of emissions and wastes.	• Skill set for solving problems related to real-world sustainability issues
Vega-Marcote, P., et al., (2015)	• Complexes of knowledge, skills and attributes that enable successful task performance and problem solving with respect to real-world sustainability problems, challenges, and opportunities.	• Skill set for solving problems related to real-world sustainability issues

AUTHOR	COMPETENCES	EMERGENT TRAITS-/-ASPECTS
MacDonald, L., & Shriberg, M. (2016)	• Green competence is the integration of the principles of adaptive management to solve issues of sustainability uncertainty, identifying possible partnership links, creating a vision, managing conflicts and strategic planning.	• The integration of the principles of adaptive management to solve issues of sustainability uncertainty
Subramanian et al. (2016)	• Green competence - the requisite ecological knowledge, skills, and other socio-economic behaviour an individual has to help him/her behave and act rightly and responsibly towards the overall well-being of his/her immediate environment	• A set of ecological knowledge and skills, with the help of which green consciousness is developed
Perez Salgado, F., et al., (2018)	• The dimensions of the green competence construct involve (1) lived experience and linking to scientific knowledge, (2) appreciating the decision making and motivation to perform, (3) communicating ethical practices, (4) political-strategic thinking, (5) coping with complex tasks, (6) goal-oriented actions and (7) convert stakeholder diversity into sustainable actions.	• A set of 7 core competencies guiding aspects of sustainability
Biberhofer, P., et al., (2019)	• *Systemic competence* - Coping with and understanding the complexity of sustainability. • *Anticipatory competence* - Integrative thinking, time horizons. • *Normative competence* - Compliance with norms and ethics promoting sustainability. • *Strategic competence* - Openness to opportunities. • *Interpersonal competence* - Work in networks of several interested parties; supporting them through a collaborative culture.	• A set of 5 core competencies guiding aspects of sustainability

AUTHOR	COMPETENCES	EMERGENT TRAITS-/-ASPECTS
MacDonald, A., et al., (2020)	• *Green competence* is the knowledge, skills, and abilities, as well as values and attitudes that can help in carrying out tasks related to sustainability challenges of implementing sustainability initiatives.	• Skill set for solving problems related to real-world sustainability issues
Cabral, C., & Dhar, R.L. (2021)	✓ **Green skills are comprised of:** (1) Skills required for EM (*Environmental Management*) such as product development and in the product life cycle by integrating recycling, reuse, and eco-design. (2) Skills as are necessary for green jobs which include mitigating the usage of energy and raw materials, alleviating greenhouse gas emission, reducing pollution, and conserving the ecosystem. (3) Skills acquired through formal education and training with concern for the natural environment and its ecosystem. (4) Sustainability skills. (5) Skills required for recycling and waste management. (6) Higher-level skills for green product development. (7) Skills that extend from soft skills to skills for energy efficiency (8) Skills that focus on human development and sustainable work account for the political economy and transform the livelihood of the poor. (9) Skills associated with green jobs with green processes, green products and services, green industries and occupations evolved to meet the need for a green economy.	✓ A set of skills and core competencies guiding aspects of sustainability

2.1.3. Inputs from the practical perspective

The analysis of good practices identified; help understand from a practical perspective the constructs on which the project is focused.

The work of Carnicer, Martínez and Morales (2021), helps to understand 3 main aspects: 1) collaboration concept, 2) smart alliance concept and 3) the process to develop smart alliances. Regarding the conceptualization of collaboration, collaboration is understood as a key component in the company's corporate strategy, being one of the mechanisms that most contributes to sustainable growth. This is the type of inter-business relationship that allows the parties involved to interact from their individuality and independence, through a non-hierarchical position, working together to achieve an objective that goes beyond the natural activity of said companies. Collaboration allows companies to take advantage of economies of scale, be more efficient and effective, access new markets and generate competitive advantages. Likewise, it facilitates access to resources, enhances innovative skills and can be a source of value creation through a more flexible structure than organic growth or the internalisation of resources and capabilities. As for Smart Alliances, it should be highlighted that, although collaboration reflects the type of inter-business relationship, the way in which that relationship is materialised is through alliances. These alliances refer to the agreement or strategic decision made by two or more independent companies that allows the management of assigned resources and the coordination of defined activities, without there being a relationship of subordination between the parties, in order to satisfy a common objective. and share the results derived from the relationship. The key elements of the alliance are the involvement of two or more companies, the strategy or objectives shared by the parties as driving agents of the collaboration, the coordination of resources and activities to achieve the objectives, the non-subordination relationship between the parties as a mode of interaction and, finally, the joint use of competitive advantages as a result of the relationship. Smart Alliances must be understood as an optimal collaboration framework that allows the companies involved to exploit and maximise the potential offered by collaborative relationships. Specifically, to define Smart Alliances, it is relevant to understand the three main theories that explain collaboration: the Theory of Transaction Cost Economics; the Strategic Approach, and the Theory of Resources and Capabilities. The integration of the key premises of the three theories allows us to identify the main characteristics of Smart Alliances. Thus, Smart Alliances are:

- Alliances that are efficient in economic-financial terms and are aimed at minimising costs and risks throughout their life cycle.
- Alliances that are consistent with the strategy of the collaborating parties, since said strategic orientation allows maximising benefits through an improvement in the competitive position.
- Alliances that manage the resources and capabilities of the parties involved in a way that guarantees greater complementarity, takes advantage of the strengths of the parties, and develops organisational learning.

Finally, regarding the process to develop Smart Alliances, the interested companies execute each of the stages shown below:
- **FOCUS:** Focus on the phase that encompasses strategic reasoning, along with the delimitation of the idea and the decision whether to collaborate or not.
- **CREATE:** When the project is designed and the selection of the partner, the type of alliance is carried out and the negotiation of the agreement is developed.
- **MANAGE:** Manage phase in which the collaborative project is activated, and the scorecard is defined to evaluate the implementation plan.
- **SUSTAIN:** Evolve phase that encompasses reflection on the continuity of the collaborative project.

The project developed by the research centre MIK (2022), aimed at identifying and evaluating the competences of the role of Alliance Manager provides interesting descriptions of the roles of Alliance Manager, including respective differences with Corporative and Operative roles.

The characteristics of the role of **Corporative Alliance Manager**:
- Sense of urgency to achieve objectives; Varied activities; Multiple simultaneous projects; Multiple tasks; The operation develops at a dizzying pace
- Focus on results; Idea generation, innovative and creative problem solving; Establish harmony and relationships, with a view to obtaining results; Achieving the commitment of others.
- Orientation to problem solving
- Assumption of risk
- Action orientation and relatively collaborative decision making
- Speed in making decisions to respond to changes.
- Extroverted, confident, enthusiastic, persuasive; Influences, stimulate others to action; Collaboration focused on the results
- Very directive leadership based on generalist experience and general knowledge of systems

- Leadership to ensure business results are achieved
- Delegation of details as necessary, with follow-up on deadlines and quality
- Responsibility for results

The functions of the Corporative Alliance Manager are presented below:
- Collect and Analyse data
- Take responsibility for making changes and innovations
- Speak persuasively from your own point of view
- Solve unusual new problems
- Ensure compliance with laws, regulations, guiding principles of the company
- Be responsible for the safety and security of the company itself
- Sell ideas or other intangibles
- Encourage the personal growth and development of employees
- Make important decisions independently
- Set priorities for the activities of others
- Participate in decision making in a work team or as part of committees.
- Develop strategic plans for the entire activity or unit.
- Be cautious when evaluating new situations
- Closely monitor the accuracy of work done by oneself and others
- Overcome objections or hostility with diplomacy
- Persuade others to change their opinions or attitudes
- Make decisions in ambiguous situations.
- Work with complex systems or processes
- Start new businesses
- Understand the problems and concerns of others
- Exercise leadership in times of change
- Meet new people frequently
- Protect the company against risks
- Make decisions about large disbursements or investments
- Institute major changes in policies or strategies
- Overcome opposition to unpopular measures
- Be a patient and sensitive interlocutor
- Identify and eliminate problems on your own
- Tactfully avoid disagreements or conflicts.
- Expand company operations into new markets
- Represent the company before new groups of people

The characteristics of the role of **Operative Alliance Manager**:
- The operation is developed at a dizzying pace; Multiple projects carried out simultaneously
- A very social approach: It requires assuming the attitude of: "How can I help you?" A lot is dispensed attention to building and maintaining relationships, especially where help, rather than pressure on others fosters the relationship
- It is important to observe established guidelines and procedures. It is important to involve others in decision making; there is a need to achieve consensus rather than take isolated decisions; Open, fluent, and significant communication
- The position requires working with and through others, especially in a collaborative function
- There is a need to implement a communication style persuasive, "salesy" (rather than "informative")
- Team environment: the leader must be willing to get fully involved in the work and roll up his or her sleeves to do it personally when necessary. A leader is needed who leads by example, with first-hand knowledge in specialty; Strict and friendly monitoring of the delegated tasks, to ensure adequate results

The functions of the Operative Alliance Manager are presented below:
- Meet the dates established for completing tasks
- Be always calm and patient
- Build friendly personal relationships with others
- Speak persuasively from your own point of view
- Solve new or unusual problems
- Ensure compliance with laws, regulations, guiding principles of the company
- Sell ideas or other intangibles
- Work at a continuous and constant pace
- Carry out instructions carefully
- Set priorities for the activities of others
- Delegate authority to collaborators
- Work in a thorough and organized manner
- Control work ensuring quality standards are met
- Participate in decision making in a work team or as part of committees
- Be responsible for a different number of activities
- Work with precision, with measurements or other types of data
- Develop strategic plans for the entire activity or unit.
- Be cautious when evaluating new stocks
- Closely monitor the accuracy of work done by oneself and others
- Be responsible for the quality of the work of others
- Overcome objections or hostility with diplomacy

- Work with complex systems or processes
- Keep waste or loss to a minimum
- Understand the problems or concerns of others
- Influencing the attitudes and opinions of others
- Protect the company against risks
- Prepare detailed financial reports, balance sheets, etc.
- Encourage others to express their opinions
- Maintain specialized knowledge in the profession or technology
- Hold training, motivation, and orientation meetings
- Provide useful services to others
- Review complex documents or reports
- Anticipate problems in area of expertise
- Be a patient and sensitive interlocutor
- Focus on detail work
- Assume responsibility for group activities
- Create team spirit in colleagues and collaborators
- Tactfully avoid disagreements or conflicts
- Perform comfortably with established routines and procedures
- Represent the company before new groups of people.

The project "Green skills" developed by the research centre MIK (2022), aimed at conceptualising, and diagnosing green skills development in the Basque Country, comes to a definition of green skills. **Green or ecological competences** are defined as those technical skills, values and attitudes oriented to transition ecological, which allow the environmental sustainability of the activity's economics and consequently the development of a green economy (Forética, 2022; International Labor Office, 2011; Kamis et al., 2018; LinkedIn Economic Graph, 2022; Sern et al., 2018; United Nations Industrial Development Organization, 2020).

Under the title "Design, development and validation of an interactionist model of professional competencies for industry 4.0" this Thesis provide preliminary empirical evidence on the potential that strategic skills must develop human agency through the design and implementation of strategies, as a way of facing the challenges of Industry 4.0, which are discussed in terms of their theoretical, methodological, and practical implications.

This study identifies, through a systematic literature review, skills associated with Industry 4.0, and classified as cognitive, interpersonal/managing people, functional business, technological, strategic and, also shows that cognitive, functional business, managing people and strategic skills are considered essential capacities

to cope with their organizational demands, which differ at the organizational level (i.e., managers, subordinates). Apart from that, the study demonstrates satisfactory psychometric properties of the strategic skills questionnaire used and reveals that there are two higher-order strategic capacities (i.e., situational assessment, strategy implementation), shaping seven different but related lower-order strategic skills (i.e.,anticipating, scanning, connecting, goal setting, planning, monitoring, enacting).

The thesis " Professional, social, academic and personal competencies personal competences in the european area of graduates in ade and communication" reveals, among other aspects, that the profiles preferred by the hiring companies, regardless of the position that the employee has to develop, are those of young people who have completed their studies in law, communication, and business administration and management (ADE), the aforementioned degrees have been analyzed in this paper and it is derived from it that 43.5% of the hires of recent graduates hired by companies go to the group of graduates in the degrees of economics and law, with of young graduates in economics and law, compared to 31.7% of young scientists (medicine, chemistry, others).

This thesis also shows that leadership is the most required skill, followed by flexibility, communication, teamwork, ability to negotiate, willingness to travel, initiative, planning skills, good presence, and people skills in which the company always comes first. Work under pressure, skill is considered a must because in any job today you must be prepared to work under pressure, especially in a managerial position.

The article "Subjective and organizational determinants of strategic competences – innate abilities or acquired skills? An empirical study" shows innate and immutable, and acquired and developmental nature of the strategic competencies, what is relevant for taking developing the strategic competencies of managers in the social and professional learning process.

"Managers' strategic thinking patterns from a perspective" article explains that the decision-making processes of managers emphasize the role of a variety of managerial competencies in the effectiveness of a manager and have important practical consequences in building competencies models of managerial positions and in the development of the strategic competencies.

The research paper "The importance of green competencies in advancing organizational sustainability: The empirical perspective" contributes to the studies on Green Competences being a significant antecedent of achieving the desired business results in terms of organizational sustainability.

"An Exploratory Study on Alliance Competence and Alliance Portfolio Orientation in Romanian Firms" study is projected to improve the understanding of the strategic alliances/collaborative strategies phenomenon of theorists and practitioners working within the strategic management field. This article shows that within participating firms there is a medium level of competence to formulate, implement and evaluate collaborative strategies. Regarding the Alliance Portfolio Orientation, the results reveal that from our sample, 60% of the firms collaborate only to obtain short-term/financial gains and 40% of the firms are more long-term oriented and partner also to improve firm's incremental innovative performance. It´s also found that neither firm does not partner to bring to the market new products/services/solutions in the form of radical innovations.

2.1.4. Definition of Sustainable Alliance Manager

Based on the literature review, we present our definition about the role of SAM.

Definition 1: A Sustainable Alliance Manager is an adept professional who orchestrates strategic alliances among organisations to leverage their unique capabilities and resources for mutual benefit while prioritising environmentally conscious initiatives. This role entails fostering a green culture, embracing energy conservation, and facilitating innovative responses to emerging environmental challenges.

Definition 2: The role of a Sustainable Alliance Manager involves forming purposive relationships between firms with compatible goals, aiming to address market opportunities while generating positive environmental and social impacts. This individual navigates the complexities of strategic environmental alliances, facilitating collaboration to explore and leverage environmental technologies for sustainable development.

Definition 3: A Sustainable Alliance Manager is tasked with bridging competencies and fostering partnerships aimed at achieving green development and management objectives. This multifaceted role encompasses integrating core competencies, promoting green consciousness, and strategically aligning organisational capabilities to drive sustainability initiatives while enhancing business reputation and performance.

Definition 4: A Sustainable Alliance Manager serves as a catalyst for green conscious collaboration, guiding organisations towards strategic alliances that

prioritise sustainability and environmental stewardship. This role entails fostering a deep understanding of green consciousness among alliance partners, promoting eco-friendly initiatives, and driving collective efforts to address environmental challenges while pursuing mutual business goals.

Definition 5: A Sustainable Alliance Manager is a versatile leader adept in multiple competences essential for fostering successful strategic alliances with a focus on sustainability. This role combines market orientation, relational competence, joint alliance competence, and operational competence to navigate the complexities of forming and managing alliances. Additionally, the manager integrates green consciousness into alliance strategies, ensuring that collaborative efforts align with environmental goals while maximising business value for all parties involved.

2.2. Competences of the role of sustainable alliance manager

To define the competences of the role of sustainable alliance manager it was important first to analyse various literature sources and in the given table 5 below with detailed revealed essential results, competences of the alliance manager and specific relevance for the project.

Table 9: Available SAM competencies

No.	Source type	Source name	Abstract	Essential results	Competences of the manager of the alliance	Relevance for the project
1	Article	Dadashian, F., Shakibfar, S., Fazel Zarandi, M. H. (2007). Strategic alliance for core competencies improvement in textile industries. International Journal of Management Science and Engineering Management, 2(2), 98-107	Strategic alliances are increasingly gaining popularity for Textile companies to achieve fast and economic growth in today's globalisation. Strategic alliances are an important source of resources, learning, and thereby core competencies improvement. So, managers have to make conscious decisions to develop certain competencies and in order to have all competencies that are required to be successful, firms look for strategic alliances and to leverage their partner firms' competencies.	AHP analysis would help a company to make more informed strategic management decisions concerning further investment for competences and key assets development and outsourcing non-core assets and competences. This paper reports on the results of that empirical survey, the results show that: Maintain market position; Expand their competencies; Gain access to complementary resources; Compete against common competitors; Reducing risk and uncertainty are important influences on alliance making for textile companies. Careful strategic planning and good partnership preparation are essential for alliance success.	Ability to combine different competencies	Available SAM competencies

No.	Source type	Source name	Abstract	Essential results	Competences of the manager of the alliance	Relevance for the project
2	Article	Ashby, J., Heinrich, G., Burpee, G., Remington, T., Wilson, K., Quiros, C. A., Aldana, M., & Ferris, S. (2009). What farmers want: collective capacity for sustainable entrepreneurship. International Journal of Agricultural Sustainability, 7:2, 130-146, DOI:10.3763/ijas.2009.0439	Expanding equitable access to product markets for millions of poor farmers is of critical importance to the development of sustainable rural livelihoods in developing countries. This paper addresses the question of how to improve strategies for improving their capacity to access dynamic markets on a large scale. Skill formation receives little attention in the current debate about how to overcome wealth differentiated barriers to market entry in poor rural societies	Systemised 5 competences.	1. Team management 2. Financial management 3. Marketing management 4. Experimentation and innovation management (access to new technologies) 5. Sustainable production and natural resource management	Available SAM competencies

No.	Source type	Source name	Abstract	Essential results	Competences of the manager of the alliance	Relevance for the project
3	Report	The Association of Strategic Alliance Professionals (ASAP). (2011). Alliance Management Professional Development Guide. https://www.petersimoons.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/ASAP-Proffesional-Development-Guide.pdf	By combining competency lists, job descriptions, development resources, and future skills requirements, we have tried to present a comprehensive look at the qualification areas that ASAP's members need to master to ensure that they are operating at the top of their game.	Systematised categories of competences of the alliance manager	1. Communication Skills 2. Time Management 3. Conflict Resolution 4. Contract Negotiation 5. Financial Management 6. Legal Aspects of Alliance Work 7. Corporate Relationship Management 8. Interpersonal Skills 9. Change Management 10. Problem Resolution/ Critical Thinking 11. Project Management 12. Cross-Functional Team Management 13. Global Thinking 14. Leadership 15. Team Management 16. Doing Business with Other Cultures 17. Influencing Others/ Influencing Without Authority/Coaching Leaders	Available SAM competencies

No.	Source type	Source name	Abstract	Essential results	Competences of the manager of the alliance	Relevance for the project
4	Article	Gammoh, B. S., Voss, K. E. (2013). Alliance competence: The moderating role of valence of alliance experience. European Journal of Marketing, 47(5-6), DOI: 10.1108/03090 561311307029	The purpose of this paper is to investigate alliance formation competence and attitudes towards brand alliances as antecedents of the firm's propensity to brandable. It aims to test the hypothesis that the relationship between alliance experience and alliance competence is moderated by the relative quality of the experience, which the authors call valence of alliance experience.	The firm's propensity to engage in brand alliances is a function of well-developed strategic alliance capabilities and positive managerial attitudes toward brand alliances. Importantly, when the firm's prior experience in alliances is relatively more positive the relationship between alliance experience and alliance competence is strengthened.	Collaborative competence: trust, communication, and coordination	Available SAM competencies

No.	Source type	Source name	Abstract	Essential results	Competences of the manager of the alliance	Relevance for the project
5	Article	Hesselbarth, C., & Schaltegger, S. (2014). Educating change agents for sustainability – learnings from the first sustainability management Master of Business Administration. Journal of Cleaner Production, 62: 24-36, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2013.03.042	In recent years knowledge and capabilities to manage corporate sustainability have become a significant component of different career paths in companies, consultancies, and even in non-profit and public institutions. As an answer to this worldwide trend of a new profession, ever more universities and business schools have taken the initiative to increase their teaching activities in corporate social responsibility and sustainability management. As most courses do not have a long track record and as only a limited number of management-oriented continuous education studies exists so far we still know little about how managers could be educated most effectively to become change agents for corporate sustainability. This paper examines a case study and provides insight into ten years of MBA education for sustainability management at the Centre for Sustainability Management, Leuphana University Lüneburg, Germany.	A graduate survey (analysing the business practice experience of the first 85 successful MBA students) and the mid-term impact of the first master's program in Sustainability Management. Based on the analysis, a competence matrix was created for structuring the main components of the master's degree in sustainability management. The paper reveals that ongoing research is needed to consider the practical experiences that MBA graduates gain in applying the knowledge they have acquired and to relate these insights to curriculum development.	1. Strategic competence 2. Systems-thinking competence 3. Anticipatory competence 4. Normative competence 5. Interpersonal competence	Available SAM competencies

No.	Source type	Source name	Abstract	Essential results	Competences of the manager of the alliance	Relevance for the project
6	Article	Lans, T., Blok, V., & Wesselink, R. (2014). Learning apart and together: towards an integrated competence framework for sustainable entrepreneurship in higher education. Journal of Cleaner Production, 62:37-47, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2013.03.036	Sustainable entrepreneurs, i.e., those who proactively facilitate latent demands for sustainable development, are now in higher demand than ever before. Higher (business) education can play an important role in laying the foundation for these sustainable entrepreneurs. Traditionally, however, educational scholars focus either on the issue of education for sustainability or on entrepreneurship education. There is little work which explores and/or crosses the boundaries between these two disciplines, let alone work in which an effort is made to integrate these perspectives.	Based on a literature review, focus group discussions with teachers in higher education (n = 8) and a structured questionnaire among students (n = 211), a set of clear, distinct competencies was developed, providing steppingstones for monitoring students' sustainable entrepreneurship development in school-based environments.	1. Systems-thinking competence 2. Embracing diversity and interdisciplinarity competence 3. Foresighted thinking competence 4. Normative competence 5. Action competence 6. Interpersonal competence 7. Strategic management competence	Available SAM competencies

No.	Source type	Source name	Abstract	Essential results	Competences of the manager of the alliance	Relevance for the project
7	Article	Wesselink, R., Blok, V., van Leur, S., Lans, T., & Dentoni, D. (2015). Individual competencies for managers engaged in corporate sustainable management practices. Journal of Cleaner Production, 106:497-506, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2014.10.093	Corporations increasingly acknowledge the importance of sustainable practices. Corporate social responsibility is therefore gaining significance in the business world. Since solving corporate social responsibility issues is not a routine job, every challenge in corporate social responsibility requires its own approach; and management competencies are crucial for designing appropriate approaches towards the realisation of sustainable solutions.	Based on seven corporate social responsibility competencies synthesised from the extant literature, this research provides an empirical analysis of which of these competencies managers need in order to achieve corporate social responsibility goals within their specific context; and at which specific stage of the implementation process.	1. Systems thinking competence 2. Embracing diversity and interdisciplinarity competence 3. Interpersonal competence 4. Action competence 5. Strategic management competence	Available SAM competencies

No.	Source type	Source name	Abstract	Essential results	Competences of the manager of the alliance	Relevance for the project
8	Article	Osagie, E. R., Wesselink, R., Blok, V., Lans, T., & Mulder, M. (2016). Individual Competencies for Corporate Social Responsibility: A Literature and Practice Perspective. J Bus Ethics, 135:233–252, DOI 10.1007/ s10551-014-2469-0	Because corporate social responsibility (CSR) can be beneficial to both companies and its stakeholders, interest in factors that support CSR performance has grown in recent years. A thorough integration of CSR in core business processes is particularly important for achieving effective long-term CSR practices.	The literature review supplemented with interview data allowed us to distinguish eight different competencies related to CSR.	1. Anticipating CSR* challenges 2. Understanding CSR-relevant systems and subsystems 3. Understanding CSR-relevant standards 4. CSR management competencies 5. Realising CSR-supportive interpersonal processes 6. Employing CSR-supportive personal characteristics and attitudes 7. Personal value-driven competencies 8. Reflecting on personal CSR views and experiences	Available SAM competencies
9	Arcile	Ingason, H. Þ., & Jónsdóttir, E. R. (2017). The house of competence of the quality manager. Cogent Business & Management, 4:1, 1345050, DOI: 10.1080/ 23311975.2017. 1345050	In modern organisations the work of the quality manager is varied and complex. Therefore, what common attributes should characterise an exemplary quality manager?	A conceptual model has been developed, entitled The House of Competence of the Quality Manager.	1.Technical expertise; 2.Behavioural competence; 3.Contextual competence	Available SAM competencies

No.	Source type	Source name	Abstract	Essential results	Competences of the manager of the alliance	Relevance for the project
10	Article	Glinkowska, B. A. (2017). Characteristics and Competencies of a Contemporary Polish Manager Working in International Markets. JPM, 8(2):57–68. http://dx.doi.org/10.12775/JPM.2017.011	The main aim of the study is to identify the competences and characteristics of a contemporary Polish manager working in the international markets either directly or indirectly (in Polish enterprises) and then to compare that profile with that of the Polish manager proposed by J. Penc in 2001.	This study is a comparative analysis of the managerial characteristics and competences profile of the Polish manager over the last sixteen years. The directions of evolving these qualities and competencies in contemporary Polish managers have been identified, which may be the basis for future analyses. The conducted research has shown a clear evolution of the characteristics and competencies of a modern manager in Polish conditions. Based on them, the future profile can be determined.	1. Ability to visualise and formulate goals 2. Ability to think and act conceptually 3. Support and motivation 4. Ability to listen and draw conclusions 5. Honesty, justice, ethics, morality, social responsibility, 6. Ability to work and build multicultural teams 7. Enthusiasm and energy 8. Knowledge of the most advanced communication technologies 9. Ability to control and detect errors	Available SAM competencies

No.	Source type	Source name	Abstract	Essential results	Competences of the manager of the alliance	Relevance for the project
11	Article	Makhloufi, L., & Al-Erjal, H. M. E. A. (2017). The Effect of Core Competence on the Sustainable Competitive Advantage of Malaysian SMEs Furniture Industry. Journal of Humanities, Language, Culture and Business (HLCB), 1(3):90-99, eISSN: 01268147	In fact, a core competence concept emerged through the resource-based view of the firm which emphasised that a sustainable competitive advantage generates from a firm's possession unique resources and difficulty to imitate knowledge, skills, and competencies by competitors. Therefore, today firms acknowledge that core competence is the crucial key strategy for achieving and sustaining competitive advantage.	Therefore, this paper first seeks to determine and explain the relationship between furniture firm's core competencies and the success achieving a sustainable competitive advantage and second, the author observed that there was little research addressing the issues of the core competencies research area in the SMEs from the managerial and operational point of view. However, the study provides a deep understanding of how core competencies are understood and a crucial factor among SMEs owner/ manager manufacturing to meet the challenges of the business competitive conditions.	1. Integrative competence	Available SAM competencies

No.	Source type	Source name	Abstract	Essential results	Competences of the manager of the alliance	Relevance for the project
12	Article	Ploum, L., Blok, V., Lans, T., & Omta, O. (2018). Toward a Validated Competence Framework for Sustainable Entrepreneurship. Organization & Environment, 31(2):113-132. https://doi.org/10.1177/1086026617697039	Knowledge, skills, and attitudes to manage sustainable development have become significant components of different career paths. Previous research has explored which competencies are needed for future change agents in the field of sustainable development. Sustainable entrepreneurship can be seen as a promising work context in which these competencies are truly at the forefront and enacted. Several researchers have compiled frameworks of key competencies. However, their work is exploratory in nature and a more in-depth analysis of these frameworks are called for.	In this study, an existing competence framework for sustainable entrepreneurship was tested in terms of construct validity, among 402 would-be entrepreneurs. The results suggest the inclusion of six competencies, which constitute a competence framework with a good model fit. Furthermore, a new combination of two existing competencies is proposed. This study has important implications for the debate on which competencies for sustainable entrepreneurship is essential on theoretical and empirical grounds.	1. Identification of sustainable business opportunities 2. Strategic management competence and action competence 3. Embracing diversity and interdisciplinary competence 4. Systems thinking competence 5. Normative competence 6. Foresighted thinking competence 7. Interpersonal competence	Available SAM competencies

No.	Source type	Source name	Abstract	Essential results	Competences of the manager of the alliance	Relevance for the project
13	Article	Horváthová, P., Čopíková, A., & Mokrá, K. (2019). Methodology proposal of the creation of competency models and competency model for the position of a sales manager in an industrial organisation using the AHP method and Saaty's method of determining weights. Economic Research-Ekonomska Istraživanja, 32(1):2594-2613, DOI:10. 1080/133167 7X.2019.1653780	The aim of this paper is to create a competency model for the position of a sales manager in a manufacturing industry organisation according to the proposed methodology of the competency models creation. The competency model will be created using the AHP method and Saaty's method of determining weights. There is briefly explained the issue of competencies and competency models in the introductory part of the paper and then the used methods are clarified.	Created competency models can be mainly used for employee selection, training and development, employee evaluation and remuneration.	1. Managerial competencies – time management; leadership; strategic thinking; orientation on result. 2. Interpersonal competencies – orientation on customer; integrity; communication; teamwork; self-reliance. 3. Technical competencies – creative thinking; orientation on standards and quality; financial management; production management	Available SAM competencies

No.	Source type	Source name	Abstract	Essential results	Competences of the manager of the alliance	Relevance for the project
14	Article	Foucrier, T., & Wiek, A. (2019). A Process-Oriented Framework of Competencies for Sustainability Entrepreneurship. Sustainability, 11(24):7250. https://doi.org/10.3390/su11247250	Employee-owned businesses, benefit corporations, and other e orts in sustainability entrepreneurship are responding to prevalent challenges such as climate change, economic inequalities, and unethical business behaviour. Universities, however, often fall short in sufficiently equipping students with competencies in sustainability entrepreneurship. One reason is that none of the existing frameworks links competencies to the actual processes of entrepreneurship, from discovery to consolidation.	A process-oriented and literature-based sustainability entrepreneurship compe-tence system was created.	1. Knowledge about social, environ-mental, and sustainability challenges 2. Information search skills 3. Entrepre-neurial mind-set	Available SAM compe-tencies

No.	Source type	Source name	Abstract	Essential results	Competences of the manager of the alliance	Relevance for the project
15	Article	Biberhofer, P., Lintner, C., Bernhardt, J., & Rieckmann, M. (2019). Facilitating work performance of sustainability-driven entrepreneurs through higher education: The relevance of competencies, values, worldviews, and opportunities. The International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Innovation, 20(1):21-38. https://doi.org/10.1177/1465750318755881	This article explores the work performance of sustainability-driven entrepreneurs to be able to provide better learning settings in higher education for sustainability-driven entrepreneurship (SDE). Sustainability-driven entrepreneurs are actors who initiate and successfully implement sustainable innovations in pursuit of social and ecological objectives in addition to economic ones as the basis of their organisational strategy. SDE suggests an action-oriented process view and emphasises the nexus of individuals and opportunities. This article argues that competencies as well as deeper levels of knowledge regarding values and worldviews are key dimensions constituting SDE.	Conducted Qualitative - exploratory research, 48 semi-structured interviews were conducted with entrepreneurs and managers from companies and non-profit organisations that implement sustainable strategies and activities in their economic enterprises in five European regions: Vienna, Gothenburg, Brno, Bolzano and Vechta. The conclusions have considerable significance for study programs in higher education institutions, which aim to develop students' competencies, deeper levels of knowledge about values and worldviews, and promote SDE activity results.	1. Systemic competency 2. Anticipatory competency 3. Normative competency 4. Strategic competence 5. Interpersonal competency	Available SAM competencies

No.	Source type	Source name	Abstract	Essential results	Competences of the manager of the alliance	Relevance for the project
16	Article	Bhengu, T. T., Mchunu, B. S., & Bayeni, S. D. (2020). Growing Our Own Timber! Lived Experiences of Five School Principals in Using a Systems Thinking Approach for School Development. SAGE Open, 1–12. DOI: 10.1177/ 215824402 0902061	This article presents and discusses the findings from five principals about their experiences of using systems thinking approach to school development. This was an ethnographic multiple case study that was conducted in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Literature demonstrates the efficacies of using systems thinking as an approach in dealing with complex school issues.	The concept of systemic leadership has been developed.	1. Systemic leadership	Available SAM competencies

No.	Source type	Source name	Abstract	Essential results	Competences of the manager of the alliance	Relevance for the project
17	Article	Markauskienė, G. (2020). Lūkesčiai aukščiausio lygmens vadovų kompetencijoms: kaita ir geroji praktika. Buhalterinės apskaitos teorija ir praktika, 22, DOI: https://doi.org/10.15388/batp.2020.25	As the economic situation changes, extremely high requirements are placed on the competencies of top-level managers: starting from functional, formal leadership, clearly defined status and work functions, and ending with the image of a modern leader, which includes endless competencies and even character traits and is constantly changing. Examining the research level of the scientific problem, it is noticed that the importance of competences, the cooperation of top-level managers, the topic of personal development, leadership, as well as the most important competences of managers can determine business success are studied.	The change of expectations for top-level managers' competencies in the context of good practices was evaluated.	1. The manager clearly communicates expectations 2. The manager behaves ethically 3. The manager acts honestly 4. The manager presents clear tasks 5. The leader's words do not contradict his actions 6. The manager provides clear objectives 7. The manager motivates the team 8. The manager values honesty and openness 9. The manager evaluates the team 10. Manager analyses and solves problems 11. The manager is interested in the team 12. The manager takes responsibility	Available SAM competencies

No.	Source type	Source name	Abstract	Essential results	Competences of the manager of the alliance	Relevance for the project
18	Article	MacDonald, A., Clarke, A., Ordonez-Ponce, E., Chai, Z., & Andreasen, J. (2020). Sustainability Managers: The Job Roles and Competencies of Building Sustainable Cities and Communities. Public Performance & Management Review, 43(6):1413-1444, DOI: 10.1080/ 15309576. 2020.1803091	Sustainable development has been a local public policy concern for nearly three decades. Accordingly, the demand for hiring sustainability professionals is increasing within local governments. However, the job of a municipal sustainability manager is notably understudied as extant literature provides little clarity on who fills these positions, what their job entails, and how they perform their job. This article seeks to address these important research questions by examining the qualifications (who), job responsibilities and work activities (what), as well as the sustainability management competencies that experienced professionals identify as most valuable for performing their sustainability manager job (how). Twenty-six sustainability professionals employed by twenty-five different municipalities across Canada were interviewed.	Ultimately, this article presents a detailed assessment of the specific job of a municipality sustainability manager from the perspective of incumbents who have demonstrated job performance; thus, contributing salient information for continued progress towards achieving more sustainable cities and communities.	1. Adaptive management 2. Communication 3. Change management 4. Multi-disciplinary collaboration for intervention formulation and implementation 5. Interpersonal 6. Sustainability knowledge 7. Strategic thinking 8. Information seeking 9. Project management 10. Future-oriented thinking 11. Sustainability values 12. Systems thinking	Available SAM competencies

No.	Source type	Source name	Abstract	Essential results	Competences of the manager of the alliance	Relevance for the project
19	Article	Martin, J., Elg, M., Gremyr, I., & Wallo, A. (2021). Towards a quality management competence framework: exploring needed competencies in quality management. Total Quality Management & Business Excellence, 32:3-4, 359-378, DOI:10.1080/14783363.2019.1576516	Few empirical studies have focused on what quality management practitioners do, with even fewer studies focusing on what it actually takes to do quality management work, i.e., the competencies of quality management. The purpose of this paper is to introduce a competence-based terminology for describing general competencies of quality management work in organisations and to create a competence framework to understand what is needed to be a quality management practitioner. This paper is based on an embedded, qualitative multiple-case study design incorporating four Swedish large size organisations where designated quality management practitioners (n=33) were selected and interviewed.	A quality management competence framework incorporating four main quality management competence dimensions is presented: the human, the methods & process, the conceptual and the contextual competence dimensions.	1. Human competence dimension 2. Methods and process competence dimension 3. Conceptual competence dimension 4. Contextual competence dimension	Available SAM competencies

No.	Source type	Source name	Abstract	Essential results	Competences of the manager of the alliance	Relevance for the project
20	Article	Su, J., Wood, A. M., & Gargeya, V. B. (2022) Sustainable entrepreneurship in the apparel industry: Passion and challenges. The Journal of The Textile Institute, 113:9, 1935-1941, DOI: 10.1080/ 00405000. 2021.1957276	Guided by the Triple Bottom Line theory, this study aims to acquire a deeper understanding of the passion and challenges that entrepreneur face in developing their sustainable apparel businesses. Qualitative data were collected via personal interviews with the research goal of giving a thematic description of the experience of sustainable apparel entrepreneurs.	The study expands the existing apparel literature by examining sustainable apparel business from an entrepreneurship perspective.	1. A creative approach to problem solving	Available SAM competencies
21	Article	Blom, T., Steyn, H., & Bond-Barnard, T. J. (2022). The Role of Project Manager Competence in Project Management Success: The Case of a Utility Company. South African Journal of Industrial Engineering, 34(1), 143-154	A project manager's competency depends on the project's complexity and includes a unique set of personal attributes and the ability to apply appropriate leadership styles. This paper reports on a Delphi study that includes the views of 30 experts – employed by a utility that executes projects with different levels of complexity.	The results confirm that project manager competence is influenced by leadership styles that are appropriate for specific project lifecycle stages and levels of project complexity, as well as specific personal attributes. The study thus provides guidance regarding the project manager competence that is required for specific situations.	Possible characteristics of SAM: 1. Ability to handle pressure 2. Determination 3. Proactivity 4. Honesty 5. A sense of responsibility 6. Assuredness 7. Maturity 8. Anticipation 9. Innovativeness 10. Respect for the feelings of others 11. Justice 12. Loyalty 13. Stable emotions 14. Optimism 15. Empathy	Available SAM competencies

No.	Source type	Source name	Abstract	Essential results	Competences of the manager of the alliance	Relevance for the project
22	Article	Blom, T., Steyn, H., & Bond-Barnard, T. J. (2022). The Role of Project Manager Competence in Project Management Success: The Case of a Utility Company. South African Journal of Industrial Engineering, 34(1), 143-154	A project manager's competency depends on the project's complexity and includes a unique set of personal attributes and the ability to apply appropriate leadership styles. This paper reports on a Delphi study that includes the views of 30 experts – employed by a utility that executes projects with different levels of complexity.	The results confirm that project manager competence is influenced by leadership styles that are appropriate for specific project lifecycle stages and levels of project complexity, as well as specific personal attributes. The study thus provides guidance regarding the project manager competence that is required for specific situations.	Possible characteristics of SAM: 1. Ability to handle pressure 2. Determination 3. Proactivity 4. Honesty 5. A sense of responsibility 6. Assuredness 7. Maturity 8. Anticipation 9. Innovativeness 10. Respect for the feelings of others 11. Justice 12. Loyalty 13. Stable emotions 14. Optimism 15. Empathy	Available SAM competencies

No.	Source type	Source name	Abstract	Essential results	Competences of the manager of the alliance	Relevance for the project
23	Article	Tovkanets, O. (2022). Development of Management Competences of an Educational Manager in the Effective Organization of the Educational Process. Sectio J, Paedagogia-Psychologia, 35(2), 197–207. DOI: 10.17951/ j.2022.35.2.197-207	The article substantiates the role of improving the managerial competence of the education manager in ensuring the effectiveness of the organisation of the educational process. The purpose of the article is to determine the role and importance of managerial competence of the education manager in ensuring the effectiveness of the organisation of the educational process.	Systematised universal functions (development and management decision-making [planning], organisation of certain tasks, adjustments, accounting, and control) and components of managerial activity (diagnostic, prognostic, projective, organisational, communicative, motivational, emotional volitional, comparative-evaluative) have been outlined.	1. Diagnostic component 2. Prognostic component 3. Innovation component 4. Projection component 5. Organisational component 6. Communication component 7. Motivational component 8. Emotional component 9. Comparative and evaluative component	Available SAM competencies

No.	Source type	Source name	Abstract	Essential results	Competences of the manager of the alliance	Relevance for the project
24	Article	Riandita, A., Brostrom, A., Feldmann, A., & Cagliano, R. (2022). Legitimation work in sustainable entrepreneurship: Sustainability ventures' journey towards the establishment of major partnerships. International Small Business Journal: Researching Entrepreneurship, 40(7):904-929, https://doi.org/10.1177/02662426211056799	Sustainable entrepreneurship, that is, venturing with the aim of contributing to a shift of practices towards environmental and social sustainability, is an increasingly prominent phenomenon. This article investigates how sustainability ventures orient between dual – commercial and environmental – logics when conducting the legitimation work necessary to secure their first major partnership with an incumbent firm.	A formal approval procedure has been set up, with pilot phases before starting a partnership agreement between different organisations.	1. Assessment of partnership competencies	Available SAM competencies

No.	Source type	Source name	Abstract	Essential results	Competences of the manager of the alliance	Relevance for the project
25	Article	Li, S., Miles, K., George, R. E., Ertubey, C., Pype, P., & Liu, J. (2023). A critical review of cultural competence frameworks and models in medical and health professional education: A meta-ethnographic synthesis: BEME Guide No. 79. Medical Teacher, 45(10):1085-1107, DOI: 10.1080/0142159X.2023.2174419	The evolution of studies on cultural competence has resulted in the existence of multiple theoretical frameworks and models, each emphasising certain elements of culturally appropriate care, but generally lacking in providing a coherent and systematic approach to teaching this subject.	Three main themes were identified: competences; roles and identities; structural competence. Effective concepts and themes have been incorporated into a new transformative model of ACT culture, which consists of three key areas: activating consciousness, bridging relationships, and transforming into true cultural care.	1. Adaptation to diversity 2. Advocacy 3. Attitudes 4. Awareness 5. Capacity building and empowerment 6. Collaboration 7. Compassion 8. Critical thinking 9. Cultural formulation and application skills 10. Engagement 11. Knowledge application 12. Organisation and leadership 13. Professional commitments 14. Conduct research 15. Self-assessment and reflection 16. Sensitivity 17. Skills	Available SAM competencies

No.	Source type	Source name	Abstract	Essential results	Competences of the manager of the alliance	Relevance for the project
26	Article	Jelonek, M., & Urbaniec, M. (2019). Development of Sustainability Competencies for the Labour Market: An Exploratory Qualitative Study. Sustainability, 11, 5716, doi:10.3390/ su11205716.	The aim of this paper is to explore the key sustainability competencies increasing the employability of higher education graduates in Poland. Based on the results of a broad literature review on key sustainability competencies, the substantive contribution to a coherent framework of typologies of sustainability competencies will be synthesised.	The results may be relevant to institutional support in the design and review of educational programs and training to foster sustainability competencies development.	Key Sustainability Competencies: 1. Systems-thinking competence 2. Normative competence 3. Strategic action competence 4. Interpersonal competence 5. Diversity and interdisciplinarity competence 6. Foresighted thinking – or anticipatory – competence	Available SAM competencies

2.2.1. List of competences

To bridge the gap between conceptual and empirical research on sustainable entrepreneurship competencies, T. Lans et al., (2014) developed a competency framework. This system is dedicated to sustainable entrepreneurship competencies. The competency framework comprises core competencies from the entrepreneurship literature and core competencies from the sustainable business development literature, making it a unique and innovative overview. The competency framework proposed by T. Lans et al. (2014) includes 7 core competencies, which are described as follows:

1. Competence in systems thinking: the ability to identify and analyse all important (sub)systems in various fields (people, planet, profit) and disciplines, including their boundaries.
2. Awareness of diversity and interdisciplinary competence: the ability to structure relationships, notice problems and recognize the legitimacy of other points of view in business decision-making processes; be it environmental, social and/or economic issues.
3. Competence in visionary thinking: the ability to jointly analyse, evaluate and create future "pictures" that assess the impact of local and/or short-term solutions on environmental, social, and economic issues in a global/cosmopolitan environment. scale and in the long term.
4. Normative competence: the ability to identify, apply and align sustainability values, principles, and goals with internal and external stakeholders, without adopting any specific norm, but based on the good character of the person involved in sustainability issues.
5. Action competence: the ability to actively engage in responsible actions, improving the sustainability of social-ecological systems.
6. Interpersonal competence: the ability to motivate, empower and facilitate collaborative and participatory sustainability activities and research.
7. Strategic management competence: the ability to jointly create projects, implement interventions, transitions, and strategies for the practice of sustainable development.

A. MacDonald et al., (2020) provided a list of competencies related to the sustainability profession. Among the most frequently cited are change management, forward thinking, systems thinking, collaboration, and interpersonal competence; Knowledge of the principles of sustainable development; assessment of diversity, environment, and social inclusion.

For example, Wiek et al. (2011) group competencies based on conceptual similarity to create a framework consisting of five key sustainability competencies for research and problem solving: systems thinking, anticipatory, normative, strategic, and interpersonal competencies. A. MacDonald et al., (2020) competencies related to sustainability management behaviour were proposed to be evaluated in 11 categories (Table 10).

Table 10: Competencies Linked to Sustainability Management Behaviours

COMPETENCIES	BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS
Communication	• Adapts message to different stakeholder audiences • Uses common language to speak about sustainability with elected officials and the public • Speaks with confidence about sustainability interventions
Change management	• Communicates positive aspects of proposed change to influence stakeholder perceptions • Explains importance and relevance of proposed change to stakeholders • Adjusts plans to accommodate diverse needs of different stakeholders • Adapts plans to respond to changing situational factors _See also communication and interpersonal competencies_
Multi-disciplinary collaboration for intervention formulation and implementation	**Formulation stage:** • Includes stakeholders early in the formulation process • Collects stakeholder feedback • Listens to and addresses stakeholder concerns • Incorporates stakeholder feedback into the design of the intervention **Implementation stage:** • Convenes stakeholders with key expertise, experience, or other resources • Mentors and builds collaborator capacity • Guides discussions toward common goals • Facilitates conflict resolution • Maintains collaborator engagement • Shares information and other resources freely
Interpersonal	• Listens to understand the diverse perspectives and needs of different stakeholders • Incorporates stakeholder ideas and perspectives into decision making and actions • Builds relationships with colleagues, community members, elected officials, and partners

COMPETENCIES	BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS
Sustainability knowledge	• Possesses solid knowledge of sustainability principles and issues • Has general knowledge across multiple sustainability-related areas
Strategic thinking	• Cultivates clarity of purpose/vision • Sets strategic priorities based on long-term vision • Aligns plan goals with city needs
Information seeking	• Attends sustainability training and courses on an ongoing basis • Seeks out examples of and information on best practices in sustainability • Stays current on evolving approaches and technologies in the sustainability field
Project management	• Budgets and allocates resources to intervention implementation • Schedules activities in a logical sequence for intervention implementation • Ensures adherence to implementation deadlines • Delegates implementation tasks and responsibilities to ensure timely goal achievement
Future-oriented thinking	• Imagines future scenarios • Connects today's actions with prospects for a sustainable future • Understands link between long-term planning and sustainability
Sustainability values	• Demonstrates commitment to sustainability through personal actions • Expresses care and concern for the wellbeing (social, environmental, and economic) of their community • Possesses a passion for environmental protection
Systems thinking	• Possesses knowledge of different component parts of system • Understands interconnections among system parts to anticipate cause and effect interactions

Adapted from: A. MacDonald et al., (2020)

2.2.2. Inputs from the practical perspective

The analysis of good practices identified helps identify the list of competences of the role of Alliance Manager. The project "Alliance Manager" developed by the research centre MIK (2022), aimed at identifying and evaluating the competences of the role of Alliance Manager provides the list of competences of both the Corporative and Operative Alliance Managers.

LIST OF COMPETENCES	OPERATIVE AM	CORPORATIVE AM
1.Strategic vision and collaborative commitment	x	x
2.Entrepreneurship		x
3.Influence and negotiation	x	x
4.Creativity and innovation	x	x
5.Analytical Capacity (interpretation of data and results)	x	x
6. Commitment and involvement	x	x
7.Collaboration		x
8. Achievement orientation	x	x
9. Planning and organizational capacity	x	x
10. Communication	x	
11. Self-control (*tension tolerance*)	x	
12. Multiculturalism	x	x

The competences listed above are described below (table 11).

Table 11: Description of competencies

COMPETENCE	DESCRIPTION
1.Strategic vision and collaborative commitment	Ability to know and understand an issue in its entirety, understand and analyse changes in the environment and establish their short, medium and long-term impact on the organization, optimizing internal strengths, responding to weaknesses and taking advantage of the opportunities of the context. It implies the ability to visualize and lead the alliance with a comprehensive approach, from the origin to the future vision, and achieve challenging objectives and goals, which are positively reflected in the result of the alliance, even in situations of conflict between the parties. All these generating relationships of trust with partners.

COMPETENCE	DESCRIPTION
2.Entrepreneurship	Vision to detect opportunities and drive to move in that direction. Ability to seek change, respond when it presents itself and take advantage of it as an opportunity, and guide one's own activity and that of other people in this direction. It involves living and feeling the alliance and becoming a promoter of it.
3.Influence and negotiation	Ability to persuade other people, use solid and honest arguments, and bring positions together through a joint reasoning exercise, reaching satisfactory agreements that consider the interests of all the parties involved in the alliance and its objectives.
4.Creativity and innovation	Ability to identify and propose changes, generate new and original ideas aimed at improving the systems and methods involved in the alliance. All this through unconventional developments with the aim of adding value to the alliance.
5.Analytical Capacity (interpretation of data and results)	Ability to carry out a rigorous and precise analysis, providing objective criteria, drawing conclusions consistent with the information analysed and establishing priorities for action.
6. Commitment and involvement	Ability to generate relationships of trust with partners, establishing stable and effective ties, and strengthening ties of mutual understanding and understanding. It involves contributing through work and individual effort to the alliance, respecting the diversity of opinions, with an active and constructive attitude.
7.Collaboration	Ability to cooperate with other people, being part of a team and working together to achieve the objectives of the alliance. It involves using communication skills that facilitate participation in the alliance, and it also involves the ability to develop team spirit.
8. Achievement orientation	Meets the objectives set for the alliance, carrying out its work to achieve specific objectives, setting challenging goals or objectives, improving and maintaining a high level of performance.
9. Planning and organizational capacity	Ability to pay attention to detail and effectively determine goals and priorities of the alliance and specify the stages, actions, deadlines, and resources required to achieve the objectives. It includes using mechanisms to monitor and verify the degrees of progress of the different tasks to maintain control of the process and apply the necessary corrective measures.

COMPETENCE	DESCRIPTION
10. Communication	Ability to listen to and understand another person, integrating their message to transmit information clearly and in a timely manner and to maintain open communication channels and formal and informal contact networks. It implies the ability to adapt the message to the interlocutor, selecting the most appropriate language and means of communication.
11. Self-control *(tension tolerance)*	Ability to control one's own emotions and impulses and adapt them to situations or circumstances derived from the alliance. It involves thinking before acting, avoiding premature judgments, and taking responsibility for your own actions.
12. Multiculturalism	The ability to be aware of the different cultures involved in the alliance (country culture and organizational culture) to respond to each of them, align them and develop them according to the objective of the alliance. It involves accepting (respecting, loving, valuing) and enhancing different cultures to act appropriately and flexibly towards each of them.

Regarding the project "Green skills" developed by the research centre MIK (2022), the United Nations mentions the following green competencies (United Nations Industrial Development Organization, 2020):
- Technical and engineering skills: hard skills that encompass competencies related to the design, construction, and evaluation of the. This knowledge prevails especially in ecological buildings, the design of renewable energies and R&D projects on energy savings.
- Scientific knowledge: essential skills for research activities innovation, especially demanded in each of the phases of the value chains and in the public services sector. These competencies are essential for environmental scientists, materials, or hydrologists, for example.
- Operational management capabilities: knowledge related to change of the organizational structure to support ecological activities. Competencies are important, for example, for sales engineers, climate change analysts, sustainability specialists, heads of sustainability or transportation planners.
- Supervisory powers: technical and legal aspects of the activities business necessary to evaluate compliance with technical criteria and legal norms. Some examples are compliance inspectors' environmental regulations, nuclear control technicians, directors of emergency management and paralegals.

The project "Green skills" identifies a list of transversal and specific green skills. Transversal green skills are presented below (Table 12).

Table 12: Transversal green skills

TRANSVERSAL GREEN SKILLS	Green skills transversal to all areas of work on the Circular Economy and sustainability
GST01. Sustainability environmental	Know, understand, and apply the fundamental principles of sustainability, current environmental problems, and implications for the effective management of resources and waste
GST02. Circular Economy	Know, understand, and apply the principles of economics circular and how to apply them in the company to reduce the waste, the generation of waste and extending the useful life of the products.
GST03: Regulations, Regulations, Policies and procedures	Know, understand, and apply regulations and standards related to sustainability and circular economy, and ensure compliance with laws and regulations applicable.
GST04. Technology and analysis of data	Know, understand, and use technological tools for the collection and analysis of data related to the sustainability and Circular Economy initiatives of the company
GST05. Assessment environmental impact	Conduct environmental impact assessments and audits internal and external to measure and quantify the impact of a sustainable or circular intervention, which allows determining the compliance with management policies and practices resources and waste.
GST06. Ethics and CSR	Develop the ethical commitment to sustainability and corporate responsibility in decision making
GST07. Marketing Sustainable and Circular	Effectively communicate related initiatives and achievements with the company's sustainable and circular interventions
GST08. Management circular projects	Plan and execute projects related to sustainability or circularity
GST09. Collaboration circular interdisciplinary	Work as a team with external experts and departments internal to integrate sustainability in the company
GST10. Investments and sustainable finance	Know, understand, and apply financing tools and investment models that support the sustainability of the company
GST11. Management of the supply chain sustainable	Identify and select suppliers that offer subjects sustainable and ethical raw materials, ensuring that their practices meet sustainability standards, minimizing carbon emissions throughout the entire chain.

Specific green skills are presented below (Table 13).

Table 13: Specific green skills

SPECIFIC GREEN SKILLS	Specialist green skills in all areas of work on the Circular Economy and sustainability
GSE01: Materials, Processes and Products Sustainable:	Know the properties of materials and manufacturing processes sustainable transformation, transportation, and packaging to take decisions oriented to product design and development sustainable, minimizing consumption and waste.
GSE02. Eco-design Industrial:	Create and develop industrial products and systems minimizing the use of natural resources, the generation of waste and emissions of polluting substances.
GSE03. Efficiency Energy:	Improve the energy consumption of the company and/or the product throughout its life cycle, minimizing the use of resources and maximizing the incorporation of sources of renewable energy.
GSE04. Mobility sustainable:	Develop sustainable mobility policies and strategies that encourage the use of efficient vehicles and transportation options environmentally friendly transportation.
GSE05: Logistics management sustainable:	Efficiently organize collection, transportation and disposal of products and waste in accordance with the regulations and with the minimization of its environmental impact.
GSE06. Technologies clean:	Know clean and renewable technologies, applied to company circular goals
GSE07. Management carbon:	Measure and reduce carbon emissions related to business activity.
GSE08: Markets carbon:	Understand and comprehend carbon markets as well as the operation of emissions trading systems.
GSE9. Risk management environmental:	Identify, manage, and mitigate environmental risks associated with the company's activity.
GSE10: R&D&I in sustainability:	Promote innovation in products, processes and business models through innovative technologies and practices that extend the useful life of products, reduce the footprint of carbon and support biodiversity
GSE11: Management waste:	Know and apply safe practices and regulations related to waste management, as well as knowing waste classification and separation techniques to facilitate and/or improve its recycling and proper management.
GSE12. Management Water resources:	Efficiently manage available water resources, including monitoring and measuring water use in the company.

SPECIFIC GREEN SKILLS	Specialist green skills in all areas of work on the Circular Economy and sustainability
GSE13. Treatment and Water Reuse:	Recycle, reuse, and properly manage water within of the company's facilities, for example, to cooling or irrigation systems and water management residuals.
GSE14. Water Audit and contingency plans:	Conduct water audits to identify opportunities for saving water and determining areas of high consumption.
GSE15: Recycling and revaluation:	Identify opportunities for recycling and recovery of waste, converting them into resources.
GSE16: Ecosystems and conservation of the species.	Understand how ecosystems work and know the conservation programs for endangered species extinction or at risk.
GSE17: Management natural spaces and Ecological restoration.	Preserve and restore natural habitats in and around the company facilities.

Conclusions

The focus of scientific study was to understand the Sustainable Alliance Manager (SAM) concept since there remained a lack of a comprehensive conceptual framework. An attempt was made to contribute to an integrated structure/framework that encompasses a wide range of concepts, interpretations and strategies and supplies theoretical models toward the emergence of Sustainable Alliance Manager as the theory. For this reason, this study investigated and provided the answer to the given question – investigate and provide the theoretical interpretations and methodological tools that could be used to assess the sustainable alliance manager competences. The study was focused on a definition of the role of Sustainable Alliance Manager. Analyzing the list of competences, focusing on the primary dimensions/aspects of collaborative-green skills and on a flexible and adaptable tool to support the SAM role in SMEs and adding the inputs from the practical perspective, the final output of this study was to identify the preliminary Sustainable Alliance Manager Competence profile, which is provided in table 14.

In the case of Sustainable Alliance Manager, it is important to structure the process related to the Alliance development Process phases: Focus, Create, Manage and Sustain, but also to understand that the behaviour can vary from different companies, more specifically number of employees, sector type and commitment in the green transition.

To verify the preliminary Sustainable Alliance Manager competence profile, the next step of the project will be to analyse the existence of the competencies and their level of development. After the interview, analyses the information about the level of management of alliances in the company and identify, from all the interviews, the most common behaviour's related with each phase of the alliance management. Once the behaviours are identified we will work in the definition of different levels for each competence.

Table 14: Preliminary sustainable alliance manager competence profile

Process of smart alliance development	Mue proposal of key competences	Definition	Collaborative skills	Green skills	Alliance specific competences	Transversal competences
FOCUS (Focus on the phase that encompasses strategic reasoning, along with the delimitation of the idea and the decision whether to collaborate or not.)	1. Systems-thinking competence	Refers to the ability to understand, analyse, and manage complex interactions and interdependencies within and around strategic alliances. It involves considering the broader systems in which the alliance operates, understanding how changes in one part of the system can affect others, and strategically managing these dynamics to promote sustainability.	x			x
	2. Strategic vision (collaborative perspective)	-Ability to understand the changes in the environment and establish their short-, medium- and long-term impact on the organization, optimizing internal strengths, acting on weaknesses, and taking advantage of the opportunities of the context. It implies the ability to visualize and lead the organization with an integral approach, and achieve challenging objectives and goals, which reflect positively on the organizational result. -Ability to know and understand an issue in its entirety, how its parts interact, how people react and what impact they have on the environment, identifying the key elements, and differentiating the important from the generic. Understand the different approaches that a situation or element can have. Understand the trajectory of the issue (where it comes from) and be able to visualize the future (what can happen).	x		x	

Process of smart alliance development	Mue proposal of key competences	Definition	Collaborative skills	Green skills	Alliance specific competences	Transversal competences
		-Contributing through individual work and effort to the collective project. Respecting the diversity of opinions and acting accordingly to the cooperatives model, with an active and constructive attitude both in social and business management, protecting the collective patrimony.				
	3. Circular project management	Ability to effectively plan, execute and manage projects according to circular economy principles. Circular project management involves designing and implementing projects with a focus on sustainability, efficient use of resources, and waste reduction.		x		x
CREATE Create when the project is designed and the selection of the partner, the type of alliance is carried out and the negotiation of the agreement is developed.	4. Alliance design	Identifying the most optimum partners to collaborate with, identifying the type of alliance that best suits the objectives, negotiating respective term. This competence involves a combination of strategic, managerial, and relationship-building skills to create and sustain successful alliances.	x		x	
	5. Interpersonal Skills	Orientation on customer; integrity; communication; teamwork; self-reliance.	x			x
	6. Norms, regulation, policies, and procedures of sustainability	Know, understand, and apply regulations and standards related to sustainability and circular economy, and ensure compliance with laws and regulations applicable.		x		x

Process of smart alliance development	Mue proposal of key competences	Definition	Collaborative skills	Green skills	Alliance specific competences	Transversal competences
MANAGE Manage phase in which the collaborative project is activated, and the scorecard is defined to evaluate the implementation plan.	7. Conflict Resolution	Ability to resolve conflicts effectively.	x			x
	8. Planning and organizational skills	Ability to pay attention to detail and effectively determine goals and priorities for their task, area or project, and specify the stages, actions, deadlines and resources required to achieve the objectives. Includes using mechanisms for monitoring and verifying the progress of the various tasks to maintain control of the process and implement corrective actions as necessary.	x			x
	9. Circular interdisciplinary collaboration	Work as a team with external experts and departments internal to integrate sustainability in the company		x	x	
SUSTAIN Evolve phase that encompasses reflection on the continuity of the collaborative project.	10. Adaptive management	Ability to navigate and adapt in complex and dynamic situations, constantly learn from experience, and adjust the structure of the alliance accordingly (in terms of strategic focus of the alliance, type of alliance or partnering firms), including the option to finish the alliance.	x		x	x
	11. Capacity building and empowerment	Identify and anticipate missing competencies among alliance members and enable them through development, hiring or new partnerships	x			x
	12. Sustainability values	Refers to the skills, knowledge, and attributes that a manager possesses to effectively lead and integrate sustainability values into the organisation's operations, strategies, and culture. The Sustainability Values Manager helps guide the organization towards environmentally responsible, socially just and economically viable practices.		x		x

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Theoretical development of SAM Profile

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