To stay alive in the market, some incumbent companies are constituting an Innovation Function (IF) as a way of maintaining the innovation in a perennial and systematic way. However, there are companies that come from segments that presents a profile of innovating incrementally, such as some autoparts companies, which face the need of developing an IF to change this scenario. The challenge is to spread their “IF arms” beyond the headquarters boundaries by establishing IF divisions in the subsidiaries. In this way, this work aims to understand how to strengthen radical innovation in subsidiaries (that have a culture of incremental innovating). This research presents data of a single case study, following a qualitative-inductive methodological approach based on Grounded Theory. The case is a Brazilian multinational autoparts company, which has an Innovation Function Headquarter in Germany and subsidiaries worldwide. As results, the IF headquarter needs to provide six dimensions to subsidiaries: innovation inputs, orchestrate responsibilities and resources, support information and knowledge management, promote engagement in innovation, be attentive to the needs and performance, and support the change of mindset. This study implies strengthening the literature on relations between headquarters and subsidiaries when seeking radical innovation.

Key-words: Innovation function; Radical innovation; Subsidiaries; Autoparts company; Grounded theory
1. Introduction

Radical innovation management literature claims a systematic approach, which points out the need of considering an Innovation Function (IF) with specific responsibilities and accountability, no longer considering innovation just as a process (O’CONNOR, 2012; SALERNO, 2019). The IF is more than a sum of cross-functional activities or only a taskforce for momentary projects, it is an area that focus on innovation management in companies, which considers traditional aspects as well as other functions, such as people, process, structure, governance, culture, and metrics (O’CONNOR, 2012). This approach is seen as a way of maintaining the innovation in a perennial and systematic way in the company.

Projects can be canceled or forgotten in the case of a crisis or an emergent situation (BAGNO et al., 2017). To stay alive in the market, some established companies that have an innovative character, such as Embraer is constituted an IF to maintain the continuity of more strategic innovations. The appearance of this function, whatever the name given to it (chief innovation officer, eg), shows that these companies are concerned with the long term and with the need of developing a more mature innovation capability (O’CONNOR, 2012). Some studies, such as Bagno et al. (2017) and O’Connor and DeMartino (2006) illustrate this fact. However, the companies observed in these studies are intrinsically innovative ones.

On the other hand, there are those companies that come from segments that do not have the main profile of seeking radical innovations. Some autoparts companies, for example, receive product designs and orders from automakers, so they are only responsible for innovating incrementally in these projects. Despite that, few companies of this profile are standing out in the innovation aspect when presenting an IF. In those cases, the challenge goes further IF systematization, which means spreading their “IF arms” beyond the headquarters boundaries by establishing IF divisions in the subsidiaries, which presents the vision only for incremental innovation.

In addition, studies related to IF in Brazilian companies (BAGNO et al., 2017; BAGNO et al., 2012, MELO et al., 2021) do not cite the subsidiaries issue. In this sense, there is a lack of knowledge concerning these aspects when considering companies that does not present historically the culture of developing radical innovation, as the autoparts segment, besides its relationship with subsidiaries. In this way, this work asks: How to strengthen radical innovation in subsidiaries (that have a culture of incrementally innovating)?

To answer this question, this article presents interviews data of a single case study, following a qualitative-inductive methodological approach based on Grounded Theory (GLASER; STRAUSS, 1967). Data was organized using quotations from representative informants to identify first-order concepts, second-order themes, and aggregated dimensions (GIOIA et al., 2013). The case is a
Brazilian multinational autoparts company, which has an Innovation Function Headquarter in Germany and subsidiaries worldwide.

This paper presents five more sections, the first of them concerns the theoretical background. Then, the method and case are presented, as well as the results. The fourth and fifth section deals with the discussions and conclusion, respectively.

2. Innovation Function: from innovation headquarters to subsidiaries

In most cases, the innovation management literature focused only on the process and some activities that surrounded it (BAGNO et al., 2017). However, for innovation management to become more effective and regular, companies need to design a system that encompasses all of its contingencies (O’CONNOR, 2012). In this case, the institutionalization of innovation (GIBSON, 2010) as an innovation function, is indicated (O’CONNOR, 2012).

According to O’Connor (2012), a function means a recognized group in the company that presents a mission. For innovation function, “the mission is major innovation, meaning innovation that is path-creating rather than path-dependent, and that offers new growth platforms for the company and wholly new benefits to the market” (O’CONNOR, 2012). The innovation function must focus on people, process, structure, governance, culture, and metrics (O’CONNOR, 2012).

Concerning the interface among the innovation function and other ones, O’Connor et al. (2018) presents the Orchestrator role, which leads the IF. The orchestrator is responsible for managing all the necessary interfaces within the organization (other corporate functions, project teams, subsidiaries) to guarantee that resources are available for the IF activities and projects. According to Salerno (2019), the innovation function is a networked function. The latter consideration is based on the idea that innovation function does not have fixed resources as laboratories, for example. It happens because radical innovations are sporadic, unpredictable, non-linear, and often take a long time to consolidate (LEIFER et al., 2000). In this case, it is not advantageous for this function to have extra resources such as fixed features, that is why the need of borrowing resources, depending on the capability to build networks (SALERNO, 2019).

Some of aspects that characterize an IF in Brazilian companies was done by Bagno et al. (2017), such as the general purposes, its origins, legitimacy, people organization and roles, assignments, and future perspectives. However, there is a lack of knowledge concerning these aspects when considering companies that does not present historically the culture of developing radical innovation, as the autoparts segment, besides its relationship with subsidiaries.

Bagno et al. (2012) tried to understand how network relationships influence the dynamics of building technological competences in this sector. The text brings aspects related to subsidiaries, but nothing
that contemplates the relationship with the IF, but with the development of capabilities. Börjesson et al. (2014), for example, described how two large and established automotive firms developed capabilities for innovation, however, the sample was not about autoparts, being the automotive segment more innovative than the latter. In sum, Börjesson et al. (2014) focused on dedicated teams for innovation portfolio, not being considered an innovation function. Melo et al. (2021) studied retrospectively the construction of an IF in a company that operates in Brazilian territory, but they do not go into details about issues involving headquarters or subsidiaries.

Concerning the existing gap on the relationship between IF headquarters and their subsidiaries in contexts of radical innovation, mainly considering “how to strengthen radical innovation in subsidiaries (that have a culture of incremental innovating)”, the next topic presents the methodology to achieve the presented objective.

3. Method

In order to understand how to strengthen radical innovation in subsidiaries, this study followed the Grounded Theory from Glaser and Strauss (1967), and the organization of data based on Gioia’s approach (GIOIA et al., 2013). Data was organized using quotations from the study case’s representative informants to identify first-order concepts, second-order themes, and aggregated dimensions (elements).

In this method, language can be understood as a mean for cognition and also seeks to create new theories and makes the researcher go to the field free of pre-conclusions a priori, since the new constructs arise from the speech of people (GIOIA et al., 2013). In this method, while the data is collected, they are analyzed and refined, so the research protocol has the characteristic of being flexible, thus allowing a sequence of abstractions and even a certain level of chronology (GIOIA et al., 2013). This method uses a well-justified single case (GIOIA et al., 2013), which is in line with the case proposed.

The analyzed case is engaged in the production of more than 50 million wheels a year, being steel and aluminum wheels for passenger, commercial and military vehicles. This company currently operates with more than 20 subsidiaries in 14 countries. The innovation function is already established, and the innovation headquarter is in Germany. The company code for the analyzes will be APCOMPANY.

Four interviews were conducted for this research. Table 1 presents the interviewed, the order, as well as the duration of interviews.
All interviews were conducted virtually, with the support of digital tools (Zoom and Google Meets). Before each interview, informants allowed the recording. All interviews were recorded and transcribed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Order</th>
<th>Interviewer</th>
<th>Interview’s duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First interview</td>
<td>Local Iadvocate</td>
<td>50’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second interview</td>
<td>Global Innovation Specialist</td>
<td>60’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third interview</td>
<td>Global Innovation Director</td>
<td>51’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth interview</td>
<td>Global Innovation Specialist</td>
<td>25’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The authors

The next topic illustrates the results.

4. Results

To understand the aggregate dimensions, appendix 1 illustrates the hierarchical organization chart of the IF’s roles of the case under analysis. The findings are presented according to the aggregated dimensions that have emerged from interviews, based on the research question. The data structure is illustrated in figure 1, which supported the organization of findings and provided the basis for the construction of the research model, which can be seen in figure 2.

Figure 1 – Data structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1st Order Concepts</th>
<th>2nd Order Themes</th>
<th>Aggregate Dimensions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Radical or disruptive innovation “is what will significantly impact both APCOMPANY and the client”</td>
<td>Defining radical or disruptive innovation for the subsidiaries</td>
<td>Providing innovation input to subsidiaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“It has to be perceived by the end customer; it can be a process, product, or a positive impact on APCOMPANY brand”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“We have more disapproval in ideation phase because many of the ideas are still at an incremental level”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“There is a concern whether people is talking too or not in all subsidiaries”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation Challenges: “most of them are written and developed by the staff working at the Innovation Hub”</td>
<td>Preparing the guide on challenges and trends in innovation from the external environment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The prediction of challenges is made from the connection with the external environment”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Also, with the guidance of the Leadership Team”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“As if it were a guide to trends and innovation”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The challenges are already aligned with what the market wants, with the customer's needs”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“They (Innovation Hub Staff) work more focused with the external environment and I (Innovation Specialist, and the Iadvocates, work with the internal environment, unfolding those challenges internally)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideation Events (generation, posting of ideas, review and approval);</td>
<td>Managing the innovation process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passing through board (technical and financial feasibility, product validation and process qualification);</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceleration (local or global implementation).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Headquarter relationship with subsidiaries: “It is the same structure for all of them”
“The innovation system, we apply (Innovation Function) to all plants”

“Once a subsidiary has a project, the advocate of that subsidiary is the project manager”
“The advocate does not have to do everything alone”
“The advocate has a team that has the Plant Manager as the Sponsor, and then he or she will define who the people on the team are according to the needs that the project will have.”
“When implemented in the plant, the advocate passes the baton to the specific area where the change will take place”

“Before Board, in the follow-up meetings, I (Innovation Specialist) ask if they (Advocates and Regional Coordinators) need technical help, financial resources, and they raise their hands”
“Sometimes, we need to provide support to advocates in commercial matters (sales), technical matters (engineering), among others”
“Subsidiary does not have the necessary resources”
“Same thing in terms of people, if advocate needs technical knowledge, we look for a person who has this knowledge to help with that specific point”
“When the subsidiary does not have the necessary resources, I board will help decide where a test will be carried out, externally or in another subsidiary”
“Customer feedback: “They (advocates) make a first approach, and if they have difficulties with this, the innovation director and I (Innovation Specialist) facilitate communication”

“During the evaluation of ideas on Board, there is top management both from the technical and commercial side”
“When we don’t know if the idea is really brilliant, we ask for sales support to approach the client (this is flexible, sometimes advocate itself does the approach)”
“If it is an idea associated with the challenge, in a way there is already a need, an interest in the market”
“When it is not B2B, but B2C: “We rely on marketing work, data collection, a different approach than what we already do”

“Advocates have training on the overview of innovation process, responsibilities, terms we use, how to do one activity or another”
“Instruction for managing the idea and project: “we (Innovation Function) managed to provide more support for others in terms of: what is this phase? What do I have to do? What is the next step?”
“Is it not part of advocate’s know-how, so we need to provide the deadlines and what he or she needs to do as easily as possible”

“We usually have records, for example, someone posted an idea similar to another one that was posted in the past, so we understand why it was disapproved and what was the lesson learned”
“I (Innovation Specialist) can retrieve information and share it, as a way of sharing and retaining knowledge”
“Speaking of projects, we have the record of why it was archived, for example”
“Posted ideas are available to advocates (from all subsidiaries) of why they approved or disapproved”

“The Advocates, based on the challenges and trends guide, define the strategy of each subsidiary with its Plant Manager”
“The advocate is responsible for engaging the people of its subsidiary (...) with communication, ideas generation events, among others”
“Each plant has an innovation communication plan (...) to plant the seed and engage other employees of the subsidiary”

“We (Innovation Function) started focusing on an innovation challenge every two months”
“We as an Innovation Function accompany the advocates in meetings every two weeks”
“It is a way for us to explain and demonstrate our challenges, and for them (Advocates) to have time to work and strengthen the culture of what we are talking about in the subsidiary where they operate”
“In each subsidiary we (Innovation Function) usually have a meeting every semester with the Advocates and Plant Managers, where the advocates present the status of the plant”
“According to the need, I (Innovation Specialist) include training, people, there is no set date”

“We (Innovation Function) also encourage each of the plants to look at their surroundings”
“They (advocates) themselves can manage an event with a startup, with a university, with a supplier or client, and we (Innovation Function) encourage this”
“Each region will have a scenario, they are open to explore as needed, according to what is close to them”

“We (Innovation Function) promote recognition every two months in subsidiaries”
“We (Innovation Function) also offer an annual global recognition program in local, regional and global innovation”
“It is clearly clear the participation and submission of ideas when there is competition and when there is not, it is a very different number, as they are also ways to foster culture”

“We (Innovation Function) have two main indicators, one is innovation points per subsidiary and the other is the number of projects under implementation/execution per plant”
“We (Innovation Function) analyze the history, the performance of each subsidiary in the last three years and, based on the performance (...) each one has an established goal”

“APCOMPANY has some criteria, (...) as if it were an APCOMPANY ISSO with no innovation pillar, and an audit is carried out (...), where a ranking is generated for each of the subsidiaries”

Promoting internal engagement and responsibilities at subsidiaries
Promoting engagement in innovation
Application of metrics considering the subsidiary’s history and performance
Evaluating subsidiaries based on established audit
Support for managing information and knowledge between and within subsidiaries
Orchestration of responsibilities and resources
Supporting the approval of ideas for execution and implementation
Execution frequency
Recruitment as a form of engagement and culture promotion
(Also) Encouraging a more local and less formalized innovation initiative
Attention to the needs and performance of each subsidiary
The aggregate dimensions will be called elements. The model is important for understanding the dynamics between elements that strength radical innovation in the subsidiaries. It is responsibility of the IF headquarter to apply these elements on subsidiaries. The elements are: Providing innovation input to subsidiaries; orchestration of responsibilities and resources; support in managing information and knowledge between and within subsidiaries; promoting engagement in innovation; attention to the needs and performance of each subsidiary; support for mindset change.

The next topic presents the discussions concerning the data structure and model.
Figure 2 – Model of elements of strengthening radical innovation in subsidiaries.

**Promoting engagement in innovation**
- Promoting internal engagement and responsibilities at subsidiaries
- Engage frequency
- (Also) Encouraging a more local and less formalized innovation initiative
- Recognition as a form of engagement and culture promotion

**Providing innovation input to subsidiaries**
- Defining radical or disruptive innovation for the subsidiaries
- Preparing the guide on challenges and trends in innovation from the external environment
- Managing the innovation process

**Support for mindset change**
- Communication for mindset change
- Leading by example as needed
- Heterogeneity in the involvement of subsidiaries
- Concern about long-term direction

**Support in managing information and knowledge between and within subsidiaries**
- Instruction development and trainings to support advocates for project management
- Concern with knowledge retention

**Attention to the needs and performance of each subsidiary**
- Application of metrics considering the subsidiary’s history and performance
- Evaluating subsidiaries based on established audit

**Orchestration of responsibilities and resources**
- Keeping the same relationship, rules and processes
- Reinforcing roles and responsibilities in advocates and local strategic people in subsidiaries
- Orchestrating resources for the advocates and Regional Coordinators in the subsidiaries
- Supporting the approval of ideas for execution and implementation

Source: The author
5. Discussion

Considering the aggregate dimensions, this section discusses the results concerning how the elements that are applied on subsidiaries strengthen their radical innovation.

5.1 Providing innovation input to subsidiaries

This dimension is an important element for strength radical innovation due to the necessity of start innovation activities and ideation in APCOMPANY. The second order themes are:

a) Defining radical innovation for the subsidiaries: This theme provides the meaning of radical innovation for the employees in all the subsidiaries. As the subsidiaries have the culture of innovating incrementally, there is the need of explaining to them differences between the innovations for the generation of ideas. As noted, “we have more disapproval in ideation phase because many of the ideas are still in the incremental level”. This first theme also contains some aspects related to the study of Bagno et al. (2017), such as origins of IF. One example is the search for business diversification and establishment for a brand associated with innovation (BAGNO et al., 2017) when seen the concern with “the positive impact on APCOMPANY brand”;

b) Preparing the guide on challenges and trends in innovation from the external environment: This theme gives direction to the subsidiaries. It is important to note that this guide comprehends the external environment and the knowledge about the clients’ needs, besides market trends. This direction is created by the Innovation Staff located in the external Hubs. Only when this guide with challenges is created, the subsidiaries can work internally through the local Iadvocates, "unfolding these challenges internally". The structure of the IF follows what Bagno et al. (2017) studied, which points out that few people work in the core of IF (in the analyzed case: Global Innovation Director, Global Innovation Specialist and Staff located in the external Hubs);

c) Managing the innovation process: Providing the same innovation process guarantees systematization in the subsidiaries, and it turns easier to the IF to manage them.

5.2 Orchestration of responsibilities and resources

This element of orchestration is one of the most interesting one because it speaks directly to the IF literature.

a) Keeping the same relationship, rules and processes: Care is taken to apply the same
treatment to all subsidiaries, as observed in “I (Innovation Specialist) try as much as I can to keep responsibilities the same”;

b) Reinforcing roles and responsibilities in Iadvocates and local strategic people in subsidiaries: Care is also taken to establish the internal roles in the subsidiaries;

c) Orchestrating resources for the Iadvocates and local strategic people in subsidiaries: In this case, the Global Innovation Specialist plays a central role being the orchestrator, which is in line with the need to have someone responsible for orchestrating innovation activities (O’CONNOR et al., 2018). In addition, it highlights the fact that IF can be considered as a network-function, as it connects important support actors for the development of innovation (SALERNO, 2019). It is observed in “Sometimes, we need to provide support to Iadvocates in commercial matters (sales), technical matters (engineering), among others”, and “Same thing in terms of people, (…)”; 

d) Supporting the approval of ideas for execution and implementation: The IF provides specialists to ensure that the ideas to be correctly, “During the evaluation of ideas on Iboard, there is top management both from the technical and commercial side”.

5.3 Support in managing information and knowledge between and within subsidiaries

It was pertinent to emerge this element from the interviewees' speech. It is known that, in many companies, knowledge management is neglected. In this case, as the IF has arms extended to all the subsidiaries, the systematization of information and knowledge management strengthens the link both within and between the subsidiaries and the IF. In addition, innovation projects have inherent uncertainties, which are also considered as knowledge problems (TOWNSEND et al., 2018).

a) Instruction development and trainings to support Iadvocates for project management: Aware that the Iadvocates and other employees of the subsidiaries do not have, for example, know-how about innovation activities, support related to training is indispensable. “We (as IF) managed instructions to provide more support for them in terms of: what is this phase? What do I have to do? What is the next step?”;

b) Concern with knowledge retention: Allows access to ideas and lessons learned for all subsidiaries globally. It is also aligned with the assignments of IF studied by Bagno et al., (2017).

5.4 Promoting engagement in innovation
This element was the most cited by the interviewees. In many of the statements, quotes emerged regarding the fact that, as there are more than 20 subsidiaries that IF takes care of, many of them have employees with different profiles and cultures, since they are located all over the globe. In this case, finding specific ways to engage the different subsidiaries is a solution to strengthen radical innovation in them, but it is also considered a challenge.

a) Promoting internal engagement and responsibilities at subsidiaries: Even if the FI wants high engagement to occur, it needs to occur in a correct and planned way, as seen in “The advocates, based on the challenges and trends guide, define the strategy of each subsidiary with its Plant Manager”;

b) Engagement frequency: The periodicity of activities, meetings, and events for keeping the “innovation light”;

c) Encouraging a more local and less formalized initiative: In this case, although IF is concerned with market trends and customer needs, it also encourages initiatives that go outside the scope of the innovation challenges created, as a way of letting employees "get out of the box" and keep creative. These ideas are evaluated with the same criteria as those that fell outside the scope of the proposed challenge;

d) Recognition as a form of engagement and culture promotion: Recognitions are ways to motivate employees, as many of them are not part of the IF as a primary function. In addition, it is known that innovation projects are complex and, sometimes, aim at the long-term, so the employee may not feel that things are moving along the trajectory.

5.5 Attention to the needs and performance of each subsidiary

Looking at figure 2, a star was placed on this model element. This star represents the need to customize metrics for each subsidiary to strengthen radical innovation. APCOMPANY believes that it cannot charge subsidiaries with different performances and realities in the same way.

a) Application of metrics considering the subsidiary’s history and performance: there are indicators for analysis, as well as metrics related to the previous performance of the subsidiary;

b) Evaluating subsidiaries based on established audit: APCOMPANY has an ISO type, in which it assesses the Innovation Pillar. It is out of the IF scope.

5.6 Support for mindset change

This element, like the first one highlighted, needs to come from the management of the IF in a
more centralized way. There are four themes pertaining to this element.

a) Communication for mindset change: As the subsidiaries have the culture of innovating incrementally, it is important to maintain the correct communication to guide them correctly, without demotivating when they have not yet arrived at more radical ideas;

b) Leading by example as needed: The IF wants to show, in this case, that it is walking alongside the subsidiaries, as seen in “If we are charging, then we also need to be involved in this process”;

c) Heterogeneity in the involvement of subsidiaries: Look at the involvement of subsidiaries on a case-by-case basis so that a specific strategy is targeted;

d) Concern about long-term direction: The IF needs to beware of project cuts that benefit only the long run. It is known that most radical innovation projects have this characteristic and, sometimes, people outside the IF (IBoard), who help to evaluate the ideals, prioritize only those that present shorter-term gains.

It is noted, therefore, that the six elements that emerged from the interviewees’ speech are aimed, especially, at strengthening radical innovation in subsidiaries that present a culture of incrementally innovating. However, there is still much to be discussed in relation to this subject, since the literature on IF is recent and does not deal in depth with topics related to subsidiaries, but with the characterization of the IF in large part. The next topic brings the conclusion.

6. Conclusion

Considering the challenge of spreading the “IF arms” beyond the headquarters boundaries by establishing IF divisions in the subsidiaries, this work aimed to understand how to strengthen radical innovation in subsidiaries (that have a culture of incremental innovating). This research presents data of a single case study, following an approach based on Grounded Theory. The case is a Brazilian multinational autoparts company.

As results, the IF headquarter needs to provide six elements to strengthen radical innovation in subsidiaries: innovation inputs, orchestrate responsibilities and resources, support information and knowledge management, promote engagement in innovation, be attentive to the needs and performance, and support the change of mindset.

This study tried to strengthen the literature on relations between headquarters and subsidiaries when seeking radical innovation. For practitioners, this study tries to create an initial base of actions for the IF of a multinational to try to strengthen and systematize radical innovation in other business units, subsidiaries or with partners.
As limitations, although well justified and applied to the research problem, the method brings only one case study. In addition, studies that deepen the relationship between the IF headquarter and subsidiaries could understand whether these elements highlighted make sense to the subsidiaries' perception, or even, if the subsidiaries suggest other ways to strengthen radical innovation.

7. Acknowledgements
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**APPENDIX**

The IF’s roles of the analyzed case are illustrated in figure 3 bellow.

Figure 3 – Hierarchical organization chart of the IF’s roles

The Global Innovation Director is responsible for providing information about how the innovation function exists, in a more holistic way, about people, process, structure, governance,
culture and metrics.

The Global Innovation Specialist is officially part of IF, and she is responsible for analyzing all ideas coming from all subsidiaries, managing all innovation challenges, as well as leading the activities of regional coordinators and Iadvocates of all subsidiaries. She is who evaluates the performance of the subsidiaries.

The IF’s Staff at External Hub are located in an Innovation Hub in Germany. They foster external ideation, identify market needs and trends, as well as help to develop innovation challenges (innovation guide) for the subsidiaries.

The Iadvocates are local employees of a specific subsidiary that has a primary role related to another function, but has secondary activities related to the IF. The Iadvocate remains as a partial member of the IF for a limited time, on average of three years, so that there is rotation in the dissemination of the culture of innovation in the subsidiaries. Its main role is to help locally in organizing innovation events, communicating and promoting local engagement in innovation, as well as managing local innovation projects. Normally, there are at least one Iadvocate per subsidiary, depending on its size.

The Regional Coordinators has a primary role as top manager, such as an Engineering Director for Americas, and its role related to the IF is to give support for the Iadvocates from a set of subsidiaries. There are three strategic Regional Coordinators: Americas, Europe and Asia.