

# Benchmarking global corporate venture strategies

For Unilever

## Situation

Unilever set up its corporate venturing activities in 2002 with the objectives of:

- creating options for growth, by either taking stakes in interesting companies or creating new businesses, which could take Unilever or its brands into new areas
- accessing emerging technology by investing in technology start-ups
- exploiting Unilever IP by creating new businesses for spin-out

In developing the approach Unilever tried to learn from other corporates' experiences in venturing as well as from the venture capital and private equity industry which led to three key elements:

- building a corporate venturing model as close as possible to a real venture capital model
- separating the different roles and tasks for venturing into different funds, i.e. creating new businesses, investing in development stage of growth companies and investing in technology
- involving venture capital and private equity partners in our funds or investee businesses, to ensure that they are managed as real businesses not corporate projects

## Objectives

As part of a review into the progress being made by its corporate venturing activities, Unilever felt it was important to understand what other corporates were doing and commissioned H-I network to conduct research into key practices in leading global corporate venturing units.

## Approach and results

H-I Network benchmarked Unilever's performance and experiences against a select group of over 20 leading corporate venturing practitioners deriving key findings from surveys and round-table discussions. Visit our [research](#) page to download an Executive Summary of our findings.



**H-I Network, 32 Duke Street, St James's, London SW1Y 6DF**  
**Tel: +44 (0)20 7747 7838 Fax: +44 (0)20 7747 7801 Email: [www.h-i.com](http://www.h-i.com)**

Registered office 32 Duke Street, St. James's, London, SW1Y 6DF. Registered in England and Wales No. 3752224