Figu 2.3: Overview of the EDA tool support for the entire design process

Hence, a survey of some of the most popular EDA tools currently available reveals the fragmentation of the automated support for the design process, as presented in Figure 2.3. It can immediately be noted that no single EDA tool supports the entire design process, from initial concept to final product. Moreover, no single EDA tool is able to support even one entire team completely (algorithmic, architectural, or implementation).

Furthermore, none of the presently available EDA tools on the market exhibit any explicitly built-in form of interoperability with tools of different vendors, which would enable seamless building of tool chains. A recent initiative by the SPIRIT consortium [4] aims to provide a mechanism for exchange of Intellectual Property (IP) blocks between EDA tools of different vendors. This would enable building of multi-vendor tool chains seamlessly. However, this initiative so far lacks a wide support base in the EDA industry and conceptually does not provide for a unified description of the system (for a more detailed discussion, see Section 2.3).

Also, EDA tool support exhibits several "gaps", i.e. parts of the design process which are critical, yet for which no automated tools are available. Although they have high