

# How do New Zealand's agricultural cooperatives positively impact climate change?

**Dr. Lisa Callagher, University of Auckland**

Dr. Frank Siedlok, Herriot Watt University, UK

Dr. Ziad El Sahn, University of Northumbria, UK

Dr. Stefan Korber, University of Auckland



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## Metaorganizing Collaborative Innovation for Action on Grand Challenges

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Lisa Callaghan; Stefan Korber; Frank Siedlok; Ziad Elsahn [All Authors](#)

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**Abstract**

**Abstract:**  
Grand Challenges are complex issues that require collaborative innovation among heterogeneous actors who draw upon contradictory institutional logics. While existing literature shows how social enterprises and individual organizations reconcile tensions between economic and environmental logics, scholars know less about how and when a broad set of actors adopt practices and priorities that balance economic and environmental values. This article explores how three agricultural cooperatives act as metaorganizations and facilitate collaborative innovation and sustainable transitions to address grand challenges regarding land use. We find that the cooperatives stimulate awareness of environmental challenges and local experimentation, orchestrate collaborative solutions by enrolling and engaging a broad set of actors, and coordinate the diffusion of novel practices across the institutional field. We add new insights into producer cooperatives' role as metaorganizations in facilitating the creation, validation, and diffusion of practices that balance business and sustainability. Based on our findings, we argue that by metaorganizing, producer cooperatives can galvanize field-level shifts in institutional logics through framing, knowledge sharing, and knowledge brokering mechanisms.

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## Translation celebration: researchers win big

7 July 2022 | Business School, Business and economy, University news

Business School academics win the overall award in the 2022 New Zealand Business Research Translation Competition.



In the winning article, Lisa Callaghan and her team succinctly detail the value of agricultural cooperatives in facilitating and orchestrating collaborative innovation towards addressing one of the country's most pressing challenges: land and water use.



# Grand challenges



- Questionable whether single organisations can galvanise the large-scale change demanded
- Needs to be a collaborative affair where individual organisations from different sectors work together to pursue a sustainable transformation

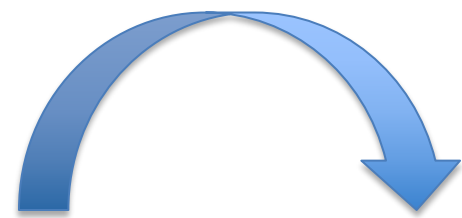
# Meta-organizing

Metaorganizations - organizations-of-organizations that share system-level goals, which members jointly produce, monitor, and sanction activities for the collective

Legally autonomous entities whose interdependence positions them to facilitate fruitful interactions and dialogue that facilitates collaborative action

Tensions related to the conflicting goals and priorities (logics) often remain strong and we need to better understand the mechanisms for handling those

# Economic, social, & increasingly environmental mission



## Member-owned organisations

- Members are businesses
- Connected business operating across a broader territory
- The 'values and principles' and the 'mechanics' provide the potential for a 'collaborative affair'

# Key theoretical insights

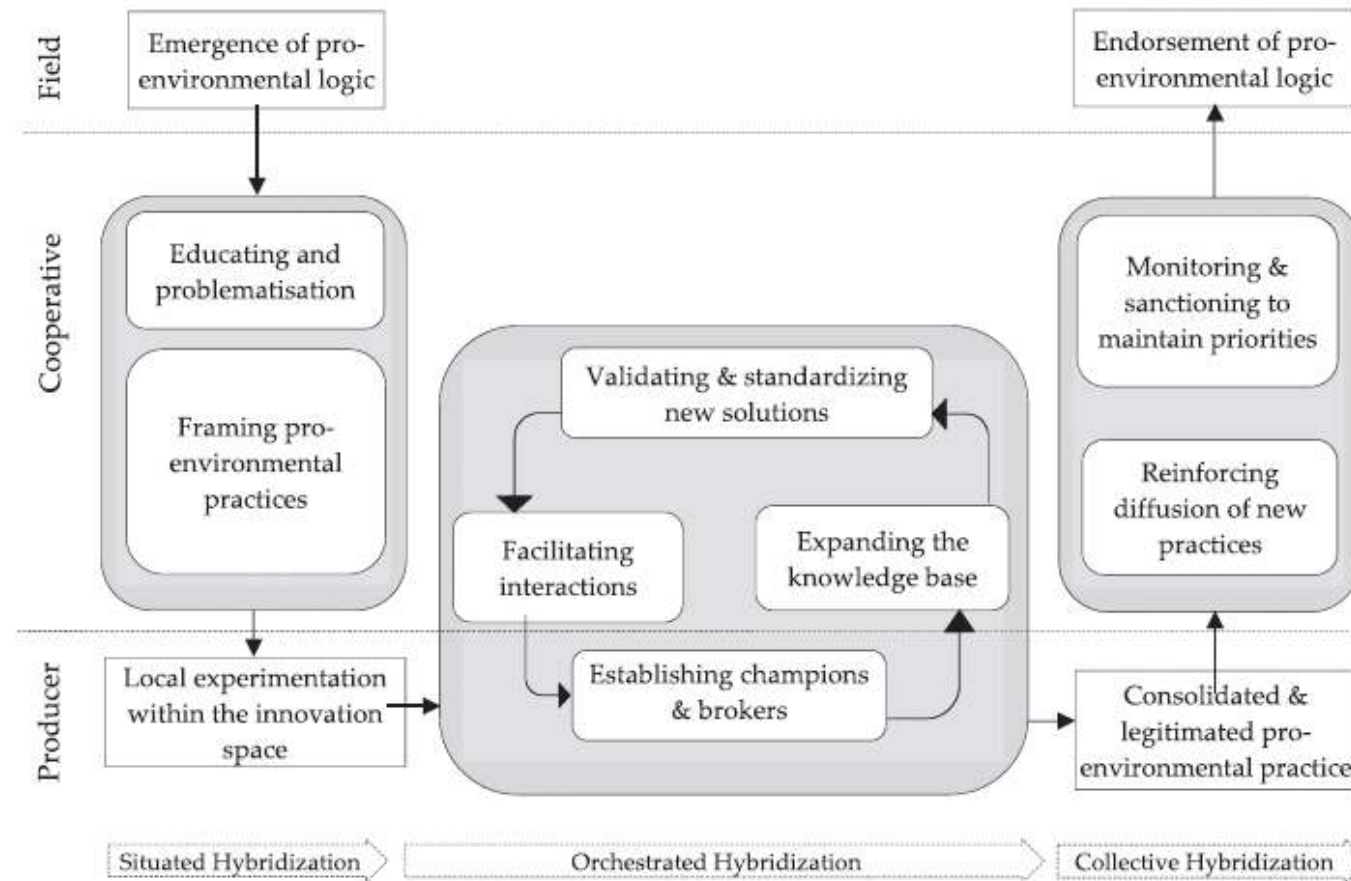


Fig. 1. Modes of hybridization that connect localized practices and field-level shifts for collective action.

# Practical insights



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Workshops/meetings with members -> members learn latest policy requirements & customer expectations are changing

Present 'ready made' solutions -> support members to experiment with novel ideas in response to identified issues

Pro-active members created pioneering solutions -> coordinate activities rapid spread ideas to broader membership

Co-op staff as advocates -> members champions and thought-leaders to promote novel ideas and their adoption

Oversee scientific scrutiny of on-farm solutions -> orchestrate scientific, innovation, and business systems 'in the same room' (metaphorically and literally)

Codify novel agricultural methods -> translate best situated practice guidelines

# What's next?



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2023 OECD Fellowship award

Co-operative Research Programme: Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems.

“Accelerating locally-developed freshwater management practices across global growing regions through innovation ecosystems.”



# Thank-you

Your remarks and questions are welcome.

Lisa Callagher

[l.callagher@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:l.callagher@auckland.ac.nz)

# Follow-up materials



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Callagher, L. & Garvneska. E. – paper under 2<sup>nd</sup> round review



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