

COLLABORATION LAB

Research began

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Challenge funding

\$1,500,000

Research theme

Collaborative Capacity

Programme contact

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The value of collaboration has begun to be recognised in New Zealand. Social science research over the past twenty years has emphasised the importance of collaboration for achieving successful outcomes in complex systems. However, there are still gaps in our understanding; there is insufficient long-term evaluation of collaborative approaches, there is a scarcity of studies on how researchers undertake interdisciplinary research, translating concepts of collaboration into practice has proven very difficult and there is a lack of important information about Māori participation in collaborative processes.

In New Zealand, adversarial processes have dominated natural resource decision-making processes, leading to stalemate and inaction. The magnitude and complexity of the challenges in New Zealand's land and water sectors require science and society to work in



completely new ways, requiring new models of engagement and science-society interaction. One of these new ways of working is collaboration. The research in the Collaboration Lab programme will help to address the gaps mentioned above.

Three projects within this programme of work are together building an enhanced understanding of collaborative practice, weaving together centuries of focused practice in Māori tikanga and the leading innovative edge of current collaborative practice from multiple fields to form new mātauranga, or practical wisdom. This research aims to improve collaborative practice, improve knowledge around the impacts of collaboration and identify the characteristics of effective interdisciplinary research. A model for supporting collaborative dialogue is currently being trialled with practitioners and groups have now established to test Māori models of collaboration.

A provisional model of key variables in collaborative practice is also being developed by this research team.

The overall outcomes of the Collaboration Lab are that collaboration practitioners such as facilitators, farmers, iwi and scientists will be more effective at participating and leading collaborations. This research will also support decision-makers make more informed decisions relating to collaborative processes, and reinforce that interdisciplinary research has enhanced impact at addressing problems of land and water management.