



Manaaki Whenua
Landcare Research

A Waka-Taurua social licence to operate framework

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Summary

Project and client

This report was prepared as part of a larger project funded by the Our Land and Water National Science Challenge on 'Navigating the social licence to operate (SLO) nexus between farmers, agribusinesses, consumers and citizens in New Zealand'.

Objectives

To bring to the fore Māori understandings of, and aspirations for, partnership in the primary sector.

Methods

Drawing on Māori scholarship and SLO literature, we theorise how the Waka-Taurua framework can be used to help conceptualise SLO across knowledge systems.

Conclusions

While not a blueprint for developing SLO, the Waka-Taurua framework does serve as a guide to what information needs to be considered in building and maintaining SLO. It provides a holistic conceptualisation of the components, processes, and connections required in developing SLO and distils this down to the essence of the problem, as itemised below.

- That the terms of a social licence are located in the values, expectations and perceptions of communities of interest (conceptualised as individual waka).
- That SLO emerges as an issue when there are gaps between people's values, perceptions, expectations and that of industries values, procedures, and processes (conceptualised as how well the purpose of your waka aligns with the purpose of the other).
- That addressing the SLO issue requires that gap to be bridged in a collaborative way (conceptualised as a space for consented, purposeful engagement between the two waka to achieve a common purpose).

1 Introduction

Māori agribusiness is a significant, and increasingly important part of Aotearoa-New Zealand's primary sector (Hutchings et al. 2020; McAleer 2021; Rout et al. 2021). While there is significant support for Māori owned and operated farms, there is also a perspective that the responsibilities to Māori are not being fulfilled by the farming sector (Beban et al. 2023). It is important for non-Māori seeking a Social Licence to Operate (SLO) from Māori agribusiness to have knowledge of Māori understandings of, and aspirations for partnership in the primary sector. There are many and varied reasons for why SLO may be sought including: reducing agricultural greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (He Waka Eke Noa 2019); biosecurity issues (Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) 2016); water management (Ministry for the Environment (MfE) 2023a); and biodiversity (MfE 2023b). However, 'gaining social license to operate from tangata whenua entails the building of direct personal relationships, networks, and connections between stakeholders and across value-chains' (Castka et al. 2023, p. 6).

The concept of SLO is based on Western conceptualisations of relationships and engagement. As such, there is a knowledge gap about how to develop SLO across knowledge systems. Working together across knowledge systems requires partners to work respectfully in a 'negotiated' or 'dialogue' space. This is particularly relevant when it comes to engaging authentically with indigenous communities, as it allows space for the recognition and promotion of different knowledge systems, approaches, and tools; and this enables the bridging of world views in an environment that fosters co-learning and co-understanding (Harmsworth 2021). The following explores the Waka-Taurua framework (Maxwell et al. 2020a, b) as a way of conceptualising and advancing SLO with Māori agribusiness.

2 Objectives

To bring to the fore Māori understandings of, and aspirations for partnership in the primary sector.

3 The Waka-Taurua framework

The Waka-Taurua framework (two single canoes connected by a temporary deck to form a double-hulled canoe) (Maxwell et al. 2020a) is a metaphorical framework that can be used to share and understand differing values, knowledge, and perspectives (Figure 1). In the Waka-Taurua framework the papanoho (deck) acts as a shared engagement space to negotiate and develop 'mutually beneficial tools, actions and approaches derived from both canoes' (Maxwell et al. 2020a, p. 3), to achieve the most optimal solution(s) and implement appropriate interventions to achieve shared goals. In this metaphor the sea/moana represents the context, issues, and threats.

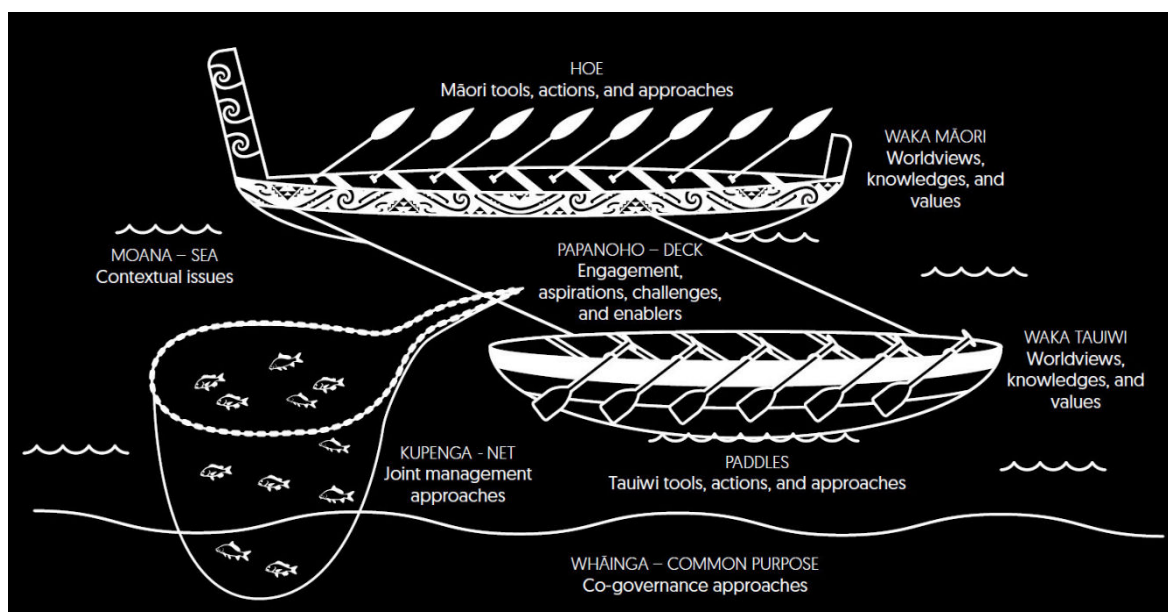


Figure 1. Waka Taurua framework. (Source: Adapted from Maxwell et al. 2020a.)

As a way of bringing differing values, knowledge, and perspectives together, the Waka-Taurua framework has the potential to help conceptualise the components, the processes, and the connections required in building and developing SLO. Key to this from a SLO perspective is that:

- the terms of a social licence are located in the values, expectations and perceptions of communities of interest (Kelly et al. 2019) (i.e. the communities of interest can be conceptualised as individual waka)
- social licence to operate emerges as an issue when there are gaps between people’s values, perceptions, expectations and those of industries values, procedures, and processes (Provasnek et al. 2017; Poelzer et al. 2020) (i.e. addressing the SLO issue requires that gap to be bridged in a collaborative way).

In the following example we examine how the Waka-Taurua framework could be used to help Taiwi (non-Māori) think about some of the key components, processes, and connections involved in building SLO with Māori agribusiness. It should be noted that as Taiwi we are not speaking for Māori agribusiness or providing a Māori agribusiness perspective. Rather, we draw on Māori scholarship and SLO literature to populate the primary Waka-Taurua components described in Figure 1 to show how the framework can be used to help conceptualise the building and maintaining of SLO.

4 Conceptualising SLO with Māori Agribusiness using a Waka-Taurua approach

4.1 Moana/sea – contextual issues

In the Waka-Taurua framework contextual issues are represented by the moana/sea which surrounds, interacts with, and influences every aspect of the Waka-Taurua. Social licence

to operate is complex and context dependent (Dare et al. 2014). Considering contextual issues and the influence they have is a critical part of each step of the SLO process.

4.2 Waka Māori – world views, knowledges and values

As noted in Section 3, SLO emerges as an issue when there are gaps between the values, perceptions, and expectations of the people from whom you are seeking SLO and your own values. For those seeking to build SLO with Māori agribusiness, identifying what their values, perceptions, and expectations are, is therefore an important aspect of the SLO process.

In the Waka-Taurua framework the Māori world view, knowledge and values are represented by the Waka Māori. Te ao Māori world views are relational, collective and place based. Table 1 identifies some key value-drivers of Māori agribusiness as expressed in the literature.

Table 1. Value-drivers of Māori agribusiness

Value-driver	References
Tauutuutu (reciprocity and balance)	Reid et al. 2021; Mika et al. 2022
Whanaungatanga (positive relationships)	Reid et al. 2019; Mika et al. 2022
Kaitiakitanga (stewardship, sustainability, human-environment reciprocity)	Reid et al. 2019; Mika et al. 2022
Whai rawa (intergenerational wealth and legacies)	Reid et al. 2019; Mika et al. 2022
Manaakitanga (support and generosity)	Reid et al. 2019; Mika et al. 2022
Mana whakahaere (leadership, management, and governance)	Reid et al. 2019; Mika et al. 2022

These value-drivers should not be seen as a definitive list. Like society in general and Māori themselves, Māori agribusiness is not homogenous, and values and expectations will vary amongst different agribusiness interests and aspirations. Furthermore, contextual issues can have a significant influence on the ability to realise agribusiness values and aspirations for some Māori. Reid (2011, p. ii) for example highlights some common constraints experienced by Māori landowners in achieving their development aspirations. These include 'limited financing options; inappropriate methods employed by education institutions to build technical knowledge and skills within communities of landowners; high levels of distrust and suspicion within communities; leadership which is unable to maintain collective support; inappropriately designed development support from government development agencies; and the presence of colonial narratives within communities that create despondency and inertia'. Fragmentation of land and multiple 'ownership' are other contextual issues that can have an influence on realising agribusiness aspirations. However, as Scheyvens et al. (2020) highlight, collective ownership is not necessarily the hindrance it has at times been portrayed to be (cf. Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) 2011).

4.3 Waka Tauwi – world views, knowledges and values

In the Waka-Taurua framework non-Māori world views, knowledge and values are represented by the Waka Tauwi. Those seeking SLO from Māori agribusiness will come with their own set of value-drivers. Understanding what those are, and how well aligned they are with those of the Waka Māori is a critical aspect in the conceptualisation of SLO. As noted, it is the non-alignment of value-drivers that create SLO issues.

Contextual issues also play an important role in influencing the Waka Tauwi. The most critical/largest contextual issue, which often goes unnoticed by those in this waka, is the power imbalance between the two waka. While the Waka-Taurua framework portrays the Waka Māori and Waka Tauwi aspirationally – sitting equally alongside each other (Maxwell et al. 2020a), the reality is a waka (Waka Māori) connected to a supertanker (Waka Tauwi) (Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research 2023). This imbalance exists due to the pervasiveness of how institutions and systems are built around/dictated by Western ways of thinking and doing (Whyte 2016; Parsons et al. 2021). Because SLO is based on relationships, power relations cannot be ignored (Hotte 2020). In seeking SLO from Māori agribusiness, those in the Waka Tauwi need to critically reflect on their positionality and the role their procedures, policies and structures play in maintaining practices that reinforce the continued domination of Western ways of thinking and power over others.

4.4 Hoe/paddles

In the Waka-Taurua framework the hoe (paddles) of each waka represent the tools or approaches derived from the respective waka (Maxwell et al. 2020a). How those seeking SLO from others engage with those communities of interest is another important aspect in the success or otherwise of building and maintaining SLO. The SLO literature makes clear that relational (or 'doing with') approaches to engagement and collaboration are far more likely to develop the kind of relationship that leads to SLO than 'doing to' approaches (Mercer-Mapstone et al. 2017; Baines & Edwards 2018; Hurst et al. 2020; Yet et al. 2022).

Effective engagement with Māori is key to producing better quality outcomes (Harmsworth 2005; Te Arawhiti 2018) so working effectively with Māori requires an understanding of their perspectives and preferences when it comes to participation and engagement approaches. For example, Ruckstuhl et al. (2014) argue that for Māori, social licence to operate is Te Tiriti led: this means organisations need to treat Māori as partners – not stakeholders – with meaningful involvement and influence, if they want to build social acceptance with Māori. Relationality and reciprocity are key aspects for those seeking SLO from Māori, with whanaungatanga (positive relationships) being a central value-driver or underpinning concept. Table 2 outlines some of the essential approaches required to form good relationships and effective engagement with Māori.

Table 2. Criteria that contribute to building and maintaining relationships with Māori (adapted from Pipi et al. 2004; Harmsworth 2005; Cram et al. 2018)

Criteria	Guideline(s)	References
Aroha ki te tangata – showing respect to people	Respect people – allow them to define their own space and meet on their own terms.	Pipi et al. 2004; Ruckstuhl et al. 2014; Cram et al. 2018; Te Arawhiti 2018; Harcourt et al. 2022
Kanohi ki te kanohi – Face to face	Meet people face-to-face, and also be a face that is known to and seen within a community.	Pipi et al. 2004; Harmsworth 2005; Cram et al. 2018
Rangatira ki te Rangatira – Chief to chief	People should have the mana (status) at the other side of the table at the beginning (this is largely to do with tikanga process) and starts with ‘Chief to chief’ and then progresses down to more junior staff or membership.	Harmsworth 2005; Harcourt et al. 2022
Nā te kakano – From the seed	Early involvement shapes the final result. Māori have a different world view and different view of time, issues, and priorities. Your priority and timelines may not be the same as the Māori community’s.	Harmsworth 2005; Ruckstuhl et al. 2014; Te Arawhiti 2018; Harcourt et al. 2022
Kei mōmou taima – Open and meaningful	It’s important not to waste people’s time – Māori are seeking meaningful engagement and desired goals and outcomes from collaboration.	Harmsworth 2005; Ruckstuhl et al. 2014; Mercier 2017; Harcourt et al. 2022
Ki tai wiwi, ki tai wawa – Flexibility	The Māori community has its own processes and structures, which need to be taken into account. They also have to juggle lots of issues and responsibilities. Allow for an organic or iterative process to emerge and proceed.	Harmsworth 2005; Ruckstuhl et al. 2014; Te Arawhiti 2018
Tikanga Māori – The correct Māori way of doing things	Māori have their own protocols, customs and ways of doing things. Recognising these is a sign of respect towards and acknowledgement of the people you are meeting – they are willing to go with your process, and this is a two-way relationship.	Harmsworth 2005; Ruckstuhl et al. 2014; Harcourt et al. 2022
Ko te tūmanako – Transparency	Literally means ‘good faith’, ‘good will’ or ‘good heart’, i.e. not hiding anything.	Harmsworth 2005

Criteria	Guideline(s)	References
Mahia te whare – Foster capacity	Good consultation should help foster Māori capacity and capability, rather than building from scratch every time. Ensure Māori have the capacity, resource, interest, and desire to participate.	Harmsworth 2005; Ruckstuhl et al. 2014; Harcourt et al. 2022
Whakatika te he – Accountability	Māori believe we should learn from the past and look to the future. This means not continuing past mistakes and injustices, taking responsibility for our actions, keeping our promises and listening to and valuing what Māori say.	Harmsworth 2005
Kia tika te reo – Use appropriate language	Use clear and appropriate communication and language to ensure Māori understand and can engage with the consultation issue and process.	Harmsworth 2005; Harcourt et al. 2022
Titiro, whakarongo, (kōrero) - look, listen and develop ways of understanding to guide conversations	Look and listen (and then maybe speak) – develop an understanding in order to find a place from which to speak. Use culturally specific mediums of communication (hui, wānanga).	Pipi et al. 2004; Cram et al. 2018; Harcourt et al. 2022
Manaaki ki te tangata – share, host and be generous	Engagement must be a collaborative and reciprocal process. It acknowledges that learning and expertise exist in both parties.	Pipi et al. 2004; Ruckstuhl et al. 2014; Cram et al. 2018; Harcourt et al. 2022
Kia tūpato – be culturally safe and reflective	Be cautious – be politically astute, culturally safe, and reflective about insider/outsider status.	Pipi et al. 2004; Cram et al. 2018; Te Arawhiti 2018
Kaua e takahia te mana o te tangata – Do not trample on the ‘mana’ or dignity of a person	Maintaining respect and an attitude of care and support during the engagement process.	Pipi et al. 2004; Ruckstuhl et al. 2014; Cram et al. 2018; Te Arawhiti 2018; Harcourt et al. 2022
Kia mahaki – find ways to respectfully share your knowledge	Be humble – do not flaunt your knowledge; find ways of sharing it.	Pipi et al. 2004; Ruckstuhl et al. 2014; Cram et al. 2018; Te Arawhiti 2018; Harcourt et al. 2022

4.5 Papanoho

In the Waka-Taurua framework the papanoho represents the bridge between the differing perspectives. It acts as a shared 'space for consented, purposeful engagement' (Maxwell et al. 2020a, p. 3). As a space for purposeful engagement, the papanoho provides a place to build relationships, trust, and respect (Harmsworth 2021), which are all central concepts to building and maintaining SLO (Thomson & Boutilier 2011; Prno 2013; Moffat & Zhang 2014; Mercer-Mapstone et al. 2018; Edwards et al. 2019; Howse 2022).

Working in a negotiated space like the papanoho requires more than just the exchange of knowledge (Harmsworth 2021), it requires a process for building and maintaining meaningful relationships. Building relationships (whanaungatanga – positive relationships) is just as critical for building SLO with Māori as it is for non-Māori (Ruckstuhl et al. 2014). As Maxwell et al. (2020a) argue 'it is on the papanoho that communities jointly discuss relationship aspirations, challenges and opportunities...'

Contextual issues can also have a significant influence on this part of the process. Maxwell et al. (2020b) highlight some of these in respect to marine management, but they apply equally to other situations, including engaging with Māori agribusiness. For example, reconciling world views in a way that maintains the integrity of each perspective is difficult (Maxwell et al. 2020b). As noted in Section 4.3, the power imbalance that favours Western ways of thinking and doing often means that Māori ways of thinking and doing are shoehorned into western approaches. From a social licence perspective this undermines the development of SLO because it does not genuinely take into consideration each waka's value-drivers or bridge the gap between the two waka in a collaborative way. Furthermore, such approaches do not give genuine effect to Te Tiriti. Capacity limitations (with respect to being able to participate effectively in engagement processes with representatives from the Waka Tauīwi) was another contextual issue raised by Maxwell et al. (2020b). As noted by Reid (2011), this is also a relevant issue for Māori landowners in achieving their agribusiness development aspirations.

Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research's social researchers have developed a roadmap (Stronge et al. 2020) that helps to guide organisations through the process of building and maintaining meaningful relationships (Figure 2). Developed with whakaaro Māori input it has the potential to build positive relationships based on trust and understanding, rather than merely fulfilling legislative requirements (Maxwell et al. 2020b).



Figure 2. Social licence to operate (SLO) engagement roadmap. (Source: Stronge et al. 2020.)

The framework has four phases.¹

- Socialising the concept of SLO with the organisation.
- Hearing the views of stakeholders and understanding their expectations.
- Integrating or co-developing the views and expectations of stakeholders into an organisation's processes and procedures so it fosters SLO and promotes participative and learning opportunities.
- Reflecting on the learning opportunities that arise throughout the process.

¹ See Stronge et al. (2020) for a more detailed discussion of each of the phases.

This engagement roadmap provides guidance on achieving the mutually beneficial tools, actions and approaches that can help close the gaps between the different communities of interest and help foster the development of SLO. As such, it has the potential to act as a bridge or *papanoho* between different communities of interest.

This potential is illustrated in Figure 3, where the general public's value-drivers of what makes a 'good farmer'² (Our Land and Water 2023) are brought together with those of Māori agribusiness. This example illustrates the Waka-Taurua process of bringing divergent views together to negotiate shared approaches to building SLO. It is the process that the framework represents that is important, not the specific value-drivers, as they will change with context.

² As with Table 1, these value-drivers should not be seen as a definitive list.



Figure 3. Waka-Taurua SLO framework example.

5 Conclusions

While not a blueprint for developing SLO, the Waka-Taurua framework does serve as a guide to what information needs to be considered in building and maintaining SLO. It provides a holistic conceptualisation of the components, processes, and connections required in developing SLO and distils this down to the essence of the problem (as shown in Figure 3), and as itemised below.

- That the terms of a social licence are located in the values, expectations and perceptions of communities of interest (conceptualised as individual waka).
- That social licence to operate emerges as an issue when there are gaps between people's values, perceptions, expectations and that of industries values, procedures, and processes (conceptualised as how well the purpose of your waka aligns with the purpose of the other).
- That addressing the SLO issue requires that gap to be bridged in a collaborative way (conceptualised as a space for consented, purposeful engagement between the two waka to achieve a common purpose).

As highlighted throughout the discussions in this report, context is a key aspect in determining SLO (Prno 2013; Dare et al. 2014; Hall et al. 2015). A SLO should be understood as a continuum of multiple licences negotiated with various communities of interest (Dare et al. 2014) which must be continually re-evaluated, and renegotiated across time, across multiple actors, across multiple spaces, and across multiple issues (Vallance & Edwards 2023). Extending the Waka-Taurua metaphor, SLO can be thought of as fleet of single-hulled canoes constantly interacting with one another (engaging, disengaging, re-engaging) across activities, place, time etc (cf. Vallance & Edwards 2023). The importance of this engagement is highlighted in the Waka Māori discussion (Section 4.2). Even within one sector there can be a wide range of positions/perspectives. Recognising that this heterogeneity exists is crucial to developing SLO. Every situation is different, so those seeking SLO from others need to genuinely reflect on their purpose, what they are trying to achieve, and what the value-drivers are for that specific context; and adapt their approach accordingly.

For this work we have drawn on Māori scholarship and SLO literature to examine how the Waka-Taurua framework can be used to help conceptualise SLO across knowledge systems. We recommend collecting empirical data across the 'fleet of single-hulled canoes' (i.e. the various Waka Māori/Waka Tauwiwi combinations) as the next step to build on this theory.

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