

Synthesis report on co-operative research priorities

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Table of contents

Executive summary.....	3
Context.....	4
Methodology and analysis.....	5
Research priorities.....	5
Quantitative findings.....	5
Qualitative findings.....	11
Highlights from the June 2011 panel in Fredericton.....	15
Key lessons.....	18
Next steps.....	19
Appendix: Survey.....	20

List of figures

Figure 1: Overall research priorities.....	7
Figure 2: Research priorities by language of respondent.....	9
Figure 3: Research priorities by affiliation of respondent.....	10

List of tables

Table 1: Overall research priorities.....	6
Table 2: Francophone versus Anglophone research priorities.....	8
Table 3: Sector versus academic research priorities.....	10

Executive summary

From 2010-2012, the Rural and Co-operatives Secretariat in partnership with the Canadian Co-operative Association (CCA) and the Conseil canadien de la coopération et de la mutualité (CCCM) engaged the Canadian co-operative research community in a consultative process to shape the agenda for co-operative research in the coming years. The project builds on the 2009 Report: *Building a Co-operative Research Agenda: Research, Strategy and Action* which was prepared by the same partners.

A Steering Committee comprised of practitioners and academic researchers built on the findings of the 2009 report to engage over 100 members of the co-operative research community in the 2010-2011 project.

The purpose of these projects was to engage researchers and practitioners in dialogues about current co-operative research, gaps in the research and priorities for future research. Another component of these projects was to gather co-operative research and publications to form a comprehensive inventory of co-operative research.

The Co-operative Research Priorities Project was directed by a Steering Committee comprised of researchers and practitioners who confirmed the research priorities identified in 2009; the development of a survey and consultation process; and the establishment of the Canadian Co-operative Research Network.

Context

This synthesis document is a result of the Co-operative Research Priorities Project undertaken from 2010-2012. The project is an initiative that sought to **identify research priorities, gaps in knowledge and future directions for co-operative research** in Canada. This process may help those interested in co-operatives (i.e. governments, co-operative organizations and researchers) in understanding common needs; setting individual and institutional goals; and seeking future funding for research priorities. The Rural and Co-operatives Secretariat funded this project, in partnership with the Canadian Co-operative Association (CCA) and the Conseil canadien de la coopération et de la mutualité (CCCM). The project was designed to reside within the co-operative research community, which will ensure the continuation of dialogue and collaboration towards an ongoing shared research agenda. Prior to the 2010-2012 phase, The Rural and Co-operative Secretariat (known then as the Co-operative Secretariat) funded a research process entitled the Co-operative Research Agenda Project that resulted in the May 2009 report entitled *Building a Co-operative Research Agenda: Research, Strategy & Action*, which is available online at www.coopscanada.coop/public_html/assets/firefly/files/pdfs/Research/Research_agenda.pdf.

The objective of the first stage of the process was to identify the current state of co-operative research in Canada; the topics being researched, the gaps in the research and the priorities for future research. Researchers and sector representatives were asked to contribute their ideas about key priorities for future studies on co-operatives. The same exercise was done in 2011, informed by the 2009 findings.

For the 2010-2012 project, a **Steering Committee** was formed to engage the research community and provide direction to the establishment of current research priorities. Steering Committee members included John Anderson (Canadian Co-operative Association), Marie-Joëlle Brassard (Conseil québécois de la coopération et de la mutualité), Denyse Guy (Ontario Co-operative Association), Lou Hammond Ketilson (University of Saskatchewan), André Leclerc (Université de Moncton) along with Fiona Duguid and Anne-Marie McInnis (Rural and Co-operatives Secretariat).

Furthermore, additional survey research was conducted in 2010-2011 to gather academics' and practitioners' feedback on the research priorities, as well as to collect references for any recent research which they had undertaken since the 2009 report. In early 2012, a comprehensive inventory of co-operative research was created. This inventory became a main feature for a newly created **Canadian Co-operative Research Network (s.coop/research)**, an online portal for co-operative research. For more details on the Network, see the *Creating stronger collaboration for co-operative research: A synthesis report*, found at s.coop/research.

These activities represent only the beginning of what will be a long-term discussion and action plan within the sector and the research community about current and future directions of co-operative research. Interested individuals and organizations across Canada are invited to participate in this ongoing dialogue.

Methodology and analysis

The results presented below are based on findings from the **2010-2011 survey** conducted by CCA, CCCM and consultants under the direction of the Steering Committee as well as discussions which took place at the June 1, 2011 panel on ***Building a Co-operative Research Agenda*** in Fredericton, New Brunswick (at the joint session of the Canadian Association for Studies in Co-operation and the Association for Non-Profit and Social Economy Research). The updated survey was first distributed in mid-November 2010 and surveys were collected until August of 2011. During and after the Fredericton event, several more surveys were collected, and further input was collected, especially on the question of building a co-operative research network online that would serve to further this whole priorities discussion as well as create opportunities for various types of collaboration on co-operative **research**. The survey was also promoted in CCA's *Co-operative News Briefs*; on CCCM's electronic *Bulletin*; on the Measuring the Co-operative Difference Research Network website; and sent to the Canadian Association of Studies in Co-operation network directly by Dr. Darryl Reed, the president. After a May 2011 review of the surveys received to date, key remaining co-operative researchers and sector representatives were identified by the Steering Committee and were contacted by phone to complete the survey verbally. The survey questions are available in the Appendix.

A total of **49 surveys** were completed:

- 19 francophone respondents
- 30 anglophone respondents
- 28 academics/professors
- 19 sector representatives
- 2 government representatives

It is important to note that some academic respondents answered on behalf of their research centres, which means this report encompasses the work and vision of several other people. Two **webinars** (in French and English respectively) were organized in the fall of 2011 to discuss the research priorities with a combined total of 50 participants. Textual analysis was used in order to group qualitative data into common themes, and simple quantitative methods were used to illustrate the frequency at which a given priority was named in a respondent's top three.

Research priorities

Quantitative findings

This section depicts how each priority was ranked by survey participants. Each respondent was asked to name their **top three priorities** from the list provided (11 research priorities were listed in total). The list was informed by the previous survey and consultations that resulted in the 2009 report as well as

deliberations by the Steering Committee. A description of the priorities is provided in the Appendix with the survey tool. A few respondents also added new priorities, which will be discussed in the qualitative section below. To establish the **frequency of responses**, the number of times a given priority was named in the top three was divided by the total number of responses and shown as a percentage. It should be noted that several surveys were completed by teams of people, so this weighting is based on a per-survey weighting.

In order to provide more depth to the analysis, the quantitative results are presented in three forms: the overall results, the francophone versus anglophone results and the sector versus academia results (for this purpose the government responses are captured with the “sector” demographic).

Table 1: Overall research priorities

Research priority	Frequency of responses
1. New types of emerging co-operatives	15%
2. Member engagement and loyalty	10%
3. Youth (16-30) engagement in the co-operative movement	10%
4. Contribution of the co-operative model to the socio-economic development of population groups	11%
5. Sustainable Development in our co-ops	8%
6. Comparing the financial performance of co-ops to that of the private sector	6%
7. Public policies aimed at co-operatives	11%
8. Governance models and Board composition	9%
9. Co-operative theory in the contemporary context	10%
10. The international dimension	5%
11. Business succession	5%
	=100%

The **top three priorities** identified by survey respondents are the following:

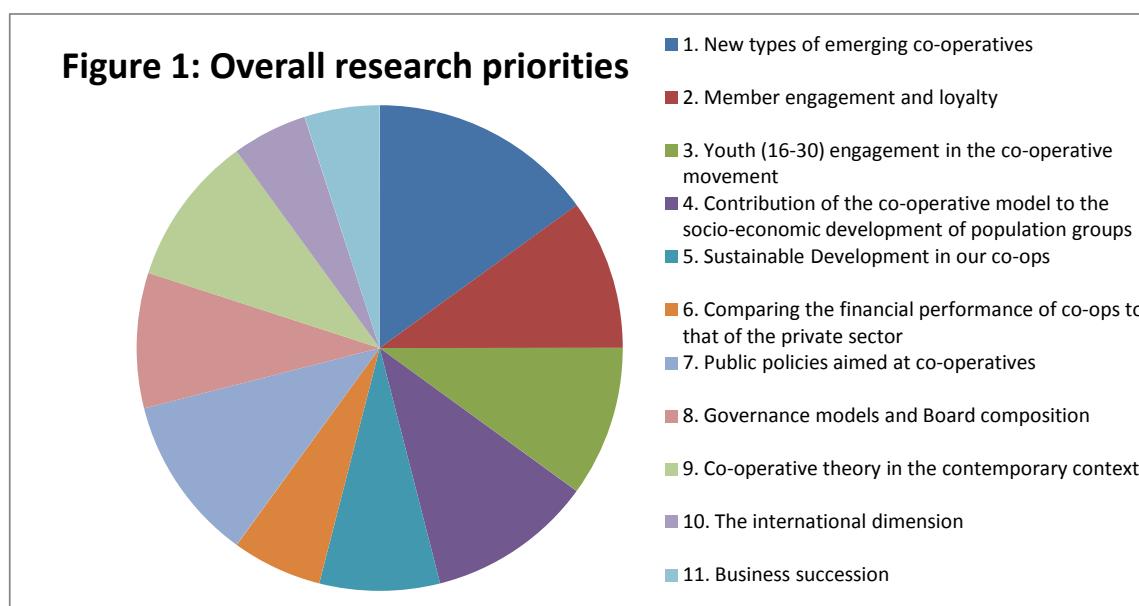
- New types of emerging co-operatives
- Contribution of the co-operative model to the socio-economic development of population groups
- Public policies aimed at co-operatives

It is important to nuance this finding because four other priorities (priorities 2, 3, 9 and 8) are next most frequent, and the difference between their ratings and that of the third most important priority is only 2%. This shows that there is no striking difference between these four and the third top.

The priorities that were the **least often selected** by respondents are the following:

- The international dimension
- Business succession
- Comparing the financial performance of co-ops to that of the private sector

These are approximately three times less frequently named as research priorities in the survey than the top priority, priority 1.



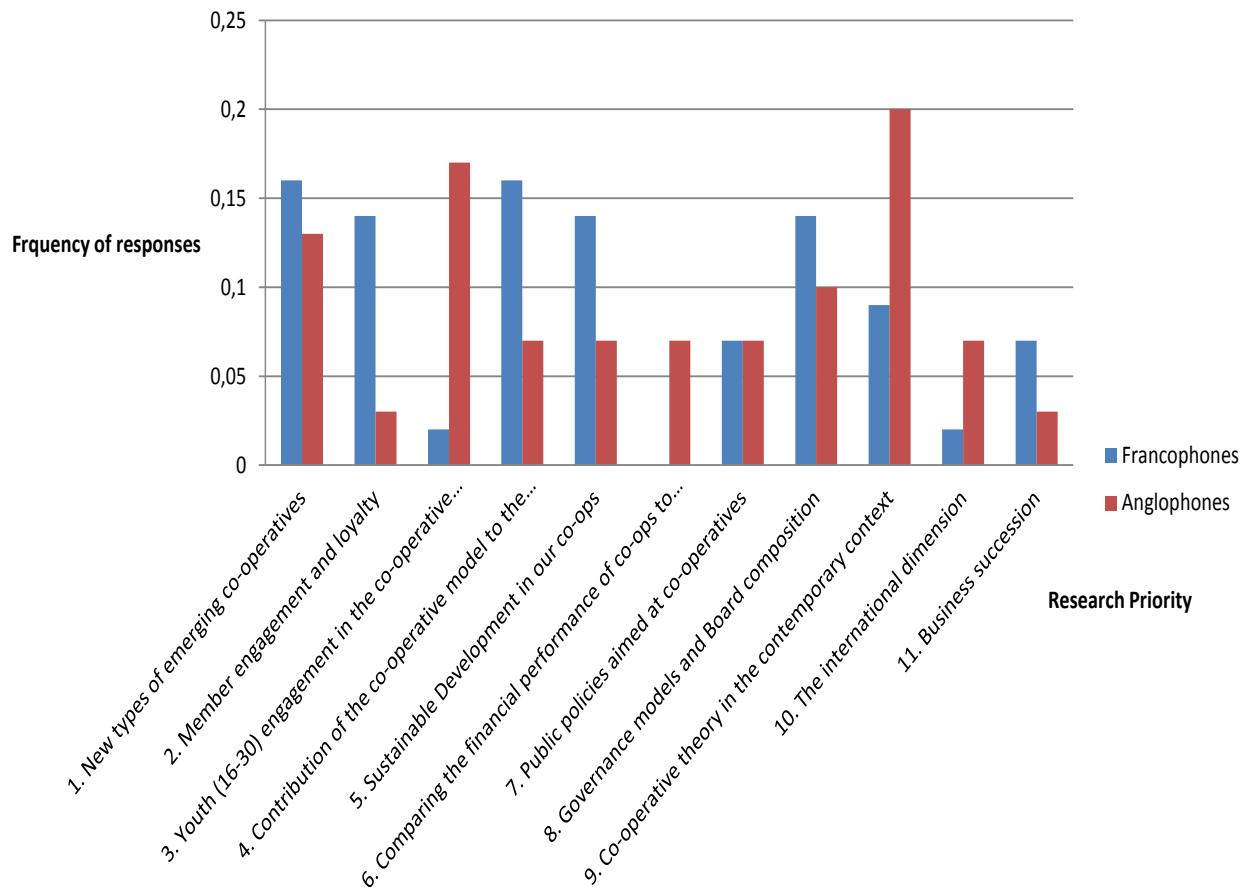
Comparison of francophone and anglophone results

A comparison of francophone and anglophone results are presented in Table 2 and Figure 2.

Table 2: Francophone versus anglophone research priorities

Research priority	Frequency of responses	
	Francophones	Anglophones
1. New types of emerging co-operatives	16%	13%
2. Member engagement and loyalty	13.7%	3%
3. Youth (16-30) engagement in the co-operative movement	2%	17%
4. Contribution of the co-operative model to the socio-economic development of population groups	16%	6.8%
5. Sustainable Development in our co-ops	13.7%	6.8%
6. Comparing the financial performance of co-ops to that of the private sector	0%	6.8%
7. Public policies aimed at co-operatives	13.7%	6.8%
8. Governance models and Board composition	14%	10%
9. Co-operative theory in the contemporary context	9.1%	20%
10. The international dimension	2%	6.8%
11. Business succession	7%	3%
	=100%	=100%

Figure 2: Research priorities by language of respondent



The most noticeable differences are illustrated in priorities 2, 3 and 9; youth engagement and co-operative theory seem to primarily interest anglophones, while member engagement is of higher importance to francophones. Interestingly, no francophone respondent chose priority 6 (comparing the financial performance of co-ops to that of the private sector), and there is no difference in the importance of priority 7 (public policies aimed at co-operatives) according to the respondent's language.

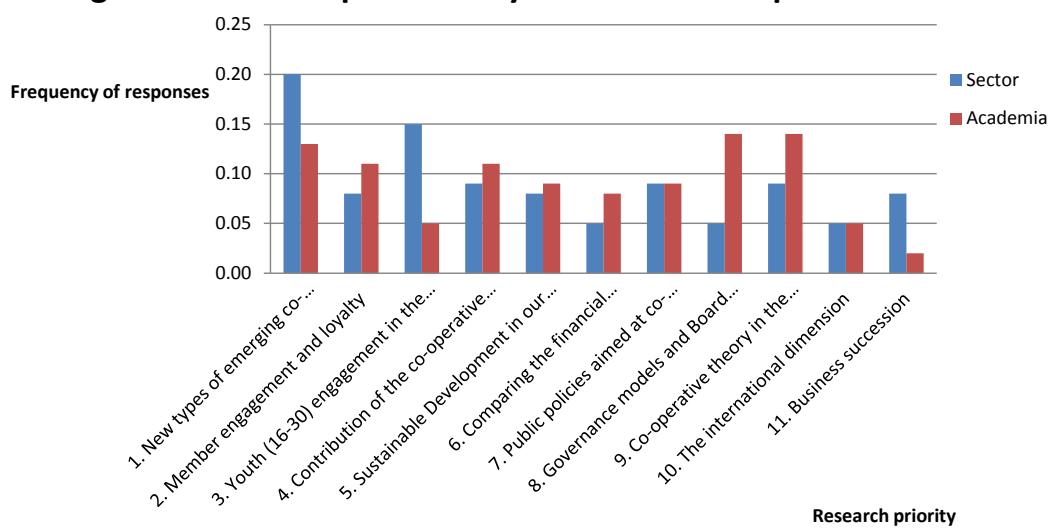
Sector versus academics results

Sectors versus Academics results are presented in Table 3 and Figure 3.

Table 3: Sector versus academic research priorities

Research priority	Frequency of responses	
	Sector	Academics
1. New types of emerging co-operatives	20%	13%
2. Member engagement and loyalty	7.5%	10.5%
3. Youth (16-30) engagement in the co-operative movement	15%	5%
4. Contribution of the co-operative model to the socio-economic development of population groups	9%	10.5%
5. Sustainable Development in our co-ops	7.5%	9%
6. Comparing the financial performance of co-ops to that of the private sector	5%	8%
7. Public policies aimed at co-operatives	9%	9%
8. Governance models and Board composition	5%	14%
9. Co-operative theory in the contemporary context	9%	14%
10. The international dimension	5%	5%
11. Business succession	8%	2%
	=100%	=100%

Figure 3:Research priorities by affiliation of respondent



Generally, there is not a striking difference between responses from sector practitioners and academics. It can be noticed that generally, the **sector** is more interested in

- New types of emerging co-operatives
- Youth (16-30) engagement in the co-operative movement
- Business succession, while the academia is more concerned with
- Member engagement and loyalty
- Governance models and Board composition
- Co-operative theory in the contemporary context

The Steering Committee is cognizant that there may be different considerations when a respondent is ranking the research priorities; whether they feel the topic is important to research, whether they feel the topic is currently under-researched, whether they are unaware of the current research available on the topic, whether they are interested in researching the topic themselves and many more. Therefore, a low rating does not necessarily denote a disinterest in a topic but perhaps rather that the researcher feels there is currently sufficient research being undertaken that will produce sufficient knowledge about the topic. For this reason, the Steering Committee encourages the research community to continue working with these findings to determine where better research dissemination is needed or to identify where real gaps exist in the research.

Qualitative findings

This section will present qualitative findings to the following question: “What are your main areas of interest (or those of your organization) where research is concerned?” based on survey results as well as notes from the panel presentation on *Building a Co-operative Research Agenda* held on June 1, 2011. When appropriate, responses were grouped according to which of the 11 research priorities they corresponded to. Other priorities will also be presented below. The section will finish with a **summary of highlights** regarding the co-operative research agenda from presentations delivered at the June 1, 2011 panel in Fredericton.

Notes on priorities

1. New types of emerging co-operatives

With regards to new types of emerging co-operatives, survey respondents were particularly interested in **multi-stakeholder co-operatives** and co-operatives providing local **services in rural areas**. This idea is also present in the Conseil québécois de la coopération et de la mutualité (CQCM) discourse, which suggests that co-operatives should be more focused on the local economy and local dynamics. Furthermore, respondents also noted an interest in co-operatives developing in new sectors, as well as the need to look into best practices in innovative co-operatives as well as new models of international partnerships among co-operatives (networks, consortiums, etc.).

Other respondents indicated an interest in the “new co-operative paradigm”, which touches on the relevance of the co-operative model in a context of hyper-competition. The respondents added that it was an important idea because research in the area would provide an alternative to the trend of co-operatives borrowing business practices from capitalistic competitors.

The “emerging” aspect of this priority was also noted as an area of importance, especially in high growth sectors such as health, commercial and energy co-operatives, as well as new forms of co-operatives in the tourism, elder housing and health sectors.

2. Member engagement and loyalty

A few key interests emerging from the survey with regards to this priority were: voluntary behaviour, reciprocity, co-operative identity, cohesion and member/employee satisfaction.

3. Youth (16-30) engagement in the co-operative movement

While many researchers surveyed noted an interest in the topic, only one elaborated on this interest by noting the importance of knowing how youth are engaged on co-operative boards of directors.

4. Contribution of the co-operative model to the socio-economic development of population groups

In response to this priority, one respondent noted the importance of considering developmental aspects of co-operatives for the population as a whole, a theme which will be taken up in the section on “Other priorities” below.

At L’Université de Moncton, researchers are interested in this topic, especially looking at how co-operatives contribute to the socio-economic development of minority language groups as well as the population of Atlantic Canada. This topic may become increasingly important across many regions of Canada due to shifting demographics over time.

5. Sustainable development in our co-ops

One survey respondent expressed a strong interest in sustainability reporting for co-operatives and one panel participant suggested that research should reflect sustainable business practices as well.

Furthermore, on the topic of sustainable development, L’Université de Moncton is partnering with Co-op Atlantic to study social responsibility as well as sustainable planning and development, but the intersection of co-operatives and sustainable development has been explored by other research centres as well.

6. Comparing the financial performance of co-ops to that of the private sector

One person who took the survey noted an interest in researching how new forms of co-operatives (mainly co-operatives that provide services to households and families) perform compared to other organizational forms.

This is a priority for the Chaire des caisses populaires acadiennes en gestion des coopératives at L'Université de Moncton who also included other types of performance within this priority, such as: employee satisfaction, operating environment, member loyalty (similar to priority 2) and perception of the co-operative by its members.

7. Public policies aimed at co-operatives

Social, economic and agricultural policy is of interest to respondents, who also included legal research under this priority. In addition, they noted an interest in the resource utilisation theory applied to public policy aimed at co-operatives, while other respondents thought it would be important to look at how co-operatives position themselves with respect to public policy.

8. Governance models and board composition

Once respondent mentioned having curiosity in organizational democracy, and another respondent indicated and interest in collective approaches to micro-business development using peer group models. The Centre for the Study of Co-operatives at the University of Saskatchewan has place great emphasis on governance research. The Centre formed a research cluster on governance under their Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council-funded project entitled *Linking, Learning, Leveraging: Social Enterprises, Knowledgeable Economies, and Sustainable Communities*. This research cluster produced the Social Economy Governance Portal, accessible on the Centre's website (<http://socialeconomygovernance.org/>).

9. Co-operative theory in the contemporary context

Applying co-operative theory to the three following topics is of interest to survey respondents: international co-operative networks, human capital (the co-operative model as a tool to serve humans) and social justice. Another researcher was interested in how co-operative theory and principles are taught in schools and universities.

10. The international dimension

This priority elicited many comments during the survey. Respondents wanted to look at how the co-operative sector is increasingly globalized. Sub-topics of inquiry included how co-operative business, solidarity and politics are being globalized; exploration of contributions of the co-operative movement to a "fair" (équitable) globalization process; and research into management practices of co-operative managers from various countries.

One panel participant suggested that this priority should focus more broadly on developing co-operative value chains and not just about North-South or West-East relations. Another person expressed a desire to see more research on co-operatives outside of Canada and also research pertaining to co-operatives organized at the international level.

11. Business succession

The topic of using the co-operative model as a tool for business succession gathered interest, and one survey respondent mentioned the relevance of establishing a technical support group on the matter.

Other priorities

Other priorities that were named in the survey but not expanded upon are: women in co-operatives, measuring the benefits of co-operative ownership and establishing statistical profiles of co-operatives.

Four survey participants were interested in the **overall impact of co-operatives**. Socio-economic impacts were mentioned twice and one person specified being interested in evaluating such impact. Another respondent was particularly interested in the impact of funeral co-operatives on the market.

A similar theme was the developmental aspects of co-operatives, which is referred to above. Two research centres surveyed are interested in the intersection of co-operatives and territorial and regional development, respectively. Another was interested in how co-operatives are understood and used as a tool for creating sustainable communities and economic development, and another in organizational partnerships to facilitate rural development.

Co-operative management and accounting were mentioned four times by participants in the survey. Leadership and organizational effectiveness were highlighted as sub-aspects to this theme. Also, one person was curious about the impact of new accounting rules at the international level on organizational structure, markets and the co-operative difference. One respondent commented that sometimes co-operative managers are left somewhat disempowered to champion co-operative practices in their management styles, hence the importance of identifying, conceptualizing, developing and validating such practices while ensuring the financial viability of the co-operative within the competitive market.

Furthermore, when asked about their interests, four survey respondents signalled being involved in research on particular types of co-operatives. The types of co-operatives mentioned were, in order of number of times mentioned: health (*3), multi-stakeholder, recent immigrants, youth and financial co-operatives. Also, when synthesizing research currently undertaken at the Canadian Co-operative Association, a respondent listed current research interests and recent publications on specific types of co-operatives and co-operative networks, such as the healthcare federation (the Québec model), renewable energy co-operatives and ethno-cultural co-operatives.

In addition to the interests named above, a preoccupation with how co-operatives adapt emerged during the survey, which is linked to another response about the history of co-operatives. The following interests were each brought up once during the survey process:

- the question regarding the role of volunteering in co-operatives and what impact it has on governance
- the field of ethics, particularly in the credit union sector

- the role of co-operatives in the evolving industrial organization of agricultural markets
- strategic planning for strengthening the co-operative difference

The Rural and Co-operatives Secretariat defines current research objectives under the Co-operative Development Initiative as follows:

As outlined by the Research and Knowledge Development program component of the CDI, our current research focus is to identify, understand and enhance the contribution of co-operatives to addressing key challenges in local community economic development, changing community demographics and supporting low-carbon environments. In particular, our research needs are to provide evidence-based research and information to demonstrate the case for co-operatives, to support public policies and programming and to raise awareness and promote the model.

Finally, during the discussion period following the panel in Fredericton, participants added being interested in the following topics: exploring what co-operative globalization looks like, improving social impact assessment and issues of capitalizing co-operatives.

Highlights from the June 2011 panel in Fredericton

Panellists and participants to the June 1st panel touched upon a number of topics with regards to building a co-operative research agenda. Key points are summarized below.

Marie-Joëlle Brassard

Research Director, CQCM

Marie-Joëlle Brassard emphasized the importance of **flexibility** when pairing researchers with practitioners in the field, for example in the context of internships. She also emphasized the need for research on emerging co-operative activities, such as eco-tourism, housing for seniors, local development co-operatives and also highlighted the need to explore other topics from a co-operative lens including land use, social capital, media and the energy economy.

Lou Hammond Ketilson

Former Director, Centre for the Study of Co-operatives, University of Saskatchewan

Lou Hammond Ketilson's presentation argued three main points with respect to building a co-operative agenda. Her first point is that it is important to recognize that, from a researchers' point of view, research focus will **vary by discipline**, stage in career, willingness and/or opportunity to conduct research in partnership with co-operatives or other community-based organizations, for example. This does not negate the **importance of being strategic** on a national research agenda for researchers who are able or willing to participate. She added that she found it hard to prioritize the eleven strategic orientations for co-operative research because all of them are important.

Secondly, she reminded the audience that academic researchers have to **compete** for national research funds which are sometimes linked to particular sets of priorities, which may or may not be consistent with the interests of the co-operative research community. She stated that money had to be made available if the co-operative sector wants to advance a particular research agenda.

Thirdly, Dr. Ketilson underlined the importance of the research agenda to **respond to the needs of practitioners and the research community**. She said:

I feel it is very important that academic research be relevant but it is also essential to the development of a body of knowledge that research be independent and a researcher be free to be critical, even of the funding agency. It is through this process of independent inquiry that co-operative studies as a field will be developed. It is possible to conduct conceptual research and translate this into application too; it is a matter of being strategic about the way in which the information is disseminated. If it only appears in the form of a journal article, it will have very limited value for the sector.

Denyse Guy

Executive Director, Ontario Co-operative Association (On Co-op)

With respect to partnership and integration of the sector's needs, Ms. Guy commented that, through being involved as **partners in research projects**, On Co-op was able to move forward its mission and strategic directions with respect to government relations, co-operative development and membership development. The funding available was most welcome, because it did not stimulate mission drift.

On Co-op recently engaged in research to meet some of its strategic goals. For example, it completed baseline market research on local organic foods in 2010, given the explosion in the sector, and was finishing a consultation piece on the 50% rule and par value shares.

Ms. Guy strongly emphasized that strategically mapping a research agenda should occur with academic researchers and the co-operative sector. In her view, this would enable better integration of work done between researchers, maximize scarce resources, facilitate a better understanding between researchers/academics and the co-operative sector, better understand what each sector's specific needs are and better understand how each co-operative's involvement fits into the larger research agenda. She said: "I know this is bold and difficult but it is essential. Otherwise, what will happen is that research is one with limited purpose... and impact. We can't afford to work this way".

With respect to the **role of provincial associations**, Ms. Guy suggests that they could "act as a facilitator/catalyst for research topics and agendas [because they] are often closer to the primary co-operatives and would be able to know their needs and aspirations. The challenge with this is that it would again require resource allocations to make it happen".

She noted that the movement really needs to strengthen its collective intelligence around legislative frameworks, and get more data to help with advocacy work, for example in the case of renewable energy co-operatives, which are facing limitations due to recent amendments to the *Green Energy and Green Economy Act*.

In an attempt to synthesise priorities, Ms. Guy commented that the 11 strategic orientations for co-operative research could be fit into **three main categories**: shaping public policy, evaluating the co-operative movement's internal capacity and building on innovation.

Ms. Guy grouped the priorities into three suggested overarching categories as follows:

Shaping public policy

- New types of emerging co-operatives
- Contribution of the co-operative model to the socio-economic development of population groups
- Public policies aimed at co-operatives

Evaluating the co-operative movement's internal capacity

- Member engagement and loyalty
- Youth (16-30) engagement in the co-operative movement
- Comparing the financial performance of co-ops to that of the private sector
- Governance models and board composition
- Business succession

Building on innovation

- Sustainable development in our co-ops
- Co-operative theory in the contemporary context
- The international dimension

André Leclerc

Chaire des caisses populaires acadiennes en gestion des coopératives , L'Université de Moncton

After sharing the research priorities of his Chair, Mr. Leclerc made it clear that it is important to **avoid being confined** to a given list of priorities. He stated: “original and spontaneous questions should not be neglected, as they often are the entry point of new researchers”.

Mr. Leclerc identified **data accessibility** as one main challenge for conducting more collaborative research in the future. He pointed to a success story during which his Chair partnered with credit unions to develop an extensive database which they could use freely while maintaining confidentiality. This situation was possible because of the trusting relationship which was developed. Quoting Vaillancourt (2005), Mr. Leclerc adds that partnering in research is a win-win thing to do for those who do so, yet it may be complicated by employee turn-over. A **flexible approach to networking** with existing practitioner networks is thus advocated for, to ensure research projects are autonomous while responding to local needs and giving way to diverse and rich findings.

Anne-Marie McInnis

Manager, Co-op Policy and Research Unit, Rural and Co-operatives Secretariat

In summarizing RCS's research priorities, Ms. McInnis highlighted the importance of **building case evidence** with regards to the benefits of co-operatives across all sectors, which could work to moderate perceptions held by certain people. To this argument, one panel participant added that research should also be critically reflective about co-operatives and look at how to improve co-operatives.

John Anderson

Director of Government Affairs and Public Policy, Canadian Co-operative Association

John Anderson shared his perspective on the differences between academics' and practitioners' interests, having led CCA into having more of a research focus, as a result of increased member desire for research and evidence-building. His response to the question follows:

The difference between academics and the sector is that the sector is more interested in research that will help them do what they do. It wants to see research that not just explores the comparison between co-operative and investor owned businesses, but the comparison between co-ops and government/state/public institutions too. The sector also wants research about the experience of co-operatives delivering government services.

This last point on **comparing co-operatives with public sector models** gathered a lot of interest in the panel attendees at the Fredericton meeting.

Key lessons

A number of key lessons can be drawn from public consultations on the strategic research agenda. First, there seems to be **great traction behind the eleven research priorities** suggested by the Steering Committee, and the enthusiasm is shared by the sector and academics, as well as from francophones and anglophones alike. The **top three priorities** are:

- New types of emerging co-operatives
- Contribution of the co-operative model to the socio-economic development of population groups
- Public policies aimed at co-operatives

Finally, the stakeholders consulted are unanimous on the importance of conducting **collaborative research** in a **flexible yet concerted way**, which responds to the **needs** of both the sector and academics.

Next steps

Through the growth of the new online co-operative research hub that was developed through the process of these consultations, the [Canadian Co-operative Research Network/ Réseau canadien de recherche sur les coopératives](#), there is a designated space to continue the dialogue of a strategic research agenda that serves all stakeholders. The partners of the network and the Management Committee formed by the partners will support this process moving forward throughout 2012 and beyond. This network makes available over 1,300 citations of co-operative research, serving as a starting point for mapping co-operative research and thus allowing for strategic planning for what should come next.

Appendix: Survey

Name and contact info: Also indicate if you are answering for yourself or for a research centre or an organization.	
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Questions

1. Please list any **research** on co-operatives that you or your organization have conducted over the last five years in Canada (completed or in-progress studies) especially newer research which may have commenced since 2009. Give the date, title and subject of the research in the chart below. If the research is completed, indicate if it is available somewhere on the web. Please give also an indication of the context in which the research was done. If there is a citation available, you can simply insert this in the right column.

Date (C or P)*	Document Title	Subject/ Context	Author	Where can the research be found? Website or citation

(Insert additional rows if required)

*Indicate whether the research is C-Completed or P-In Progress and expected completion date

*To view 2009 Inventory results:

http://www.coopscanada.coop/public_html/assets/firefly/files/files/Research/Research_chart.pdf

2. Please examine the following list of **key strategic orientations for co-op research**. Please choose your top three from that list. Feel free to add your comments to each specific area, or make further suggestions.

Please note: We interpret research priorities as any major theme, concept, theoretical consideration, empirical analysis or issue that is missing from the research, is under-researched, or has not been sufficiently addressed in past or current co-operative research.

Rank	Research Priority	Additional Comments
1		
2		
3		

(Insert additional rows if required)

3. Would you like to have more/better **communication with your co-operative research community?**
Please tell us which means of communication you feel would be most effective in keeping you engaged in a network of researchers (face-to-face, email listserv, online bulletin board, etc).

4. What are your main areas of interest (or those of your organization) for co-operative research?

Strategic Orientations for Co-operative Research

- 1) New types of emerging co-operatives: local services (such as internet, gas stations), multi-sector/multi-functional co-ops (offering services such as restaurant, internet, gas) , innovative sectors (such as health care, home care, funeral, housing for Aboriginal communities) and local agriculture (producers & consumers working together)
- 2) Member engagement and loyalty. Will members truly support their co-operative, or will they shop around for the best deal in town?
- 3) Youth (16-30) engagement in the co-operative movement
- 4) Contribution of the co-operative model to the socio-economic development of population groups. The needs of francophone and Acadian communities should be explored in greater depth; also, Aboriginals, immigrants, and seniors.
- 5) Sustainable development in our co-ops. How are co-ops attempting to include sustainable development in their day-to-day operations? The example of the Co-operators is a good one.
- 6) Comparing the financial performance of co-ops to that of the private sector. This might include sales, profits, productivity, labour costs.
- 7) Public policies aimed at co-operatives – to promote growth of existing co-ops and to encourage the development of new ones.
- 8) Governance models and Board composition (representation of women, cultural communities, average age of Board members, etc)
- 9) Co-operative theory in the contemporary context – exploring the depth of the movement, defining the co-op advantage. Can we still talk of a co-operative economy as some thinkers did in the previous century: how can we adapt the theory to the context of a modern capitalist economy?
- 10) The international dimension: Canada's role in co-operative development overseas; fair trade
- 11) Business succession: How the co-operative model could play a role in the succession planning of traditional enterprises