
Coopetition and knowledge transfer dynamics: New Zealand's regional tourism organisations and the 2011 Rugby World Cup.



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RWC 2011

- Quadrennial event owned by the International Rugby Board (IRB)
- 9 September – 23 October 2011
- Biggest event ever hosted in New Zealand
- 133,200 international visitors
- Organised & delivered by RNZ 2011
- Held in 11 cities in 12 different stadia across NZ

Rationale

- To ensure the success of RWC 2011, RTOs were expected to collaborate to develop a nationwide approach
- They simultaneously competed with each other for visitor nights and spending
- Simultaneous cooperation and competition is known as *coopetition* (Nalebuff & Brandenburger, 1996).
- Relatively little is known about the impact of coopetition on knowledge transfer dynamics (Easterby-Smith, Lyles, & Tsang, 2006, 2008).

Research question

How did coopetition affect knowledge transfer dynamics among RTOs in the context of RWC 2011?

Literature review

- Collaboration can positively enhance inter-organisational learning and KT (Inkpen, 1996).
- Paradox: Knowledge shared for cooperation may be used for competition (Loebbecke, Van Fenema & Powell, 1999).
- Coopetition is relevant in the tourism industry (von Friedrich Grängsjö, 2003)
- Limited evidence explaining why organisations in a relationship switch between cooperation and competition (Wang & Krakover, 2008).

Literature review

- data – information – knowledge
- Knowledge transfer: When information has been reasoned over and incorporated into the receiver's existing knowledge structures (Beesley & Chalip, 2011)
- Effective KM and KT is essential to remain competitive in the global, rapidly changing business environment (Talwar, Hancock, Yeomans, & Padgett, 2010)
- More research on the influence of coopetition on KT dynamics needed (Easterby-Smith et al., 2006).

Methods & Data analysis

- Qualitative case study approach (Yin, 2009)
- Participants:
 - 12 RTOs (CEOs and senior management staff)
 - Executive Officer from RTONZ
- Methods:
 - Semi-structured interviews both pre- and post-event
 - Formal online survey (post-event)
 - Documentation review (e.g. reports, media articles, bid documents)
- Thematic analysis
 - based on Braun & Clarke (2006) using Atlas.ti software programme

Collaboration among RTOs for RWC 2011

- The RTOs used each other mainly as a source of information and to exchange ideas
- The level of collaboration among them was limited
- The RTOs collaborated mostly with organisations from within their regions (intra-regionally) and with national bodies and organising committees (e.g. TNZ, RNZ 2011)

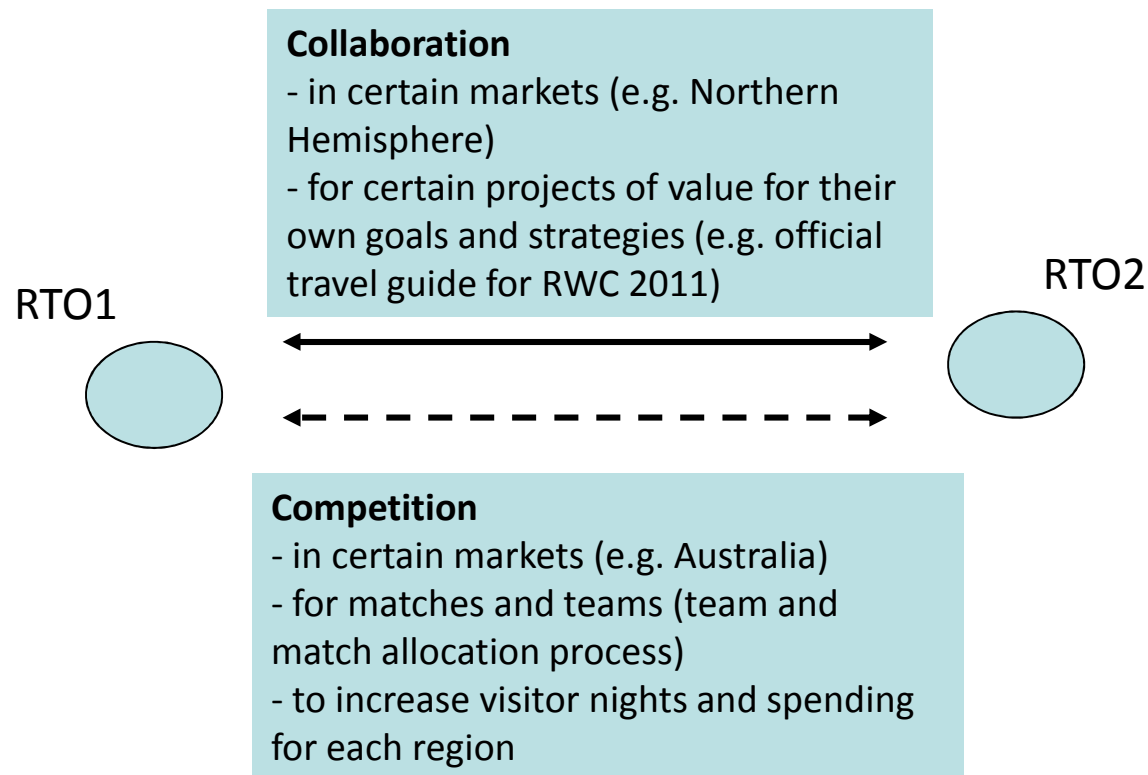
Barriers to collaboration

- Other vehicles were regarded as more effective to foster collaboration among RTOs
- RWC 2011 was a one-off event
- Limited resources
- The focus was on intra-regional collaboration
- Limited willingness to collaborate

Competition among RTOs for RWC 2011

- Several RTOs identified competition within the RTO network in the lead-up to, and during RWC 2011.
- The RTOs were competing for matches and teams (during the match and team allocation process by RNZ 2011), but also for visitor nights and spending.

Continuum of collaboration & competition among RTOs



Coopetition did not (negatively) affect event planning

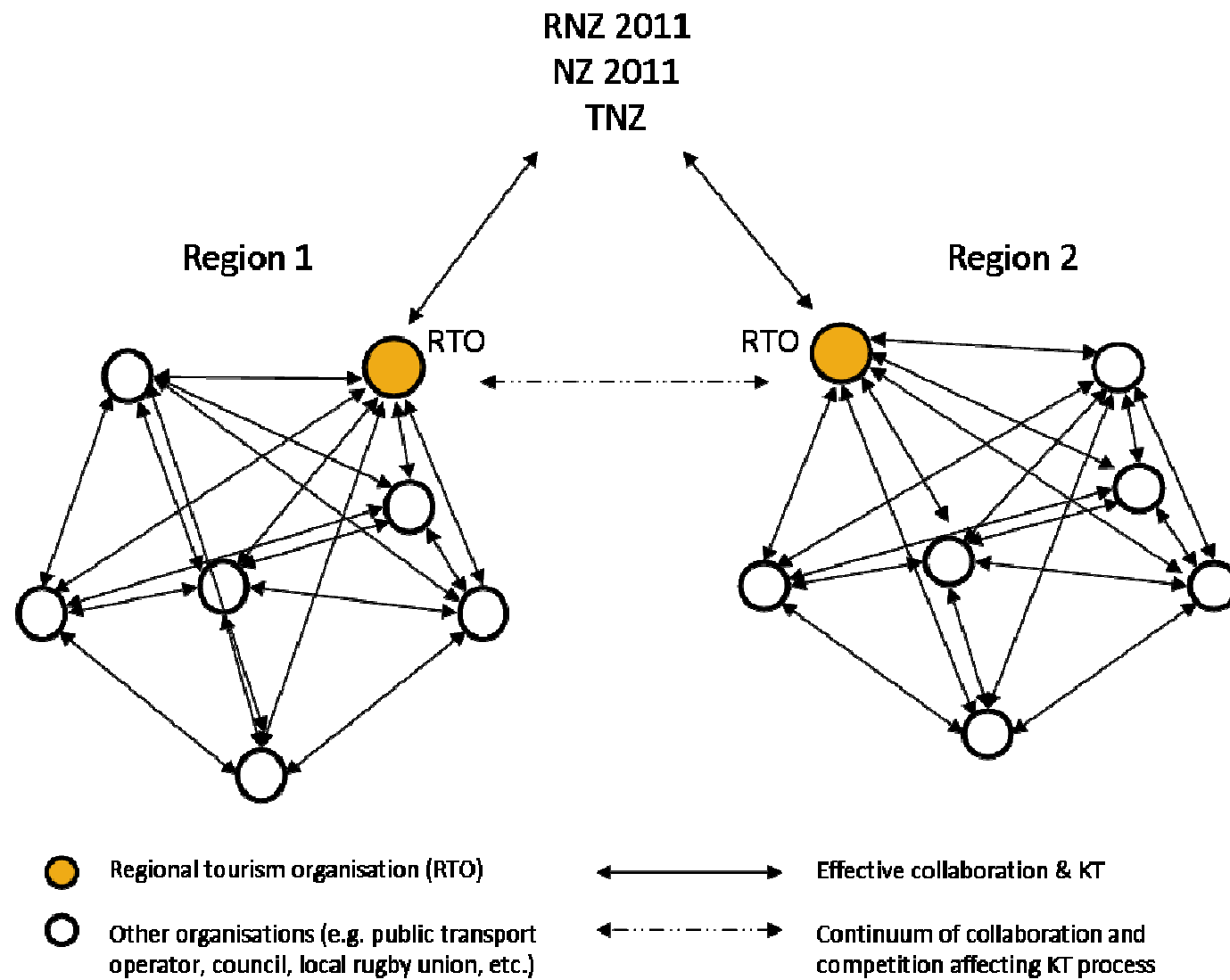
- The RTOs did not feel that coopetition among them (negatively) affected the preparations for the event.
- Most of the preparations took place *within* the regions; also close liaison with national bodies/organising committees
- Collaboration with other RTOs was not felt overly important for the success of the event

Knowledge

- RWC 2011 provided a significant learning opportunity
- RTOs gained useful skills & experiences
- RTOs learned more from organisations *within* their region and from the national organising bodies than from other RTOs.
- Information sharing among RTOs was a selective process.

Coopetition did affect KT dynamics

- The RTOs agreed that coopetition negatively impacted on knowledge sharing and transfer among them.
- The continuum of collaboration and competition (coopetition) impeded a more efficient and effective KT process among the RTOs.



Impact on coopetition on KT processes

The knowledge acquisition and transfer processes among the RTOs were negatively affected in two ways:

1. The limited RTO collaboration did not facilitate an effective knowledge transfer process; and
2. RTO competition constrained knowledge sharing.

These factors restricted the flow of potentially useful knowledge and information around RWC 2011

Conclusion

- Coopetition can negatively affect the sharing and transfer of knowledge
- The set-up of RWC 2011 played a major role
- If future events use a similar set-up, collaboration among the RTOs should be further promoted
- Significant opportunities of a mega-event to facilitate KT processes among RTOs.
- Need for future strategic approach to leverage these knowledge opportunities *ex ante*

THANK YOU



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