



Office of the Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor  
Kaitohutohu Mātanga Pūtaiao Matua ki te Pirimia

---

## Terms of Reference (ToR)

### [working title] Towards a vision for commercial fisheries in Aotearoa New Zealand in 2040

---

## Background

Aotearoa New Zealand's fisheries are a significant economic, cultural, social, and ecological natural resource. Maintenance of this resource and respect for our taonga species requires management that ensures sustainability of fisheries stocks and the wider marine ecosystem. As technology has developed and international and national attention turns towards integrated management systems that combine the best of quota management with protection of ecosystems, Aotearoa New Zealand has an opportunity to lead with innovative approaches. This project seeks to support this goal.

What do we as a country value when we look to the future in commercial fisheries? The values below are adapted from the industry but reflect the views of the project's expert panel:

- **Challenge and inspire** – use knowledge and science to challenge, inspire and guide a better future for commercial fisheries and Aotearoa New Zealand.
- **Responsibility** – to be good ancestors and ensure we maintain and enhance the resource for those generations to come.
- **Te hā o Tangaroa kia ora ai tāua** – protection of the environment (and ecosystem) so that utilisation is possible and sustainable.
- **Respect** – respect for the oceans, the people, and the products we produce and share. We reflect on what sustains us, the contributions made, and the high value of our products.
- **Retain what has worked** – build on strong foundations to enhance outcomes for commercial fishing, the community and the environment, and remain open to new ways of doing things.
- **Crown obligations** – have respect for the agreements made between the Crown and Iwi in relation to fisheries and the marine environment, such as Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the 1992 Fisheries Settlement.

The research considers these values as we build on other work undertaken. For example, the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment undertook a review of our environmental reporting systems in 2019. The report commented that:

*Current fisheries management systems... rarely take into account the effects of fishing on the wider ecosystem.*<sup>1</sup>

The Ministry for the Environment reported on the marine environment in 2019. Reporting showed marine catch has remained stable over the last decade and that in 2018 68% of marine catch came from stocks that were scientifically evaluated. The report also comments that:

---

<sup>1</sup> See: <https://www.pce.parliament.nz/publications/focusing-aotearoa-new-zealand-s-environmental-reporting-system>

*Stock assessments apply to individual fish stocks so they do not account for interactions between different stocks or interactions with the broader marine environment.*<sup>2</sup>

In 2015 Fisheries New Zealand undertook a Fisheries Management System review, and from this review they developed a major work programme called the Fisheries Change Programme to enhance and update the fisheries system. The programme is currently underway.<sup>3</sup>

A report in 2017 by The Nature Conservancy found that while Aotearoa New Zealand's Quota Management System has consistently ranked well compared to other countries against a range of global indicators, we do not routinely report on the ecosystem impacts of fishing.<sup>4</sup>

Around half of wild seafood caught in Aotearoa New Zealand is certified to the Marine Stewardship Council's (MSC) Fisheries Standard as well-managed and sustainable (this compares to 15% worldwide).<sup>5</sup> Incremental improvements are made to MSC standards and fisheries must continue to improve their practices in order to be recertified.

## Aim of project

The aim of the project is to help identify ways to reduce the gaps in data and knowledge in the fisheries sector. This is important to ensure that fishing is being undertaken sustainably and to meet Aotearoa New Zealand's commitment<sup>6</sup> to taking a more integrated approach to fisheries management, which includes consideration of the wider environment and its inhabitants.

This project will convene an expert panel which seeks to identify innovative technologies and methods that can be applied to fisheries to achieve these goals. It will provide recommendations on how Aotearoa New Zealand can move towards a vision for a modernised, data-driven approach to efficient and effective fishing which preserves this resource for future generations.

The aims of the panel are to:

- Reduce the gaps in data and knowledge, and improve data accessibility, in the commercial fisheries sector.
- Identify ways to help ensure that fishing is being undertaken sustainably.
- Consider the wider environment, ecosystem, and its inhabitants; and
- Help Aotearoa New Zealand commit to a more integrated approach to fisheries management.

## Proposed Scope

The scope for the project will be finalised in conjunction with the expert panel. The research will be evidence-based and seek to create a vision for commercial fisheries in Aotearoa New Zealand in 2040 supported by knowledge-driven management and an ecosystem approach.

In the context of this vision, the research will consider:

- 1. Data and knowledge gaps.** Consider the effectiveness of our processes for collecting information, how fit-for-purpose the data we collect is, where our data and knowledge gaps are, what impact these have on achieving the vision, and how these can be improved.

---

<sup>2</sup> See: <https://www.mfe.govt.nz/publications/environmental-reporting/our-marine-environment-2019>

<sup>3</sup> See: <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/protection-and-response/sustainable-fisheries/strengthening-fisheries-management/fisheries-change-programme/>

<sup>4</sup> See: <https://www.nature.org/media/asia-pacific/new-zealand-fisheries-quota-management.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> See: <https://www.msc.org/en-au/media-centre-anz/media-releases/new-zealanders-choose-sustainable-seafood-for-future-generations>

<sup>6</sup> United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (1992). See <https://www.doc.govt.nz/globalassets/documents/about-doc/role/international/nz-6th-national-report-convention-biological-diversity.pdf>

- 2. Mātauranga Māori.** Consider how to appropriately represent mātauranga Māori together with science in achieving the vision.
- 3. Innovation.** Explore relevant new technologies, innovative research, models, and approaches, and how these can provide opportunities to fill knowledge-gaps and improve fisheries management.
- 4. Application.** How can we apply this research to fill knowledge-gaps and step towards the vision.

### *Out of scope*

The research will not review or make recommendations on:

- Quota ownership and Crown obligations
- Aquaculture
- Recreational fishing including catch reporting
- Customary fishing

However, the report will explain how these factors impact and interact with the in-scope aspects of the project. Linkages and overlaps between in and out-of-scope factors may be commented on.

## Process

- Draft Terms of Reference agreed with PM.
- Wide stakeholder engagement will be included with an open reference group process.
- The membership of the panel and wider reference group will be public and processes open.
- Call for nominations of the expert panel and wider reference group will be sought from the key institutional contact lists. The panel shortlisting will actively seek to support a diverse and balanced panel. Expert panel approached and wider reference group assembled to guide the Office of the Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor in preparing the report.
- The report will be delivered to the Prime Minister and later made public on the PMCSA website.

## Timeline of activities

- Scope drafted – early February 2020
- Call for nominations via key institutional contacts list – February 2020
- Panel establishment – March 2020
- Research and engagement – March to June 2020
- Reporting – July-August 2020

## Research contact

Celia Cunningham, Research Analyst and Writer

☎ +64 9 923 4474

✉ [celia.cunningham@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:celia.cunningham@auckland.ac.nz)