



**SUSTAINABLE
SEAS**

Ko ngā moana
whakauka

Addressing politics when conducting valuation for decision-making

Decision-makers have to consider diverse and often conflicting economic, cultural, social and environmental values.

Officials advising decision-makers want best practice valuation frameworks and methods to render decision making more objective and less political. However, politics and social context unavoidably shape the way that information is generated and decisions get made. Attempting 'best practice' valuation without attention to this social and political context has consequences for local democracy and the environment (see the examples in the table).

This guidance offers recommendations to help advisors recognise and choose how to ethically and responsibly respond to this context.

Valuation

Holistic ecosystem-based management (EBM) of the marine environment seeks to recognise and accommodate the multiple ways in which people relate to and use the environment.

Valuation – the collection of information about people's values and relationships to the environment – is often used to inform decision making. By systematically identifying, collecting, and analysing peoples' economic, cultural, social and environmental values, decisions that affect people's values can be made more transparent and democratically accountable.

Beyond 'best practice'

As part of any valuation process, advisors should:

- **Acknowledge** that all valuation exercises are influenced by political and social context
- **Make deliberate and explicit choices** about how they will respond to this context
- **Explain** their choices and how they might affect social and environmental outcomes

We recommend three steps to address social and political context in values-based decision making. The steps build on each other and act as a scaffold upon which more 'legitimate' decisions can be made.

The first step, giving effect to Treaty-based principles, underpins the other two steps. The second step poses questions about the consequences of decision-making, which are then used to guide the choices outlined in the third step.

This will take you further than the traditional best practice framework and is likely to result in decisions that are less contested and more widely accepted by Māori partners and stakeholders.

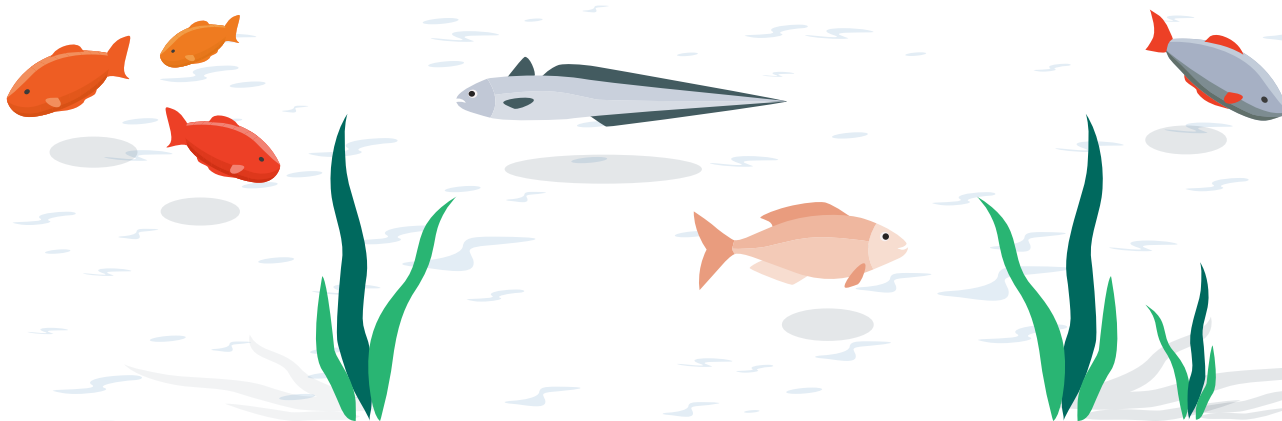
Step 1. **Adhere to the principles suggested by Māori resource management professionals:**

- The Treaty of Waitangi/Te Tiriti o Waitangi is the over-arching framework within which ecosystem-based management should sit, not the other way around.
- Decision processes should reflect the Treaty partnership – decisions should 'give effect to' and not just 'consider' iwi views. If Treaty partners do not agree, they should talk further.
- Iwi should be recognised at a governance level – kanohi ki te kanohi (face to face).
- Co-governance and co-management should be properly resourced. It is not a true partnership if one party controls all resources for information and analysis.

Step 2. **When scoping your valuation exercise and methods, be explicit about your objectives and question if they are broad enough. Do valuation in ways that:**

- Improve ecosystem health and recognise past abundance as a goal for the future
- Recognise that people are part of the environment— if te taiao is not healthy, people are not healthy
- Recognise and maintain mātauranga Māori about living from the land and the sea
- Recognise and value a diversity of voices, including local knowledge
- Reduce inequality and protect access to public spaces

When reporting your results, show how your valuation exercise contributes to these objectives and acknowledge where your methods constrain or prevent you from achieving them.



Step 3. Design your approach to valuation with these four questions in mind:

Key questions	Things to consider	Example	Recommendation
<p>1) Who is a 'legitimate' decision maker?</p>	<p>Many parties have rights, legal responsibility for and/or an interest in marine management, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Māori partners • Central government • Local government • Local stakeholder groups and organisations • Co-governance or collaborative decision-making 	<p>The valuation process to map values information and locations for marine-based activities in the Hauraki Gulf, completed in 2016, was led by a 16-person steering group that included eight mana whenua.</p> <p>However, the group's final recommendations were criticised by some Māori as illegitimate because affected hapū were not involved in the decision-making process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the start of the valuation process, identify entities who might claim authority over the decision, including Māori authorities at various scales. • Clarify which decision-maker the valuation is designed to serve, and why. • State how you are empowering entities who are not recognised as the official decision-maker but who have rights and/or interests.
<p>2) How should the valuation connect with the law?</p>	<p>You must choose whether to align with, or contest, existing legal and regulatory knowledge frameworks to achieve sustainable and fair outcomes for value holders.</p>	<p>In 2014, the Supreme Court ruled that a salmon farm in Marlborough could not be permitted because the site had been previously characterised in the Marlborough District Council plan as being a site of outstanding natural character. The economic benefits put forward by the company were not considered.</p> <p>In this example, the law dictated which types of evidence were permitted in the decision-making process and the value holders (local community members and businesses) used existing regulations to achieve their objective.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State how you are choosing to align with or contest legal criteria and evidentiary requirements.
<p>3) Whose expertise is considered and how does it affect the process?</p>	<p>Your choice of 'expert' knowledge influences the valuation process by determining which voices are heard and the types of knowledge that are used.</p>	<p>Value holders involved in the valuation process for the Marlborough salmon farms felt that bringing in experts 'from elsewhere', from different social worlds and with different cultures and priorities, intensified rather than ameliorated conflict, invalidated their vast experiential knowledge, and decreased the legitimacy of the decision-making process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include knowledge and values expertise that sits outside of the traditional scope of technical/'Western science'. • Provide multiple ways for people to express their values and knowledge, including ways that are culturally meaningful to the value holders.

Continued on next page

Step 3. (continued)

Key questions	Things to consider	Example	Recommendation
4) What power dynamics are at play and how can I give smaller players a voice?	Power dynamics (personal or organisational networks/connections/influence) can directly or indirectly influence decisions during the valuation process.	<p>The ability to influence political decisions is often associated with financial resources.</p> <p>In Marlborough, industry organisations had the resources to marshal local and national politicians to generate support for a development and the ability to negotiate the terms of court proceedings. In contrast, smaller businesses, community members, and the iwi/hapū involved, lacked the resources to engage in this kind of political activity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work to ensure players with less power and influence are heard. • Ensure the experts you use are aware of the limitations of valuation methods and actively work to level the field.

Source information



Sinner J et al (2018). *Exploring valuation frameworks and principles for sustainable seas*

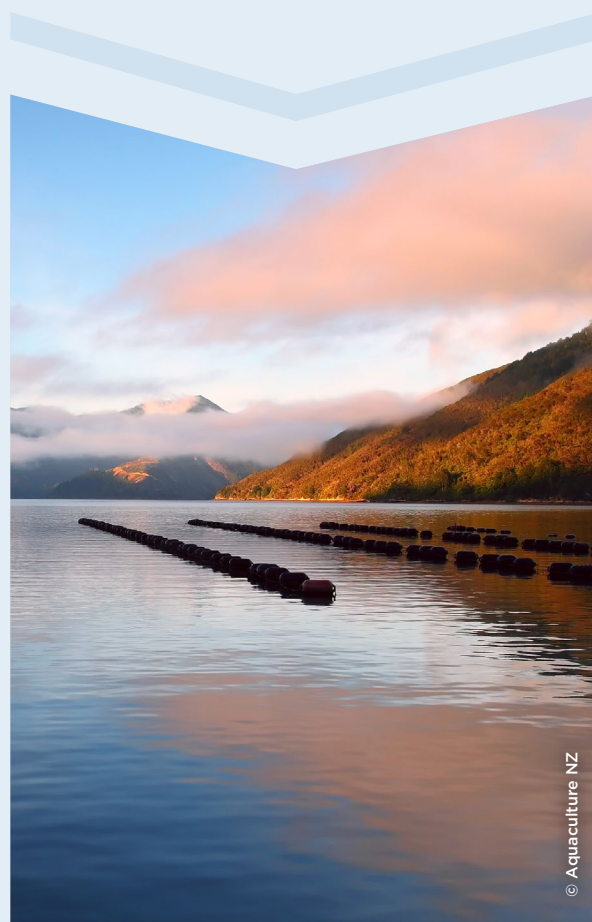


Tadaki M et al (2020). *Four propositions about how valuation intervenes in local environmental politics. People and Nature, DOI: 10.1002/pan.3.10165*

Related guidance



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