

# Empowering Māori knowledge in marine decision-making

Mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge and knowledge system) and te ao Māori (Māori worldview approaches) are often poorly understood and marginalised in marine planning, management, and decision-making.

There are documented benefits to incorporating mātauranga and te ao Māori worldviews into decision-making. In addition, local and central government agencies have Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations, yet agencies have varying capacity and capability to fulfil them. Sustainable Seas research has shown that empowering Māori knowledge in marine decision-making is key to achieving fit-for-purpose, robust, and place-based outcomes that achieve community and business aspirations.

## About this document

This document summarises Sustainable Seas research findings and insights on empowering Māori knowledge and approaches in marine decision-making. It aims to inform decision-makers from local and central government agencies by providing guidance on how to do so, including key recommendations, and highlights examples of projects, processes, frameworks, and tools to assist decision-makers. For more information, please see our full guidance document and the references listed at the end of this summary.



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## Recommendations

We recommend that to achieve the benefits of marine decision-making that is informed by mātauranga Māori, local and central government agencies should:

- » Invest in building team and individual capability that provides for diversity and addresses power imbalances to achieve more equitable and effective decision-making.
- » Situate marine planning processes in context, place, time and acknowledge local aspirations.
- » Acknowledge the validity of te ao Māori informed advice.
- » Apply Te Tiriti o Waitangi principles as a key underpinning for improved decision-making processes and setting future directions.

We note also that these recommendations can be enacted within current legislative and policy frameworks.

## Local and central government agencies need to invest in building team and individual capability that provides for diversity and addresses power imbalances to achieve more equitable and effective decision-making

### Individual capability: Position yourself as a decision-maker (figure 1)

- Commit to personal and professional development to expand your understanding and proficiency in te reo Māori (Māori language), Te Tiriti o Waitangi, tikanga and mātauranga Māori, and New Zealand history
- Investigate worldviews, positionalities, and disciplines
- Be reflective, conscious, and willing.

<p><b>Tips</b></p> <p>It's okay to feel uncomfortable with 'new' processes and knowledges.</p> <p>You aren't starting from scratch-what Te Tiriti-led work you can join?</p> <p>Councils/government often have hapū/iwi representatives on salary, make contact.</p> <p>Pick up the phone, send an email, make relationships.</p> <p>Find out the names of all hapū and iwi in your rohe.</p> <p>Read widely and out of your normal field - easy way to broaden thinking</p> <p>Arrive willing to listen and learn.</p> <p>Think: What can I do in my 'here and now'?</p>	<p><b>Dos</b></p> <p>Recognise and work with other ways of knowing.</p> <p>Do your personal work: build your capacity to be an ally of te ao Māori.</p> <p>Think restorative research and decision-making, increasing mauri.</p> <p>Reach out to hapū and iwi.</p> <p><b>Don'ts</b></p> <p>Don't get stuck in the past, change how the future goes.</p> <p>Don't feel guilty for the past, only if you ignore the present.</p> <p>Don't retrench to reporting lines. Retain awareness of and intersect with what others are doing.</p>	<p><b>Assumptions</b></p> <p>That worldviews are shared and understood across parties.</p> <p>That new legislation is needed. There are already provisions to enact Te Tiriti-led decision-making in legislation.</p> <p>That courts may dismiss evidence-in practice legislation allows a very broad range of practices.</p> <p>That it takes too long. Upfront relationship building and discussing shared values can shorten later decision-making times.</p> <p><b>Reminders</b></p> <p>Colonisation isn't an event in the past, it's embedded in current structures and is a lived reality for many.</p> <p>Remember that in co-developed work, the point is you don't know where it will end up.</p> <p>Te Tiriti-led work is a statutory obligation and there are many resources to help.</p> <p>Your organisation will have processes and experience in enabling te ao Māori, use these.</p> <p>Research should be of value to all involved, not extractive. What are hapū aspirations?</p>
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Figure 1 Dos, don'ts, tips, and assumptions: building capability to empower te Ao Māori

**Team capability: Create a te ao Māori positive team (figure 2)**

- Have a shared commitment to te ao Māori
- Ensure sufficient Māori knowledge expertise within the team
- Recognise the diversity of the Māori community (ie that iwi, hapū, whānau, Māori commercial organisations etc are not homogenous and often have different aspirations)
- Provide for leadership that prioritises collaborative, multidisciplinary, locally specific, and cross-boundary approaches
- Ensure a working environment that encourages the ability to work with different knowledge approaches.

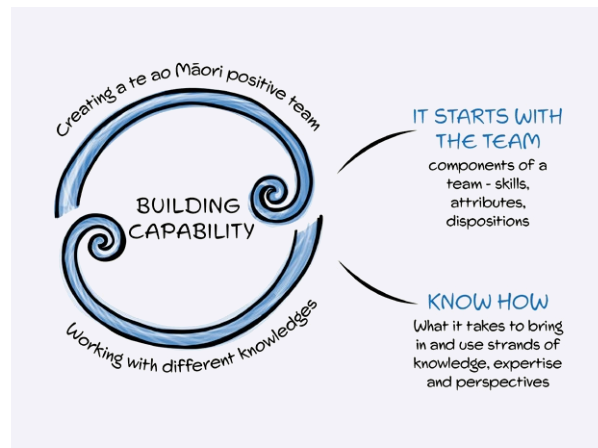


Figure 2 Building capability

This advice is for use by internal teams to build capability, as well as in producing policy or plans. It is offered as considerations that might inform future policy or legal reform, and should always be applied in accordance with current legislative/policy frameworks.

**Situate marine policy, planning and management processes in context, place, and time and acknowledge local aspirations (figure 3)**

- Include iwi/hapū and community aspirations and find out about the legacies of previous work.
- Place, time, law and relations can be understood differently, which matters for decision-making.
- Anchor the Aotearoa New Zealand setting of Te Tiriti o Waitangi principles and ethics.

**Acknowledge the validity of te ao Māori informed advice (figure 4)**

- Recognise the valuable contribution of mātauranga Māori experts.
- Provide for different types of mātauranga Māori - general vs context specific.

- Relationships are critical to timely decision-making.
- Te ao Māori does not work within our mainstream policy, principles, governance, knowledge, boundary structures.

**Apply Te Tiriti o Waitangi principles as a key underpinning for improved decision-making processes and setting future directions**

- Provide for partnership in decision-making.
- Respect that mātauranga Māori belongs to the knowledge holders, like intellectual property.
- Shift the focus to interdependent wellbeing.
- Enact te ao Māori principles and outcomes.
- Bringing together mātauranga Māori and science can inform improved decision-making.

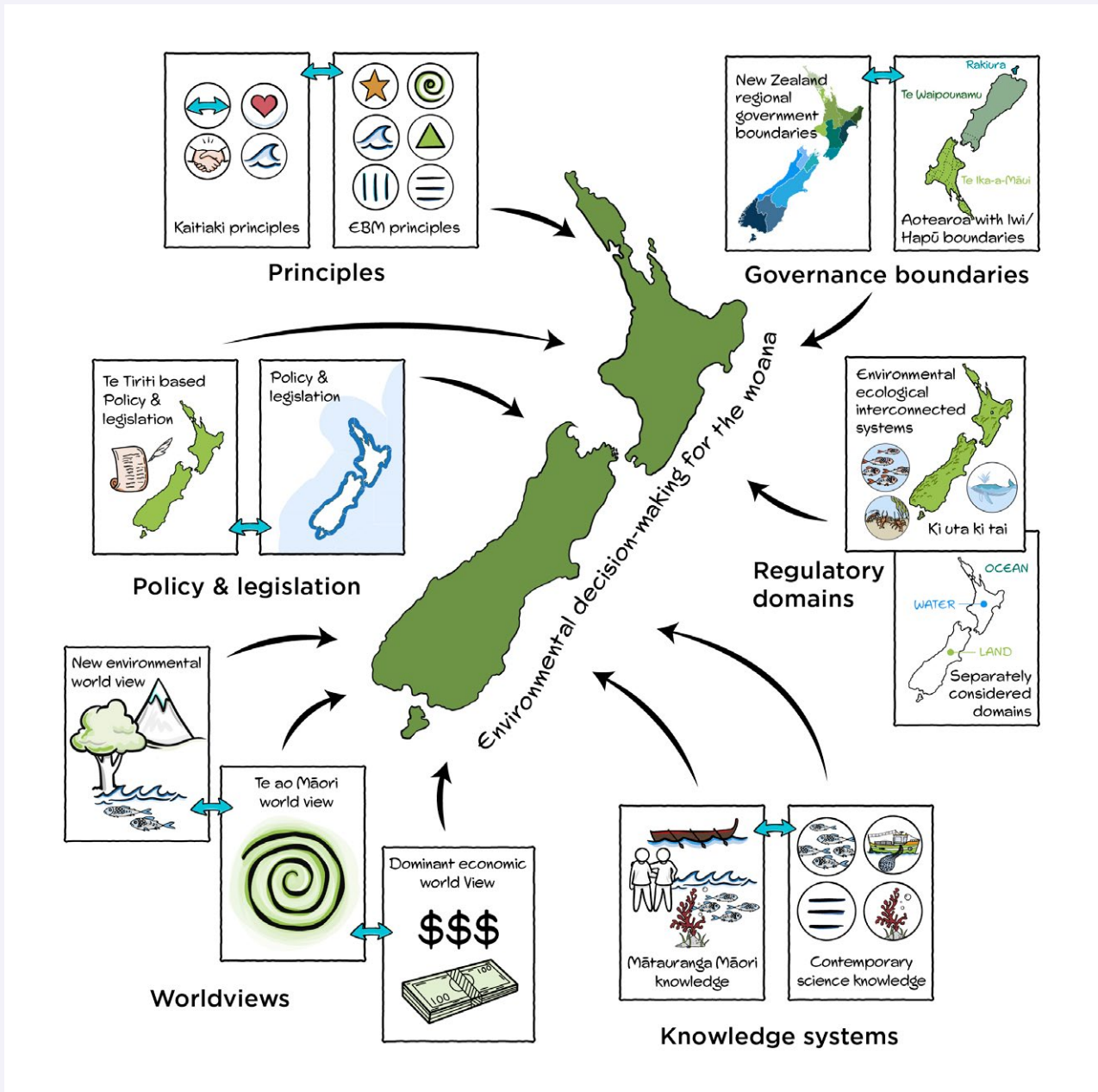


Figure 3 Environmental decision-making for the moana



Figure 4 Empowering te ao Māori

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For more information and support with marine management decisions, please see our other synthesis project summaries and guidance documents in this series.