

Users of Sustainable Seas research for ecosystem-based management (EBM)

The **Whakatutuki (synthesis) phase** of the Sustainable Seas Challenge aims to draw together research findings to ensure the overall result of the Challenge is greater than the sum of its parts. This includes **refining tools** to facilitate their wider use and application for, and beyond, stakeholders who have been directly involved in the research to date.

A 2022 survey of Sustainable Seas project leaders identified which users of research – those who will use or directly benefit from the outputs, outcomes, or results of research – had been engaged across Phase 1 (2014-2019) and Phase 2 (2019-2024) projects, and where project leaders saw gaps in engagement.

Apart from a Phase 1 project that had engaged with galleries and the energy sector, all research user groups from Phase 1 were also identified in Phase 2 projects. With a relatively low number of responses from leaders of Phase 1 projects (8 respondents) compared to Phase 2 (24 respondents), limited further comparisons have been made between phases. The primary focus is on Phase 2 interactions and how these will inform synthesis.

Identified gaps

Respondents identified types of users who could benefit from tailored Challenge outputs for their specific project, but that they were not presently interacting with (Box 1). Most of these types were not missing from the overall Phase 2 interactions, except for those in blue text, although those in bold were identified early in the synthesis plan. The gap analysis of research users is now informing engagement within synthesis projects being implemented from 2022-2024. Those highlighted in bold in the list of gaps have been a particular focus to date.

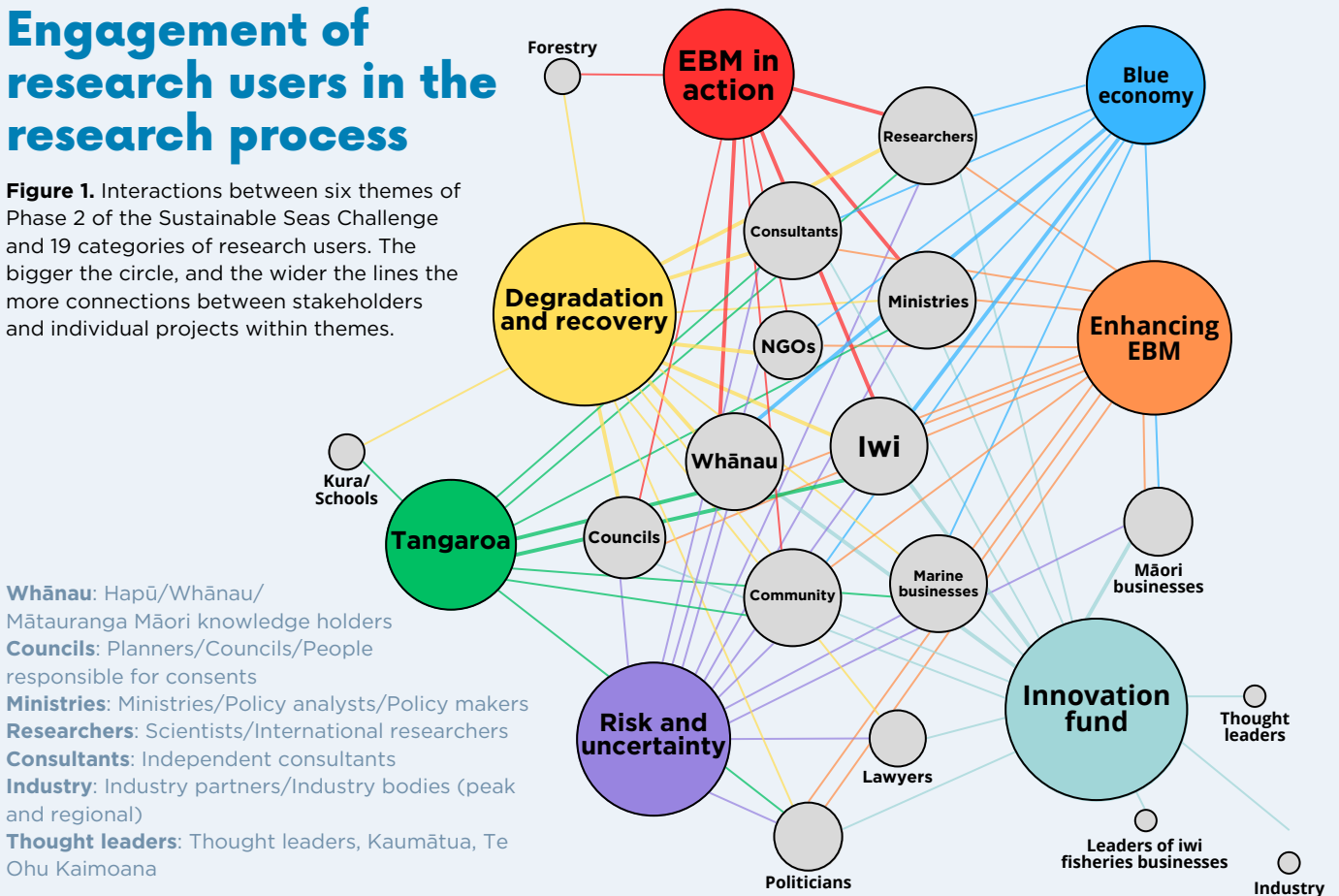
Box 1. Gaps identified by at least one project within a theme: Those in blue text were missing from the overall Phase 2 interactions. Those in bold were identified in the synthesis plan.

- MPI
- Wider hapū and whānau members
- Impact Investors
- Schools, kura, wānanga
- Local Action Groups
- National Māori ocean peak¹ bodies (eg iwi chairs), Te Arawhiti
- Land based industries
- MBIE
- Artists
- **Entrepreneurs**
- **People with the energy and capacity to effect change**
- **Other taiao and mātauranga practitioners, Mātanga reo**
- **Te Ohu Kaimoana**

¹ Umbrella organisations that broker relationships and facilitate collaboration and networks

Engagement of research users in the research process

Figure 1. Interactions between six themes of Phase 2 of the Sustainable Seas Challenge and 19 categories of research users. The bigger the circle, and the wider the lines the more connections between stakeholders and individual projects within themes.



In Phase 2, projects from all six research themes were interacting with community, whānau, iwi, marine businesses, researchers, consultants, and ministries (Figure 1).

The centrality of whānau, hapū, mātauranga Māori knowledge holders and iwi groups (Figure 1) suggests a response to a mismatch of scale (Box 2), that was also identified by a Phase 1 respondent: “it was difficult to engage with specific iwi/hapū given the research was mostly focused at the national scale”.

Innovation Fund projects were targeted at research partnerships with enterprise and business organisations to help build a blue economy in Aotearoa. This is reflected in the research partners particular to this theme, and includes thought leaders, industry, and leaders of iwi fisheries businesses.

Box 2. Scale-dependent barriers to EBM (Ellis et al. 2022) include:

- A spatial mismatch between national and local/regional scales
- A mismatch between artificial jurisdictional boundaries and environmental effects that often transcend these jurisdictional boundaries
- Institutional fragmentation and siloed agencies that further complicate the scale of jurisdictional boundaries