



Implementing mahinga kai as a Māori freshwater value

A 60-minute webinar for Regional Councils on the guidance document

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Executive Summary

Mahinga kai connects people with place, tangata with whenua

Mahinga kai was elevated to a compulsory value under the NPS-FM 2020 and is required to be implemented in the National Objectives Framework (NOF) by 2024.

This gives greater recognition to values that Māori hold for freshwater and provides for tangata whenua to meaningfully exercise their freshwater interests and obligations.

Mahinga kai is a broad and multi-faceted indicator, which will ensure that a wide variety of quantitative and qualitative Māori measures of health are incorporated into regional freshwater planning.

This requires regional councils to work collaboratively with tangata whenua to identify mahinga kai values and to actively involve tangata whenua in decision-making processes.

Contents

Mahinga kai connects people with place, tangata whenua

Section 1: An introduction to mahinga kai in the context of the NPS-FM and National Objectives Framework.

Section 2: Guidance for engagement to help tangata whenua and councils work together.

Section 3: Existing and new tools that may be applicable within the NPS-FM context offering insights into the role of mātauranga Māori, data sovereignty, monitoring, and cultural mapping.

Section 4: Critical issues of capability, capacity, and resourcing.

Section 5: Links to relevant and insightful audio-visual, infographic, and fact sheet content.

Mahinga kai and Te Mana o te Wai

The connection between mahinga kai and Te Mana o te Wai

Te Mana o te Wai, a mātauranga Māori approach to water that prioritises the health and well-being of water bodies and freshwater ecosystems, the health needs of people, and the social, economic and cultural well-being of people and communities.

The NOF Process

The steps to implement mahinga kai through the National Objectives Framework

The NOF is a process that requires regional councils to work collaboratively with and enable tangata whenua to identify mahinga kai values and be actively involved in decision-making processes relating to freshwater management.

Engaging with tangata whenua:

Recommendations for effective engagement between councils and tangata whenua, who are the experts for the values and knowledge they hold for their local waterbodies, to enable a process that respects their rights, obligations, and aspirations for freshwater.

Tools

Existing and newly developed tools that tangata whenua and councils can use to identify, assess, manage, monitor, map, and report on mahinga kai values and attributes.

Mātauranga Māori and data sovereignty

The significance of mātauranga Māori, the unique body of knowledge that informs Māori worldviews and practices, and data sovereignty, the right of tangata whenua to own, control, access, and protect their data

Capability, capacity, and resourcing

Gaps, issues, and opportunities for improving the skills, knowledge, relationships, funding, and support needed to implement mahinga kai successfully.

Recommendations

Integrating mahinga kai – ideas for councils

Councils and tangata whenua provided several practical suggestions for integration of mahinga kai.

A common message was that mahinga kai should become business-as-usual for councils.

The first of 20 bullet points:

Provide training for council staff, or even better, shared learning experiences and opportunities that include tangata whenua.

Training for Councils

All of the tools require specialised skills and training due to their complexity and process demands



The Mauri Compass

A mauri assessment tool and a framework for restoring the mauri of any ocean, river or lake.

Provides specifically for mahinga kai and integrates mātauranga Māori and a range of other sciences.

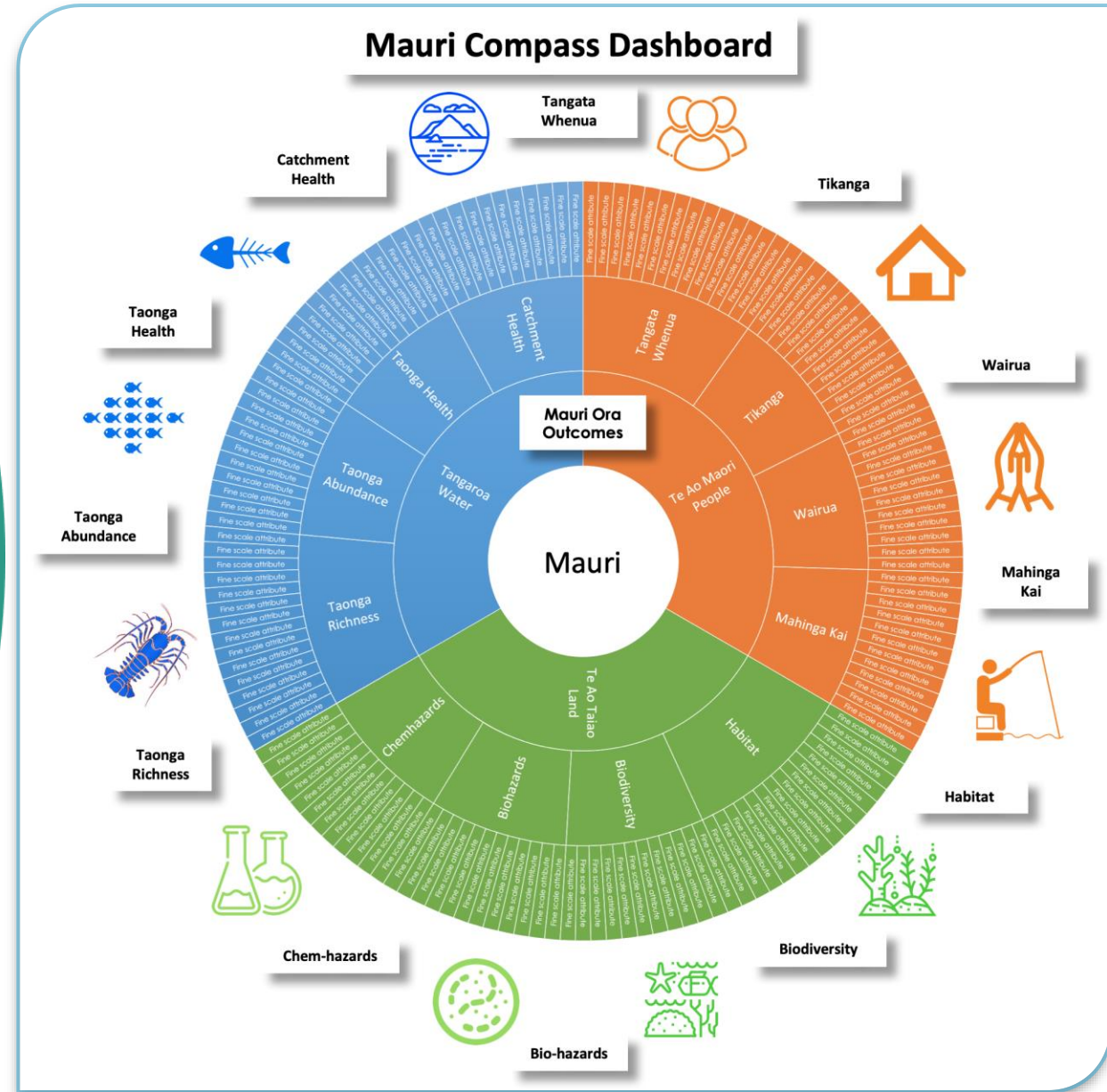
Is applied by Accredited Assessors with endorsement from tangata whenua.

Offers accredited training packages for Council Staff, RMA Practitioners and tangata whenua;

Introduction to the Mauri Compass 101 and Mauri Compass Assessors Course

The Mauri Compass

A mauri assessment tool and a framework for restoring the mauri of any ocean, river or lake.



TARANAKI REGIONAL COUNCIL STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT REPORT 2022

Ngāti Mutunga and the Mauri Compass



Ngāti Mutunga had been looking for a monitoring tool to assist them in fulfilling their kaitiaki responsibilities and enable them to play a proactive role in environmental management. This was particularly around the priority area of freshwater governance.

Ngāti Mutunga Environmental Officer Marlene Benson says that at times the iwi had been unable to participate effectively in the Resource Management Act process because of a lack of useful data about taonga species.

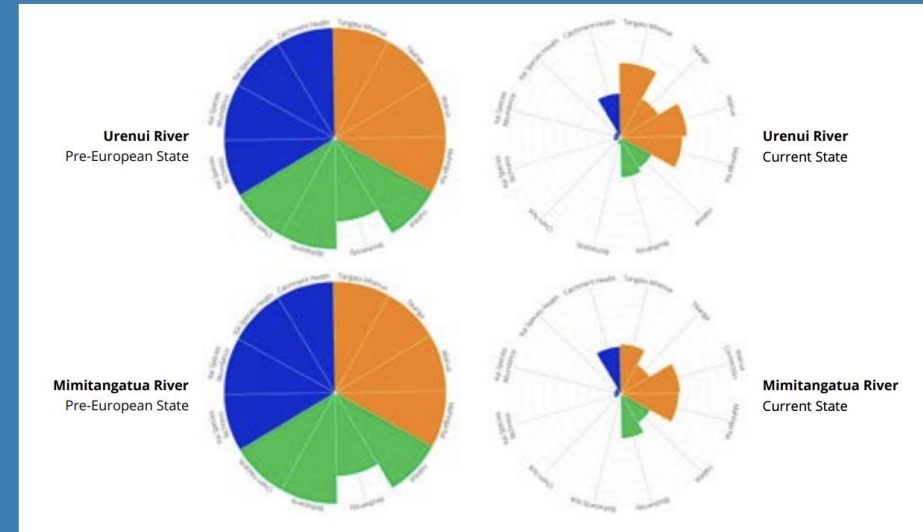
There was also no recognised tool to monitor the effect of consented activities on the mauri (life force) of its awa.

They chose the Mauri Compass, developed by Ian Ruru of Te Rūnanga o Turanganui a Kiwa and the Gisborne District Council, because they felt it had a good balance of mātauranga Māori and science data collection.

They like that it:

- Is by Māori for Māori
- Is holistic and inclusive -acknowledges te ira tangata (the human element) as part of our ecosystem
- Includes and prioritises Māori values and tikanga
- Provides an avenue for whanau/iwi to connect with ancestral lands through participation
- Provides measurable and comparable outcomes for use in a colonial system
- Has been implemented and influential within other iwi/ council bodies

With the support of Te Ohu Kaimoana and Te Wai Māori Trust, Ngāti Mutunga engaged the services of Ian Ruru and his sons Manawa and Riaki to apply the Mauri Compass tool to assess the historical and current state of mauri on two of the Ngāti Mutunga tupuna awa - Urenui and Mimitangiatua.



The Compass uses 12 indicators of a waterbody across three key areas: Te Ao Maori, Nga Tini a Tangaroa and Te Ao Taiao and involves both wānanga (space of learning) and fieldwork.

During the wānanga sessions topics discussed by tangata whenua included historic practices and kōrero tuku iho (information passed down) including mahinga kai, ceremonies, wāhi kainga (place of dwelling), and wāhi tapu (sacred place) sites, taniwha (supernatural guardian) and tauranga waka (canoe landing place, safe anchorage).

Ngāti Mutunga carried out the original taonga species survey in 2020 on four sites on each awa with the focus on tuna. As predicted, they found the mauri of both awa had declined since European settlement.

“Three of the 12 Mauri Compass indicators focus on the health and wellbeing of our freshwater sentinel taonga, the tuna. Species richness, tuna abundance and tuna health had each fallen 80%, which is a talisman for the decline in Ngāti Mutunga connection, tikanga, mahinga kai practices, and overall wairua of our tupuna awa,” Mrs Benson says.

“While a bit depressing, the assessment provided a tangible and visual reminder of the work that we have to do immediately, before it’s too late.”

She says Ngāti Mutunga whānau aged from 2 to 70-plus had been involved with the process.

“It will be easy to engage the wider Ngāti Mutunga whānau during any future mahi we do. This will increase everyone’s skills in the collection of scientific data while recognising and affirming the cultural knowledge, expertise, and experience of Ngāti Mutunga whānau participating in this work.

“It also helps to reconnect us and strengthen our relationships as tangata whenua to our whenua, our awa and ngā mātua tupuna (ancestors before us). We believe this to be important in enhancing and maintaining the mauri of the environment and the health and wellbeing of our people.”

Since the original survey Ngāti Mutunga has used the Mauri Compass to monitor resource consents at the Urenui and Onaero Campgrounds and to inform Cultural Impact Statements provided to the New Plymouth District Council.

“Provide training for council staff,
or even better, shared learning
experiences and opportunities that
include tangata whenua.”



MAURI COMPASS: INTRODUCTORY COURSE
TARANAKI REGIONAL COUNCIL STAFF & NGĀTI MUTUNGA



Taranaki Regional Council

March 26, 2021 · 🌐



Our staff were recently involved in Mauri Compass training hosted by members of Ngāti Mutunga iwi at Onaero and Urenui.

Mauri Compass is a structure for assessing and restoring the mauri of our waterways and is a tool that brings together western science and Mātauranga Māori measures to present a wider view.

Ensuring our staff are familiar with Mauri Compass is important to empower them to integrate Mātauranga Māori into their environmental assessments and interpretations.

Thank you [Te Runanga o Ngati Mutunga](#) for a really educational and inspiring experience!





Patai / Questions?

