

Enhancing ecosystem-based management through transdisciplinary research

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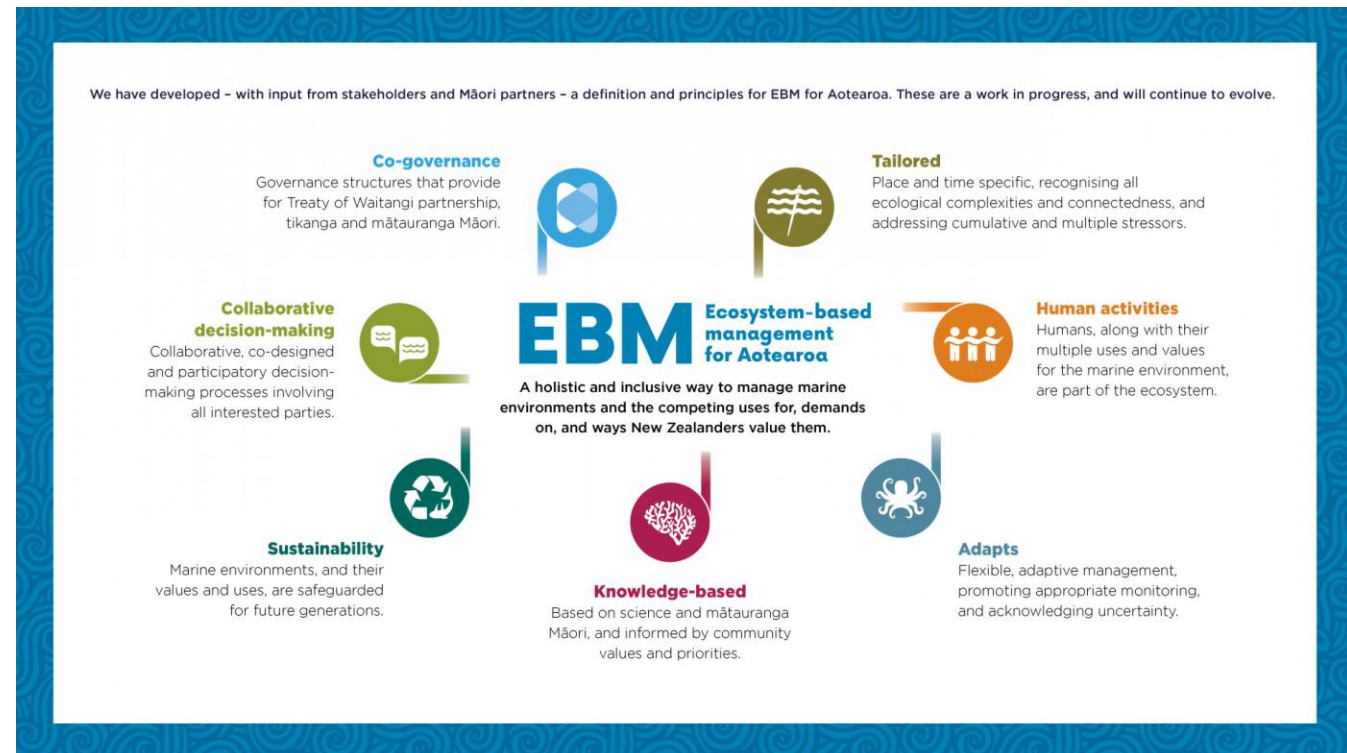
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Sustainable Seas National Science Challenge

- 10-year programme of research focused on ecosystem-based management (2014-2024)
- Inter/transdisciplinary
- Development of principles specific to Aotearoa New Zealand



Enhancing EBM practices

- Law, policy and governance arrangements to enhance/support the implementation of EBM

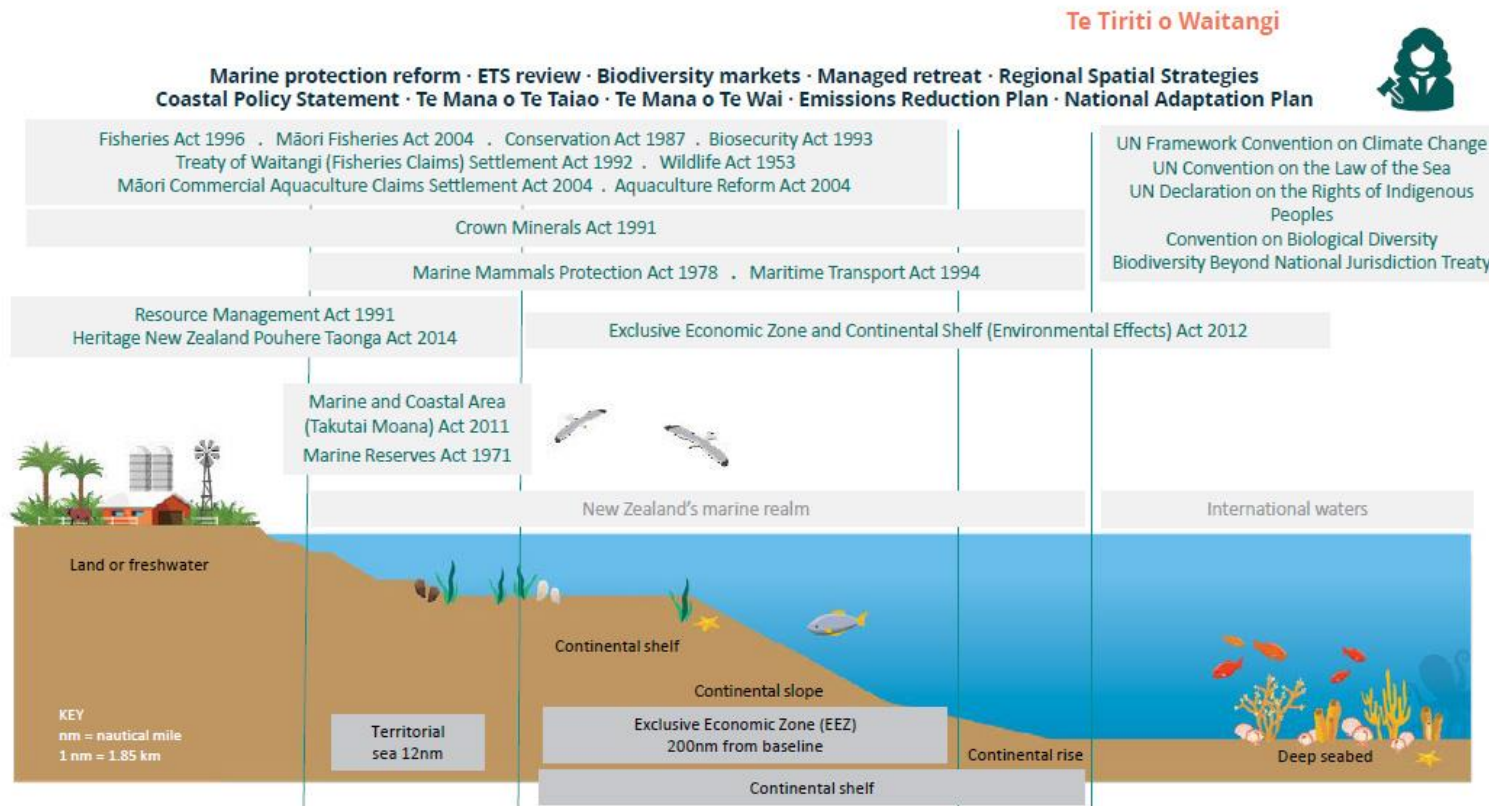


Figure 1 The overlapping and inconsistent spatial scales at which marine law and policy operates in Aotearoa New Zealand

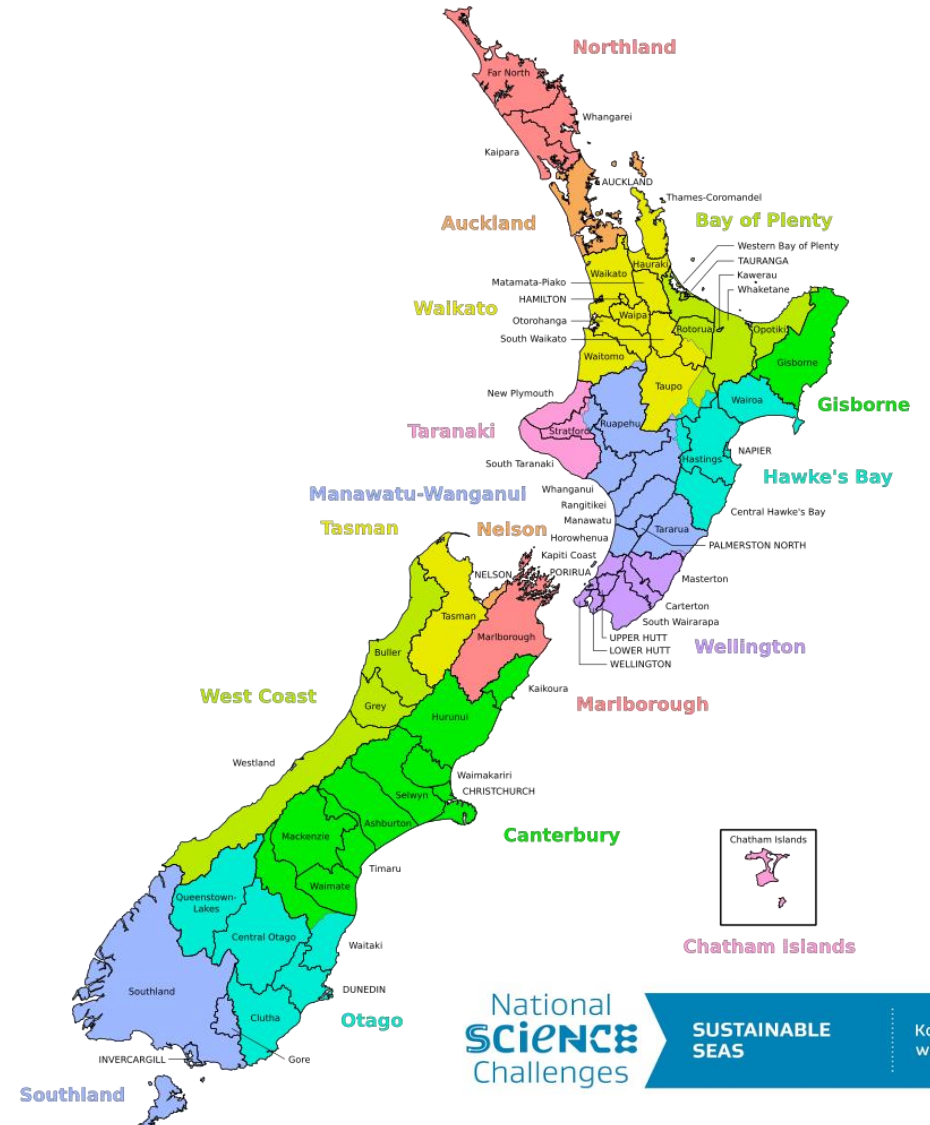


SUSTAINABLE SEAS

Ko ngā moana whakauka

Enhancing EBM practices

- Working with regional councils
 - 11 regional councils and 6 unitary authorities
 - Develop plans in accordance with Resource Management Act 1991 (and national policy statements)

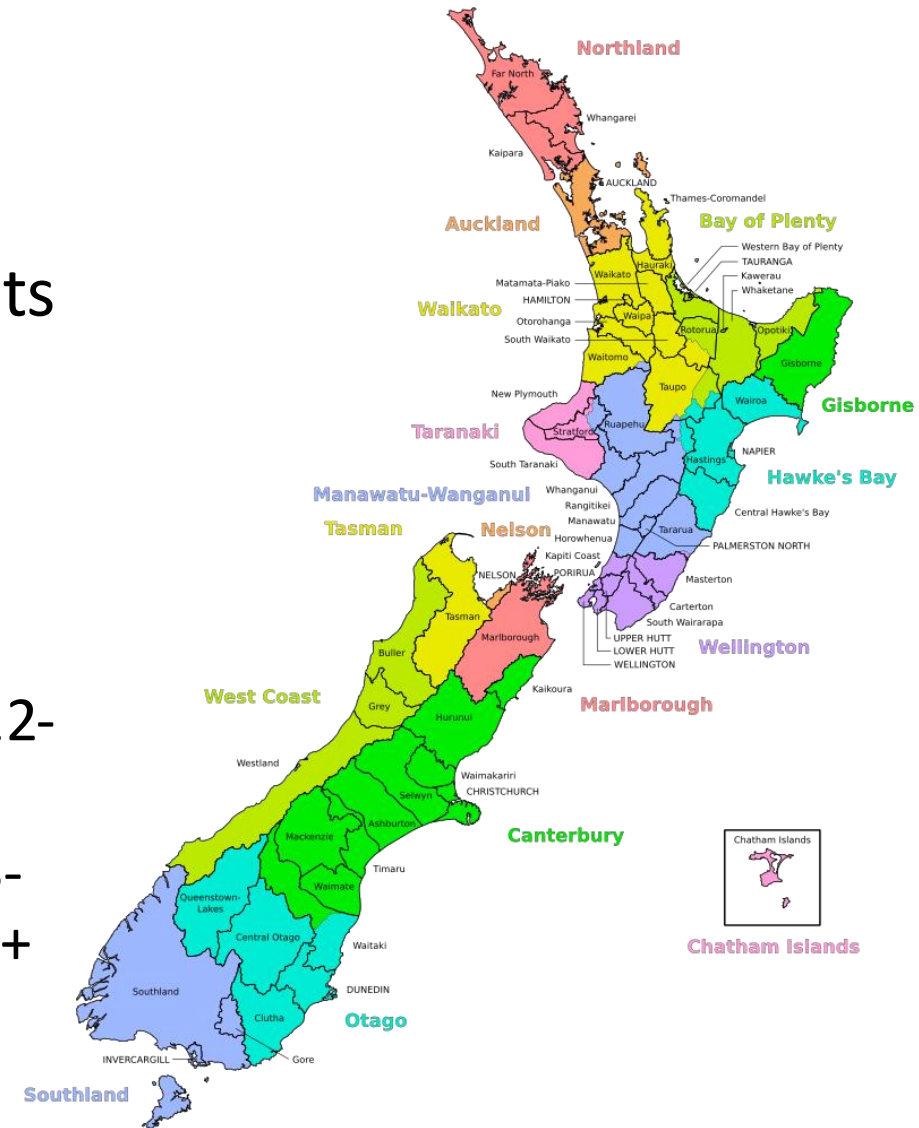


Transdisciplinary research in policy and planning

- Opportunities to embed EBM principles into regional coastal plans/regional plans as part of plan reviews
 - Part of statutory processes as set out under legislation
 - Relationships built as part of broader Sustainable Seas research
 - Interest in adopting EBM approach in light of failures of current planning approach (e.g., outdated plans)

Research approach

- Research team: social science, law, physical science; council policy and science; consultants with regional council experience
- Case studies:
 - 1) Waikato Regional Council Coastal Plan Review (2020-2021);
 - 2) Hawke's Bay Regional Council Plan Change (2022-2023*);
 - 3) Embedding EBM in regional coastal plans (2023-2024) (Hawke's Bay, Otago, Greater Wellington + Canterbury, Southland)



Research approach

- Research methods
 - Gap analysis of existing plan/draft review and development of methodology (1)
 - Facilitated workshops (2, 3)
 - Review and testing of guidance, frameworks and tools developed as part of Challenge Research
 - Team meetings (1,2,3)
 - Generating understanding, building trust, 'problem' identification/clarifying focus

Applied policy research in action

- Progress on Waikato Regional Council project affected by COVID-19 pandemic, lockdowns, and shifting council priorities
 - Ability to influence change in this plan relatively limited because of internal deadlines, plan-writing process
 - Plan notified for public submission in August 2023



Applied policy research in action

- Hawke's Bay project affected by Cyclone Gabrielle, February 2023
 - Work has recently re-commenced on plan review process

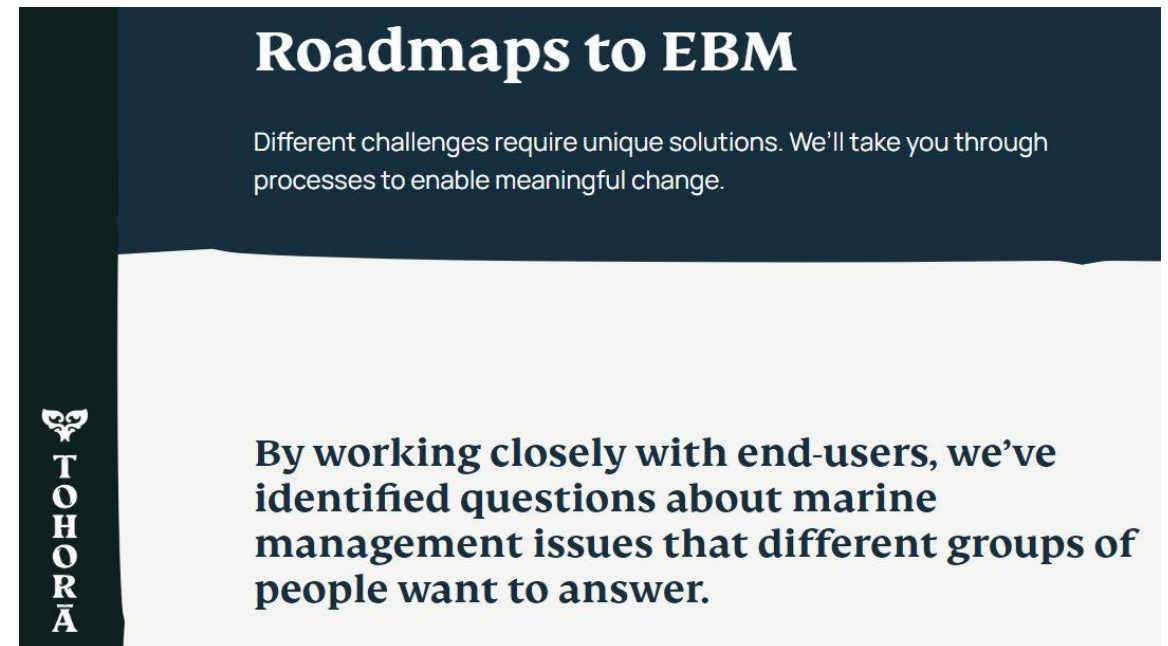


Applied policy research in action

- Current project: focused on producing short (1-2 page) guidance documents aimed at preparatory stages
 - Guidance to complement other guidance, frameworks and tools produced by Sustainable Seas



See <https://www.sustainableseaschallenge.co.nz>



tohora.org.nz/roadmaps-to-ebm

Embedding the principles into practice

 Co-governance	Support to assist councils in fulfilling legal obligations, to engage in good faith and to resource engagement.
 Knowledge-based	Evidence base to support processes (plan and policy making, as well as decision-making); science and mātauranga (Māori Indigenous knowledge).
 Human activities	Support to identifying regulatory (rules-based) and non-regulatory approaches to manage activities and effects: evidence, case studies; networks.
 Sustainability	Support to evidence basis for trade-offs; intergenerational focus.
 Collaborative decision-making	Processes to support collaborative processes and what councils currently do (evidencing decisions and guiding knowledge generation and use)
 Tailored	Identifying what people care about (places, species) as the basis for determining regulatory/non-regulatory responses and actions
 Adapts	Support to enhance monitoring and approaches that reflect local needs

Reflections and observations

- **Timing is everything**

- Waikato Regional Council => alignment with principles; however, late involvement in their process
- Hawke's Bay => early involvement; however, Cyclone Gabrielle shifted priorities and effort
- Internal timelines confounded efforts to embed EBM principles (e.g., Waikato Regional Council and engagement with Māori)
- Current project => councils early in process; however, value in applying insights and learnings from those further along

Reflections and observations

- **Where to draw the line?**
 - Distinguishing role of research/researchers e.g., council obligations and responsibilities in respect of Māori; resourcing engagement opportunities
- **Take the wins where you can**
 - Learning to live in risky and turbulent times
 - Incremental changes now could lead to bigger changes later
 - Think big/act small (re-imagining leadership)
 - Research as evidence to enable change