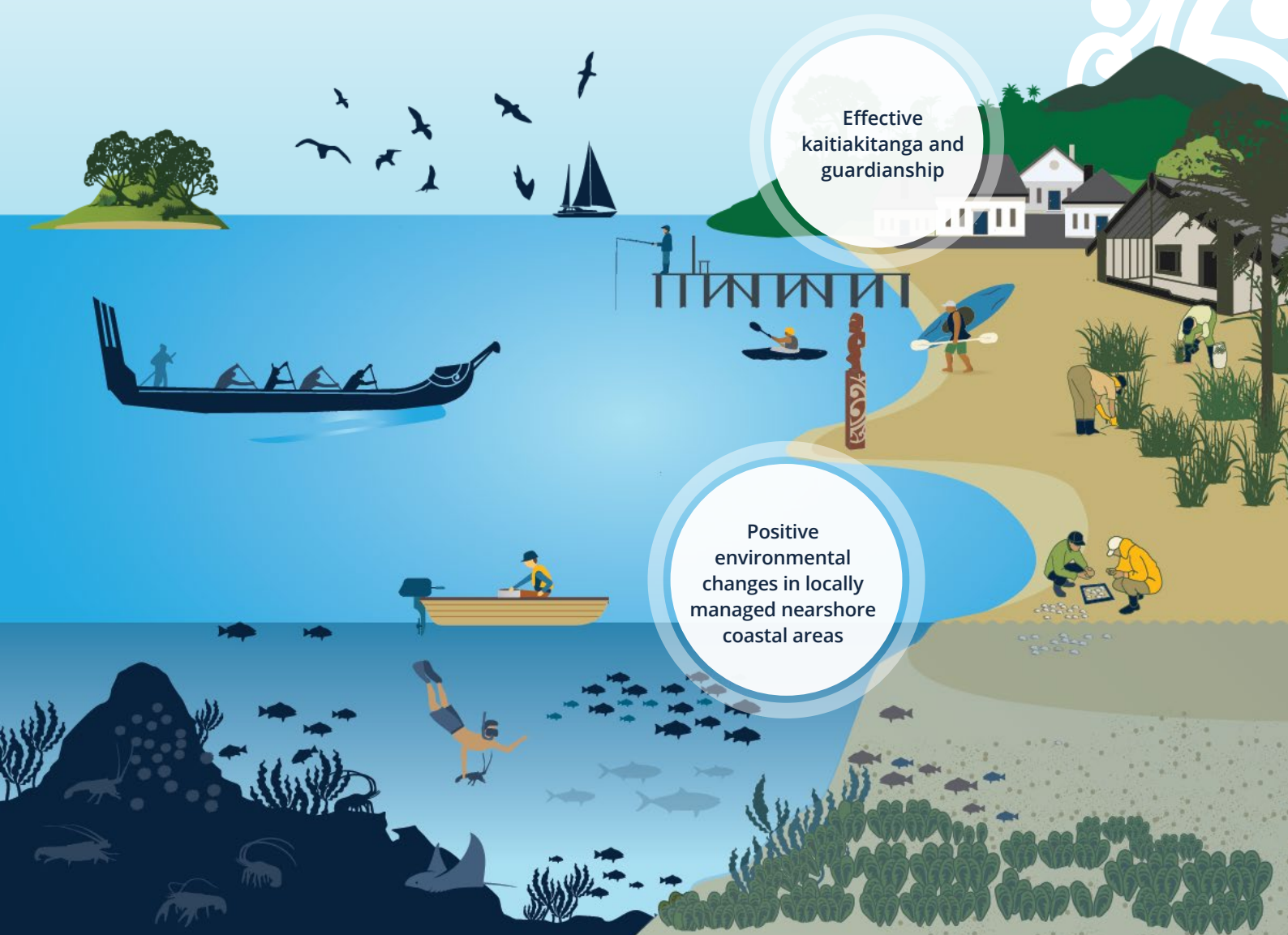


5.7 Ahu Moana



Ahu Moana at a glance

The Strategy outcomes for Ahu Moana are:

- effective kaitiakitanga (mana whenua) and guardianship (local communities), with local management of nearshore coastal areas and decision-making drawing on the knowledge and connection of mana whenua and local communities; and
- observation of positive environmental and fisheries changes in locally managed nearshore coastal areas.

To achieve the above outcomes for Ahu Moana in the Gulf, we will:

- work with mana whenua, local communities and others with a role in local area management, to identify collaborative management principles that will help deliver local outcomes;
- identify, through implementation of Ahu Moana pilot projects, what is needed from central government to facilitate and support local initiatives and build that into our way of working; and
- work with iwi to review and improve existing statutory customary fisheries tools and their supporting processes.

What the Sea Change Plan sought for Ahu Moana

The Sea Change Plan proposes that Ahu Moana coastal areas are identified for co-management by mana whenua and local communities, with the intention they will extend along the length of the Gulf

and its islands. It identifies principles to apply to Ahu Moana and recognises it will take time to find the best ways to implement this approach.

Ahu Moana in the Gulf

Ahu Moana is based on four main pillars: people, place, knowledge and action. It brings together mana whenua and the local community and uses their combined knowledge and skills to deliver shared goals in their local fisheries and environments.

For Ahu Moana initiatives to have enduring strength, they need to be formed independently of the Government and based on joint mana whenua and local community goals for the local area.

The formation of Ahu Moana projects in coastal areas in the Gulf would allow local communities to be involved in coastal management, help mana whenua fulfil their ancestral kaitiaki obligations, and recognise their historical, traditional, cultural and spiritual relationship to the area.

The bringing together of mātauranga Māori and local knowledge, including that of recreational and small commercial fishers, alongside scientific data, would provide responsive and adaptive management and strengthen iwi and hapū relationships with local communities in their shared spaces.

"Ahu Moana could be a concept to enable sustainable delivery of community aspirations – identifying how you can help with gaps."

Engagement feedback

Strategy's proposals for Ahu Moana

We want to support collaborative management approaches between mana whenua and local communities to restore and improve coastal fisheries and environments in their local nearshore areas.

The Strategy's social and environmental outcomes for Ahu Moana are:

- effective kaitiakitanga (mana whenua) and guardianship (local communities), with local management of nearshore coastal areas and decision-making drawing on the knowledge and connection of mana whenua and local communities; and
- observation of positive environmental and fisheries changes in locally managed nearshore coastal areas.

To achieve these outcomes, we will:

- work with mana whenua, local communities and others with a role in local area management, to identify collaborative management principles that will help deliver local outcomes;
- identify, through implementation of Ahu Moana pilot projects, what is needed from central government to facilitate and support local initiatives and build that into our way of working; and
- work with iwi to review and improve existing statutory customary fisheries tools and their supporting processes.

Ahu Moana framework

Through our targeted engagement on this Strategy, we heard that mana whenua and local communities want to take responsibility for and be part of strategic projects that lead to positive environmental change.

“The importance of iwi and community partnership is critical. Locals need to take responsibility.”

Engagement feedback

Feedback to date indicates that many examples exist of mana whenua and local communities working together, and several opportunities are available where an Ahu Moana approach could be progressed. These initiatives need to be locally driven from the bottom up. They will help identify how and where central and local government can provide valuable support for local initiatives.

We will provide DOC and MPI/FNZ with support to facilitate the implementation of Ahu Moana pilot projects. These projects will follow mana whenua and local communities as they work together to deliver their shared fisheries and/or conservation objectives in their nearshore coastal areas. Mana whenua and local community groups leading the pilot projects will consider what governance arrangements (if any) and what actions are needed to deliver their shared goals. Because areas of interest overlap for many iwi in the Gulf, ensuring those with mana moana (customary authority over the sea and lakes) and mana whenua support the Ahu Moana projects will also be critical.

The pilot projects will test collaborative approaches and identify ways of working that will inform the development of an Ahu Moana framework to streamline future Ahu Moana initiatives. This framework will be developed using an adaptive management approach. It will focus on learning and adapting as initiatives move through the planning, doing, evaluating and learning, and adjusting cycle.

“... this could give us an ability to go to the right place and people to deal with and expedite action.”

Engagement feedback

The Ahu Moana pilot projects will be undertaken with mana whenua and local community collaborations that have already defined the outcomes they want for their local nearshore coastal areas and for whom Ahu Moana is an appropriate approach.

Engagement with mana whenua and local communities has helped identify candidate areas for the first two pilot projects: Te Māta and Waipatukahu and Great Barrier Island (Aotea Island). We will continue discussions with mana whenua and local communities and, with their support, progress these projects. We will also continue to engage with mana whenua and local communities to define what Ahu Moana means for them and what action would look like (or they would like to take) in their area.

We expect these preliminary pilot projects to focus on nearshore coastal areas, for example, the restoration of a locally accessed shellfish bed in an area of importance to both parties. Their scale, however, will ultimately depend on the mana whenua and local community.

Existing regulatory tools and frameworks will support implementation of the pilots, retaining the Minister for Oceans and Fisheries responsibilities for providing for the utilisation of fisheries resources while ensuring sustainability.

In addition to pilot projects, case studies can also be used to test ideas, assess what works and identify opportunities to improve how things are done. Several examples of local, place-based collaborations that would be suitable for this have already been identified.

In the future, we will identify and progress initiatives based on the readiness of mana whenua and local communities, DOC and MPI/FNZ resourcing requirements, and connections to work under way through other initiatives, including those already being delivered with councils. The proposed structure for identifying and progressing Ahu Moana initiatives is described in Figure 9.

Initiatives within the mandates of the Minister of Conservation and Minister for Oceans and Fisheries will be prioritised for DOC and MPI/FNZ support, for example, those seeking to improve local area fisheries or conserve local marine biodiversity. We also recognise that mana whenua and the local community may want to address broader issues that cross over with the responsibilities of other agencies. An example is the management of sedimentation of shellfish beds through improved catchment management, an issue that sits within the remit of councils. We will continue to work with councils, to make connections to progress an ecosystem-based approach to management in the Gulf.

We want to build on the lessons learned from existing examples, where mana whenua and communities are collaborating to deliver a shared vision for their local areas, and improve our processes to support future initiatives. The role of central and local government is to improve how we support mana whenua and communities to achieve their goals. A cross-agency project team will be formed to provide this support. We will continue to engage with mana whenua and local communities, to develop an approach that works best for them and can be adapted to suit specific local situations.

An iterative approach

We will develop the Ahu Moana Framework iteratively throughout the ongoing engagement process, applying what we learn from each of the initial Ahu Moana pilot projects and other case studies. As noted, the Framework will comprise four pillars (people, place, knowledge and action) and currently includes the following basic elements:

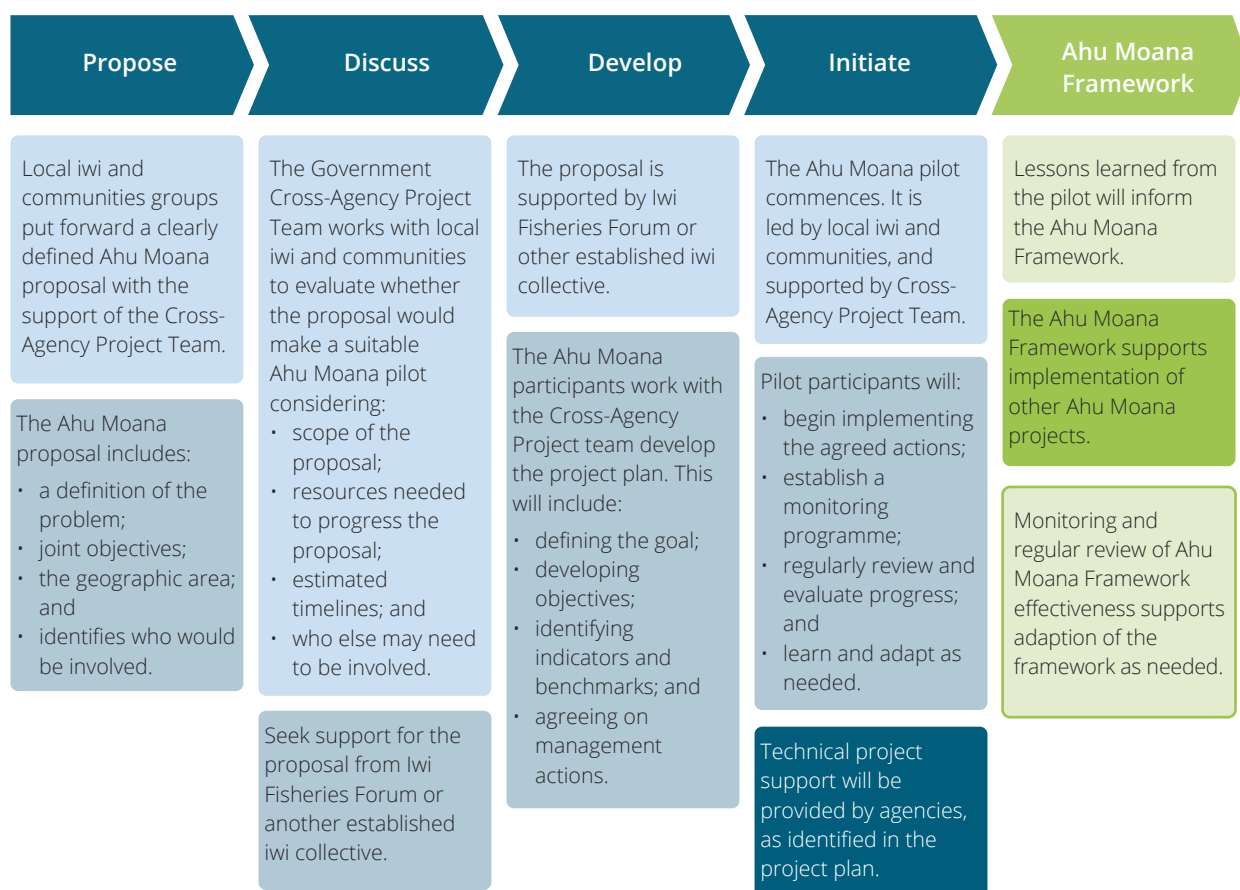
- providing an overview of the Ahu Moana concept, its principles and purpose, and how it fits with the wider management of the Gulf;

- identifying the roles and responsibilities of DOC and MPI/FNZ that may be relevant to actions on the ground, what types of local initiatives we can support, how we will provide support and how we can be contacted;
- identifying the roles of other agencies and how they work together; and
- identifying the tools available to progress specific outcomes at a local level and how to use them.

“There is a key opportunity to learn through prototyping and trialling. It is critical that the appropriate learning and evaluation frameworks are embedded into this process.”

Engagement feedback

Figure 9: Proposed structure for identifying and progressing Ahu Moana initiatives



Improving existing processes

Existing planning, statutory and legislative tools and processes may be used to achieve mana whenua and local community goals, such as those under the Fisheries Act 1996 (for example, mātaihai reserves, taiāpure reserves and temporary closures)²⁹ and the Marine Reserves Act 1971.

During our Strategy engagement, we repeatedly heard that efforts must focus on improving the implementation of existing tools, recognising that both iwi and the Government have limited capacity and resources, and consultation processes can be lengthy. Our aim is to make these tools work more effectively in delivering the outcomes mana whenua and communities are seeking in their local areas.

The main challenge with using existing customary fisheries approaches to address local issues is the timelines and processes required by legislation, which can result in implementation taking months or even years. We will work with mana whenua and stakeholders to build on our existing understanding of where these and other processes need to be improved so we can consider options for improvement, including legislative review, where necessary. Tailoring legal provisions, potentially through existing statutes, to recognise Ahu Moana groups may also be considered.

We expect any agreed improvements to deliver a readily accessible toolkit for collaborative management projects, so future Ahu Moana initiatives no longer experience the frustrations associated with use of the existing tools.

Identifying further actions

We will use the Ahu Moana pilot projects to explore whether any further actions are necessary and feasible to implement mana whenua and local community goals, in addition to reforming existing tools. The nature of any further actions will depend on the issue that needs to be addressed.

Resources

We will allocate resources from DOC and MPI/FNZ to support the delivery of the Ahu Moana pilot projects, develop the Framework and review existing processes. The Ahu Moana initiative also aligns and is compatible with work being undertaken by Auckland Council and Waikato Regional Council, both of which recognise the value of the initiative.

Resources will include a dedicated project team to support the Ahu Moana pilot projects, relevant subject matter experts (for example, in science, research, education, communications and compliance) and policy staff to review legislative processes and tools.

Financial support will be considered during the planning and defining periods of the initial Ahu Moana initiatives with mana whenua and local communities.

Evaluating the Framework

Following completion of the Ahu Moana pilot projects, we will evaluate the Ahu Moana Framework's effectiveness in supporting mana whenua and local communities to achieve their shared goals for their nearshore coastal areas. We will consider whether provisions for such local area management need to be strengthened and will assess the most appropriate and workable options to achieve this.

The way we evaluate the success of the actions for the initial Ahu Moana initiatives will be defined at the inception of the projects. Measures of success will be evidence based, use mātauranga and accommodate the values of the mana whenua and local community (Table 3). In addition, the Ahu Moana initiatives should encourage mana whenua and local community participation in the collection, storage and transfer of local knowledge.

²⁹ Refer to the Glossary for explanations of mātaihai and taiāpure reserves.

Table 3: Assessing the achievement of Ahu Moana outcomes

Outcome	To support collaborative management approaches between mana whenua and local communities to restore and improve coastal fisheries and environments in their local nearshore areas		
Deliverables	Ahu Moana pilot projects	Collaborative Ahu Moana Framework	Review of existing legislative tools and processes
Actions	Ahu Moana initiatives will be developed with clear objectives, agreed outcomes and a supporting monitoring programme (specific to each project)	The Framework will be revised and updated with outcomes from each Ahu Moana project	The review will be a collaborative process and progress will be monitored at regional iwi fisheries forums
Evaluation criteria	Project leaders are satisfied with the level of government support	The final Framework is supported by iwi, local communities and the Government	Iwi and the Government support the review recommendations
	Projects are delivered and achieve the expected outcomes	The Framework is used to deliver future Ahu Moana initiatives	Regulatory amendments are considered (if recommended)

Reasons for this approach

The Sea Change Plan highlights that the changes needed in the Gulf are the responsibility of every person who cares about or depends on it. It inspires the Gulf community to own and instigate positive change.

The exercise of kaitiakitanga and guardianship by mana whenua and local communities, respectively, to make positive changes at the local and nearshore scale will contribute to the overarching outcomes for the Gulf. It will also deliver social and cultural benefits, including a healthier environment, the sharing of knowledge through action and the strengthening of local connections to the area.

Overall, the Ahu Moana approach has a lot of support, through which mana whenua and local communities will be directly involved in nurturing their local environments for future generations.

Addressing challenges

Mana whenua and local communities have clearly indicated they want a focus on more local management decisions rather than, for example, the fisheries management areas used to manage fish stocks. To achieve this, it will be important to manage expectations of what can be achieved by developing clearly defined outcomes based on the biological

characteristics of the fisheries stocks concerned, tools that can be deployed, resourcing and costs. For example, a local area initiative may not, by definition, affect the sustainability of the whole species but could address localised fisheries depletion.

DOC and MPI/FNZ are regularly approached by groups or individuals looking to solve local issues within the fisheries management or conservation space. Unfortunately, they are unable to resource every request, and unfulfilled expectations can create discontent. The Ahu Moana Framework can help develop a system to guide decisions around resourcing or identify other, more effective, management pathways for progressing local initiatives.

Councils also recognise the need for a framework to support decisions on when and how they collaborate on Ahu Moana initiatives, given their existing programmes with mana whenua and communities and limited resourcing.

The concept of joint initiatives between mana whenua and local communities to improve environments is not new, and Ahu Moana will benefit from the knowledge gained through previous and current collaborative projects. The role of government, however, and how it can support initiatives, is often unclear to collaborative

groups and the government agencies themselves. This Strategy proposes piloting the Ahu Moana approach to understand how the Government can better support mana whenua and communities to deliver on social and environmental aspirations for their local areas. This would build on the Ahu Moana initiative described in the Sea Change Plan while also ensuring government outcomes are delivered.

Several longstanding priority issues for mana whenua and relevant communities will be addressed by actions identified in other parts of this Strategy (for example, marine protection and fisheries management). Ahu Moana initiatives could be applied in areas where they would complement or enhance other established methods, to make effective use of limited mana whenua, community and DOC and MPI/FNZ resources.

Effective kaitiakitanga

Preliminary engagement with iwi highlighted the connection they have with particular areas and their desire for effective kaitiakitanga. However, some of the existing planning, statutory and legislative arrangements, and their supporting processes, are not working effectively for some iwi. Implementing the Ahu Moana initiative will provide an opportunity to work with iwi to identify where existing legislation and processes require review to streamline the delivery of local-scale objectives, where this aligns with the purpose of the legislation.

Recognising Te Tiriti o Waitangi rights and obligations

It is important that implementation of the Ahu Moana initiative does not undermine Treaty settlements and existing rights, including Crown commitments to the negotiation of historical claims regarding the area that includes the Gulf.

Regional iwi fisheries forums are a platform for iwi to engage directly with FNZ on issues that affect their fisheries interests. The role of iwi in iwi fisheries forums is a feature in many Treaty settlement protocols and, as a general principle, deeds of settlement provide for protocols to be legally enforceable.

The Sea Change Plan seeks to create new legislation that will devolve the joint management of Ahu Moana areas to mana whenua and local communities. This concept represents a significant aspirational opportunity so, as a next step, its practical applicability should be more fully explored with mana whenua and local communities. Development of the Ahu Moana Framework will support implementation of mana whenua and local community initiatives by improving existing processes and exploring possible further actions that are suitable and practical. Where required and appropriate, existing legal frameworks, such as those for customary fisheries that have been negotiated with mana whenua, will be used to ensure the integrity and value flowing from Treaty settlements are preserved and to recognise the Government's obligations to Māori established through those settlements.

Connections with other elements of this Strategy

Mana whenua and local communities are looking for a holistic approach to managing precious environmental resources. The Ahu Moana initiative will work alongside other aspects of this Strategy to support this aspiration while also contributing to the broader outcomes.

We have identified the following initiatives that align with our work to progress Ahu Moana in the Gulf.

- Fisheries management (Section 5.1): The Hauraki Gulf Fisheries Plan has the ability to reflect local fisheries management outcomes being sought by mana whenua and local communities.
- Active habitat restoration (Section 5.2): Ahu Moana initiatives may include objectives that align with the active habitat restoration initiatives and guidance proposed in this Strategy.
- Marine protection (Section 5.5): Ahu Moana groups may wish to contribute to what should

be monitored within High Protection Areas and Seafloor Protection Areas in the Gulf, how mātauranga Māori is incorporated into monitoring, and how customary management approaches are integrated into their management.

- Protected species (Section 5.6): Mana whenua and local communities may wish to enhance the protection of species in their local areas.
- Governance (Section 5.8): Ahu Moana pilot projects will help provide insights that will inform future governance in the Gulf.

Ahu Moana has implications that reach beyond the mandates of the Minister for Oceans and Fisheries and the Minister of Conservation. In the longer term, relationships built with other agencies (for example, councils) and bodies (for example, the Hauraki Collective) will support the holistic approach to local area management that mana whenua and local communities desire.

Next steps

DOC and MPI/FNZ will work with mana whenua and local communities to develop a detailed project plan. At a broad level, the following steps and timelines are proposed, noting they are subject to the project plan being agreed with mana whenua and communities.

