



Summary

How to Indigenise the blue economy in Aotearoa New Zealand

How to Indigenise the blue economy in Aotearoa New Zealand is a paper from a project that examines how the blue economy in Aotearoa New Zealand could be Indigenised.

The paper synthesises results from five case studies. It also reviews literature that explores the concept of the blue economy and discusses the political and philosophical aspects of 'Indigenising' the blue economy. The discussion emphasises the importance of ensuring that solutions are holistic, relational, balanced, and cyclical, in keeping with te ao Māori, or the Māori worldview.

Three constraints identified

The paper draws on research on Māori fisheries to identify and describe three key constraints to transitioning to a blue economy.

- Centralisation
- Fragmentation
- Commodification

Centralisation involves the consolidation of fishing rights at iwi scale when they were held at hapū scale historically. Fragmentation refers to the uncommercial allocation of quota by the Quota Management System (QMS). Commodification refers to prioritising low-value, high-volume fishing as a consequence of the QMS. The paper outlines the impact of these constraints across the five case studies, focusing attention on possible solutions.

Solutions suggested to overcome constraints

Possibilities for overcoming centralisation include ring-fencing quota for whānau based fishing operators, ensuring that these smaller community-based fishers can return to actively fishing. Others involve iwi and government financial support for mentoring whānau fishers; and developing community fishing clusters that connect multiple businesses to deliver economies of scale and improved value chain outcomes.

Solutions to fragmentation might include joint ventures between iwi as a way of consolidating fragmented quota into commercially viable packages, as well as innovative methods of optimising the use of quota that is already held. Hybrid governance structures that incorporate elements of traditional Māori socio-economic arrangements are another option.

Commodification might be addressed through market research to investigate international consumer markets, along with targeted branding and marketing. This market research could encourage harvesting and processing practices that add value-generating provenance and credence attributes.

A coordinated strategy is needed

The final section of the paper emphasises the importance of ensuring that these solutions are integrated into a coordinated strategy to Indigenise the blue economy. It emphasises the need to ring-fence quota for whānau fishers as core to any Indigenised blue economy and a central initiative around which the range of solutions might be connected into an effective strategy.

Academic
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Rout M, Mika J, Reid J, Whitehead J, Gillies A, Wiremu, F, McLellan G, MacDonald T, & Ruha C (2024). [How to indigenise the blue economy in Aotearoa New Zealand](#). *Kōtuitui: New Zealand Journal of Social Sciences Online*, 1-20.