

National Aquaculture Position Statement

The New Zealand government commits to working in partnership with the aquaculture industry, local government, Māori and communities to maximise the contribution aquaculture makes to the national economy and its potential for growth. The government recognises that environmentally sound aquaculture has a legitimate place on our land and in our coastal waters in conjunction with other users of the natural environment.

The government encourages the industry's growth over the next twenty years as it advances towards its long term goal of \$1 billion by 2025. An internationally competitive and environmentally sustainable aquaculture industry has a significant role to play as part of New Zealand's economic transformation. This non-statutory statement signals the government's support for the development of environmentally sustainable aquaculture in New Zealand.

This statement sits alongside the aquaculture sector strategy; the government's plan of commitment to the development of aquaculture in New Zealand. This sector strategy outlines the actions central government is committed to undertaking in the short-term to support the industry, local government, Māori and communities to grow aquaculture to maximise long-term gains.

Principles

The government will work to maximise the potential of the New Zealand aquaculture industry by following five guiding principles:

- Maximising economic benefits
- Stewardship
- Promoting innovation
- Māori participation
- Good governance

These principles outline the government's support for the aquaculture industry achieving maximum sustainable growth, whilst also meeting regional, national and international expectations for environmental, social and economic performance.

1. Maximising economic benefits

Sustainable aquaculture has the potential to make a significant contribution to New Zealand's economic transformation. As such, efforts to maximise the economic benefits from the industry to New Zealand are encouraged.

1.1 Market development and promotion

The government supports the aquaculture industry in developing local and international market prospects.

The New Zealand aquaculture industry has the potential to be an international leader in the provision of high quality, safe, and sustainable seafood products. Increasing the value and volume of sales and exports will be critical. Developing the New Zealand aquaculture brand via mechanisms such as regulatory and quality assurance frameworks, environmental certification, marketing, and promotion will assist the industry increase its international competitive advantage.

The government also has a role in ensuring the best possible market access for New Zealand aquaculture products. Reducing barriers to trade will be important to the industry's ability to increase its market share.

1.2 Investment

The government supports investment in aquaculture development.

Increasing investment in aquaculture will assist the industry in achieving its long term goals via the introduction and application of new technologies, knowledge and skills. International investment can also provide for greater market access for New Zealand aquaculture products.

1.3 Public perception

The government supports the aquaculture industry in promoting its contribution to the New Zealand economy to the general public.

The aquaculture industry has the potential to make a significant contribution to the economic transformation of New Zealand resulting in considerable economic and social benefits. It will be important to communicate the potential benefits and costs of aquaculture in a factual manner. Good information will also be helpful in informing local decision making processes.

1.4 Regional development

The government supports aquaculture development that revitalises regional New Zealand.

Many communities want to be able to take advantage of the natural resources in their region, including enhancing these through aquaculture. These expectations, along with those of other coastal users, should be recognised via inclusive planning processes. Opportunities for industry development are also likely to be found in regions undergoing, or in need of, economic regeneration, such as rural, coastal communities.

2. Stewardship

The aquaculture industry in New Zealand has a responsibility to act as a conscientious steward of the physical and social environment in which it is situated. The government supports the industry in taking a long-term view and making wise decisions about its development to protect the future interests of all New Zealanders.

2.1 Environment

The government supports the development of environmentally sustainable aquaculture in New Zealand.

An environmentally sustainable aquaculture industry needs to work in harmony with the natural environment, avoiding, remedying or mitigating adverse environmental effects. It must also avoid causing significant negative, cumulative, long-term or irreversible adverse changes to ecological systems, cultural and amenity values, including valued landscapes and scenery. It is also acknowledged that good land management practices and policies governing land use are vital to protect coastal water quality.

Aquaculture development is usually sited in public space where there can be conflicting interests in the use and values of the environment. Sound resource management will be required to address these issues, including good information and coastal planning processes.

2.2 Community

The government supports aquaculture development that benefits local communities.

Aquaculture development should foster strong community links, recognise and support the needs of local communities and work in concert with community initiatives to manage local environments for mutual benefit. It must be integrated within its community, communicating and liaising on all appropriate matters.

Communities also have the right to contribute to the processes which decide on aquaculture development in their region. Supporting community involvement in local planning processes will be critical.

2.3 Biosecurity and food safety

The government supports investment in biosecurity initiatives that protect the quality of aquatic environments and the safety of aquaculture products.

Biosecurity initiatives will require strong collaboration between industry and government at all levels. Protecting our clean green reputation is the responsibility of the government, as well as all other players within the industry, including providing for fish health, keeping the country free of unwanted organisms, and preventing or reducing any damage these may cause should they occur.

Ensuring consumers' access to safe seafood requires stringent food safety practices to be enforced and maintained at the highest possible standard at all stages from production to consumption.

3. Innovation

Innovation within the aquaculture industry will continue to be an integral component of its ability to achieve its long-term goals. Developing New Zealand talent and technology as well as linking into global sources of knowledge and skills will be crucial.

3.1 Research and development

The government supports research and development as a key mechanism for the growth of the aquaculture industry.

Developing New Zealand's competencies in the rearing of new, high value species as well as exploring ways to add greater value to existing species will be critical to the growth of the industry. While expanding production capacity is one component of the industry's future, achieving its full economic potential will also require the development and uptake of new technologies and processes at other spheres of industry activity. This could include research and development in areas as diverse as the recycling of aquaculture by-products, poly-culture initiatives, or corporate management practices.

3.2 Skills and knowledge

The government supports initiatives to enhance the knowledge base of the industry via training and education programmes.

Retaining and increasing the level of skills and knowledge within the aquaculture industry will be instrumental to its success, as will embedding enabling technology and best practices within industry structures. Strengthening the existing industry training framework and enhancing education and research relationships with New Zealand tertiary institutes, crown research institutes and international aquaculture education and research institutions will be necessary.

3.3 Networking and industry coordination

The government supports the creation of local and international partnerships to foster innovation and knowledge transfer.

New Zealand must focus its position as a small, niche, high quality aquaculture producer in the global marketplace. We must also be seen as a source of innovation and at the forefront of technology and best practice. Linking into external sources of expertise as well as fostering knowledge transfer within the wider industry in New Zealand is imperative to achieve these goals.

4. Māori participation

The aquaculture industry provides Māori with a number of opportunities to strengthen existing involvement, encourage new initiatives, and expand their economic base. The participation of Māori in the growth of the aquaculture industry will be critical to its future success. Through the Māori commercial aquaculture claims settlement, the government is committed to assisting Māori to maximise their participation in the industry. The government supports industry and Māori forming national, regional and local partnerships to ensure Māori interests are represented and their views incorporated.

4.1 Economic development

The government supports and encourages sustainable Māori economic development in the aquaculture industry.

Māori are already extensively involved in the aquaculture industry and so it is vital to retain, develop, and share their expertise and knowledge. Aquaculture can contribute significantly to the economic independence and development of Māori communities.

Māori also have a unique set of skills and experiences that can add value to export products and maximise the contribution the industry makes to the national economy and its potential for growth for all New Zealanders.

4.2 The Māori aquaculture settlement

The government is committed to enabling the Māori Aquaculture Claims Settlement Act 2004.

Through the Māori aquaculture settlement, the government is committed to providing iwi with twenty percent of all new marine farming space. The government is also committed to exploring with iwi the best options for settling pre-commencement space obligations. To achieve this, the government will work with iwi, local government and industry to maximise the potential of the sector.

4.3 Partnerships

The government supports and encourages durable and long term partnerships between Māori, local government, industry and key stakeholders.

The aquaculture industry is global and dynamic. Its potential to contribute to New Zealand's economic growth is well documented and the government is committed to working in partnership with the aquaculture industry, local government, Māori, and communities. Partnerships between Māori and key industry stakeholders will be important to the industry's innovation, growth and long term success.

Kaimoana has long been an integral part of Māori life and as such Māori have intimate knowledge of their local fisheries which is a valuable commodity in the industry. Equally, Māori participation at all levels of the industry will maximise the opportunities for partnerships and economic growth.

5. Good governance

Good governance is required to enable the industry to develop to its full potential within a sustainable and supportive regulatory framework. The government is committed to fostering governance arrangements which promote industry development.

5.1 *Enabling regulation*

The government is committed to providing and supporting regulatory frameworks which foster growth in the aquaculture industry and take account of the need for environmental and economic sustainability, and other users of public space.

Sustainable aquaculture will be promoted through the appropriate allocation of new space and the better use of existing space. Good information and coastal planning is critical to the identification and allocation of new aquaculture management areas, and the management of existing space.

Central government recognises that local government has a significant responsibility for managing natural and physical resources and the use of public space, including aquaculture development. The government supports the efforts of local government in working with the industry, Māori and communities to make the best use of space in the coastal marine area.

The government will also work with local government to ensure that experience and best practice is acknowledged and shared so that aquaculture policy is coordinated and well implemented at all levels.

5.2 *Planning for the future*

The government is committed to taking a long term, proactive stance supporting aquaculture development.

Enhancing partnerships and stakeholder participation in the planning process will create a culture of best practice and continuous improvement. The potential for industry growth must be catered for in a manner that mitigates environmental risks and recognises the needs and interests of other coastal users, but which gives adequate allowance for innovation and experimentation, including the application of potential new technologies, processes and species.