



Ministry for Primary Industries
Manatū Ahu Matua



Terms of Reference for the Māui dolphin Research Advisory Group

1. The Māui dolphin Research Advisory Group

The Māui dolphin Research Advisory Group (Māui RAG), jointly convened by the Department of Conservation (DOC) and the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI), is a research advisory group focused on identifying and prioritising research on Māui dolphins that will help inform management decisions for their recovery and continued conservation.

The vision for the convening of the Māui RAG is that *“The recovery and continued protection of the Māui dolphin population will be achieved through informed management decisions underpinned by robust scientific research.”*

It is envisaged that the Māui RAG will hold two Māui RAG-Stakeholder meetings per year in Auckland. These stakeholder meetings will be supplemented when necessary (i.e. on a case by case basis) by meetings of a smaller technical sub-group (Māui RAG-Technical) where further technical discussion and advice will be undertaken on individual research projects. The participation in any such sub-group would reflect the topic or theme and the technical expertise available and would not be confined to the participants of the Māui RAG-Stakeholder meetings. Decision as to the participants of each Māui RAG-Technical meeting will be determined by DOC and MPI in discussion with the Māui RAG-Stakeholder prior to each meeting.

Individual research projects that are prioritised through the Māui RAG (i.e. proposed by Māui RAG-Stakeholder and refined if necessary by Māui RAG-Technical) would then be subject to final approval by respective funding agencies and organisations. Projects funded by DOC and MPI would undergo staged technical guidance and peer review through appropriate working group streams already in place e.g. DOC-Conservation Services Programme Technical Working Group (CSP TWG), MPI-Aquatic Environment Working Group (AEWG). Other agencies and organisations would be welcome to submit their projects for staged technical guidance and peer review through the CSP TWG or AEWG.

2. Functions

Māui RAG-Stakeholder will seek to:

- discuss and develop research prioritisation criteria
- apply the research prioritisation criteria to identity research priorities, drawing on the list of research needs outlined in the Māui dolphin Threat Management Plan (TMP), but expanded to include participant suggestions;
- incorporate wider stakeholder feedback into the research prioritisation process;

- propose timelines for prioritised research that may be undertaken (or may begin) over the following year; and
- undertake a progress review of relevant research and activities completed in the previous year.

Māui RAG-Technical will, as necessary, seek to:

- design and evaluate the feasibility of specific research projects prioritised by Māui RAG-Stakeholder;
- utilise expertise from appropriate researchers on a case-by-case basis to advise Māui RAG-Stakeholder;
- inform Māui RAG-Stakeholder of the feasibility of prioritised research projects; and
- review project descriptions for any prioritised research projects that are evaluated as feasible to enable such projects to be commissioned by DOC, MPI or other organisations.

3. Chair

The role of Chair will be filled by an independent facilitator appointed by DOC and MPI. Decision on the Chair of future Māui RAG-Stakeholder and Māui-RAG Technical meetings will be undertaken by DOC and MPI prior to each meeting in consultation with the Māui RAG-Stakeholder. The Chair will be responsible for:

- facilitating open and constructive discussion;
- recording conclusions, advice, and action points;
- recording the different views of members where conclusions, advice and action points are unable to be provided by consensus and initiating or recommending any further actions that might assist in achieving consensus.

4. Technical and Administrative Support

Technical and administrative support will be provided by DOC and MPI staff.

Other relevant government agencies will be invited to provide technical support and input to the Māui RAG.

5. Participation

The Māui RAG-Stakeholder meeting will include representatives from:

- central government agencies;
- regional councils;
- fishing industry;
- mineral and gas industry;
- environmental organisations;
- research providers;
- international organisations; and
- iwi

Should a participant not be able to attend a meeting, they may request that a suitably qualified alternate from their organisation attend as their replacement.

A mailing list will be used to notify Participants of upcoming meetings and other relevant matters. Interested parties who wish to participate should ensure their current email address is registered on the mailing list, by sending a request to marine@doc.govt.nz.

To encourage openness of discussion the Māui RAG will operate under Chatham House rules i.e. participants may subsequently refer to the discussions but must not attribute comments to particular individuals or organisations, or utilise social media to update and inform external parties during any of the Māui RAG meetings.

Participants in Māui RAG meetings should declare, during opening introductions, their sector affiliations and contractual relationships to the research under consideration, and any substantial or perceived conflicts of interest related to any particular issue or scientific conclusion. The Chair will determine how any identified substantial or perceived conflicts of interest are to be managed.

6. Documents

Agendas and background papers will be made available to Participants prior to the meeting via email or the relevant meeting page on the Māui RAG website (www.doc.govt.nz/Māui-rag-meetings). Where this is not possible, hard copies will be made available at the meeting. Presentations and any other relevant documentation will be made available on the Māui RAG websites following the meeting.