

Impact investment prefeasibility: toward a sustainable seafood sector in the Hauraki Gulf

In February 2017, \$50,000 was awarded to Envirostrat (Nigel Bradly, working with Lucy Tukua and Richelle Kahui-McConnell), to undertake a prefeasibility assessment of the potential for impact investment to build a lower impact, higher value seafood sector in the Hauraki Gulf. Impact investment provides capital to address social and environmental issues, while generating a financial return. The project team had been closely involved in developing Tai Timu Tai Pari Sea Change – a Marine Spatial Plan for the Hauraki Gulf.

A sustainable fishery would improve the mauri of the Hauraki Gulf by allowing fish stocks to regenerate, improving fish habitat and increasing the health and abundance of fish. It requires bringing many interests together, including the commercial and recreational fishing sectors, iwi and government.

The project found that the time was not yet right for large scale impact investment for a sustainable seafood sector in the Hauraki Gulf, as relationships, trust and cooperation amongst the relevant sectors need building and the government position is unclear. Government has not yet tangibly committed to the recommendations of the Marine Spatial Plan. There are also outstanding Treaty negotiations and harbour claims processes to be undertaken with iwi. A number of smaller projects could however be developed through impact investment, including high value aquaculture and fisheries innovation.

Achievements of the project include:

- ◆ Socialising impact investment with key players. This was assisted by Envirostrat bringing Kelly Wachowicz, a US based fisheries impact investment specialist to New Zealand to share global experience (see here to hear from Kelly), and linking this work with other impact investment work underway in New Zealand.
- ◆ Identifying “a cascade of things that need to happen”, barriers to building a sustainable seafood sector in the Hauraki Gulf and opportunities for innovation.

The opportunity to develop impact investment opportunities on coastal land has emerged from this work. For Nigel, a sustainable fishery will become feasible when the problems with the current fishery and pressure for change increase; when politicians get behind it and when innovative thinking and skilled leadership drive the issue. The potential to achieve major environmental and social impact through developing a sustainable seafood sector in the Hauraki Gulf is considered both exciting and immense.



The elephant in the room is the need to lift fish stocks. We're too early for large scale impact investment in the Hauraki Gulf for a sustainable fishery, but we had to do this work to know that. A big disruption is needed.

Nigel Bradly, Envirostrat

The innovation in this project lies in its pairing of impact investment and sustainable fisheries potential in the Hauraki Gulf. Interest in impact investment is growing apace in New Zealand and this project planted seeds in a range of sectors in terms of what is possible and how changes might be resourced. See <https://www.giftofthegulf.org.nz/media/> to hear Nigel Bradly and Richelle Kahui-McConnell talk about this project.

For more information on Envirostrat, [click here to visit their website](#).