

Strategic Plan | 2016-21

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Organisation Summary

The Deepwater Group Ltd (DWG) is a structured alliance of the owners of quota in New Zealand's deepwater fisheries.

DWG was established in 2005 by quota owners in recognition of the need for innovative, unified, professional and proactive approaches that underpin their businesses with effective and sustainable fisheries management practices. These approaches recognise the global and domestic challenges facing the seafood industry. Of all the world's environments, the deep ocean remains the least understood and technologically the most challenging. It has also become the new frontier for environmental protection and along with this, there is increased scrutiny on the activities that take place here.

In New Zealand, nobody has more to lose from low stock sizes or from any deterioration in the health of New Zealand's marine environment than those with property rights to access the ongoing commercial harvest. As a consequence, quota owners are actively engaged in the science and management systems that underpin the sustainable management of New Zealand's deepwater fisheries and the marine environment upon which these all depend.

Any owner of quota for deepwater species may become a shareholder of DWG. Each shareholder owns one share and is invited to contribute on a *pro-rata* basis to the decisions on and to the costs for approved projects pertaining to the fish stocks for which they own quota.

DWG represents the interests of shareholders who collectively own quota for the following species: black cardinal fish, English mackerel, frostoffish, hake, hoki, jack mackerel, ling, orange roughy, oreo, scampi, silver warehou, southern blue whiting, sea perch, squid and white warehou. DWG shareholders collectively own 91% of the quota for these fisheries.

DWG's role is to provide a professional capacity to unite and assist quota owners to maintain sustainable harvest levels from New Zealand's deepwater fisheries, to mitigate any adverse environmental effects of these fishing activities, and to facilitate the further economic growth of this sector.

DWG is a non-profit organisation with strong working relationships with the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI), the Department of Conservation (DOC) and others to enable New Zealand to gain the maximum sustainable economic benefits from our deepwater fisheries resources.

DWG operates within a five-year strategic framework:

- **2006-11:** for the first five years the strategic focus was to *"Improve Management of and Performance within New Zealand's Deepwater Fisheries"* under the theme *"Performance before PR"*. This was achieved through a number of successful initiatives.
- **2011-16:** for the second five years the strategic focus was to gain recognition for excellence in fisheries management by *"Maintaining Integrity and Telling Our Story"*. During this period we increased the performance of key fisheries to a level that 61% of our Tier 1 annual production is now certified as sustainable under the Marine Stewardship Council's programme.
- **2016-21:** this document addresses the third five years with a focus to *"Re-define, Re-position, Re-engage to Re-build trust"*. During this period we will continue to:
 - Add value to New Zealand's deepwater fisheries
 - Excel in sustainable fisheries management
 - Support and enhance environmental and social responsibility
 - Engage in effective and relevant relationships.

Current Position

Internal Factors	
<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Zealand seafood is world-class and in demand • Effective, professional, coordination amongst deepwater quota owners • Recognised vehicle for building effective relationships and work programmes with government and others • Our management systems, levels of information and sustainability are performing well compared to the world • Good relationships with other industry leaders to promote our work and to keep up-to-date with best practice and current affairs around the world 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate understanding of the status of low information fisheries • Inadequate understanding of some of the environmental impacts of fishing and if these are adverse effects • Challenges to obtain the information required to make 'informed' decisions. Acknowledge we will never have perfect knowledge and will need to make decisions based on some degree of uncertainty • Strategic focus often overshadowed by immediate need to address urgent tactical concerns • Relationship with Government and MPI waning in strength and utility • Public relations to often reactive, not proactive • At times internal cohesion insufficient to collectively deliver on agreed strategic outcomes
External Factors	
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance the science-based management of deepwater fisheries • Enhance management decisions and, in doing so, enhance both reputation and levels of trust • Foster collaborative partnerships and constructive relationships that maintain and enhance New Zealand's marine resources and environment • Promote innovative ideas that deliver enhanced science, utilisation, environmental and social outcomes • Engage in discussions, both global and domestic, that promote industry knowledge, initiatives and effective practical solutions. 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low levels of trust between DWG and other groups provide challenges to be engaged and influential in discussions • MPI repositioning itself – move from industry 'partner' to 'regulator' • MPI and DOC not publicly supporting or promoting their own effective management systems – reducing the recognition afforded to processes and successful outcomes • Science-based management is increasingly complex and costly to our businesses – we need to ensure science programmes are relevant and are focussed on informing management decisions • Low levels of scientific and technical understanding within external groups – challenging to engage in dialogue on industry/governmental performance • Increased politicisation of marine management – leading to decisions based on environmental polemics, rather than on science

Levels of trust in large corporations and in industrial businesses are declining around the world. There are increasing expectations for businesses to deliver on *values* as well as on *value*. These challenges present opportunities for DWG and the seafood industry more broadly to assess their relevance as producers of high quality, safe and natural food for world markets.

This 2016-21 five-year Strategic Plan strikes a balance between managing for the short term and planning for the future through

- Re-positioning DWG to deliver on outcomes
- Re-defining external perceptions of the industry
- Re-engaging to increase trust between industry, government, scientists, eNGOs and the wider public.

Where are we going?

Vision, Mission & Values

Our vision is:

To be trusted as the best managed deepwater fisheries in the world.

We want our stakeholders to think of New Zealand when they think of seafood and to buy our seafood with confidence knowing that it is a natural and a sustainable food choice.

Our mission is:

To ensure New Zealand's deepwater fisheries resources are managed to optimise their long-term sustainable yields.

This is our aim when managing our fisheries. If we do this well, our vision will be realised.

Our values and beliefs are:

- The best foods are natural
- The food that we eat and the environment from which it is harvested require our utmost care and respect
- Supporting our local communities and workforce
- Creative thinking and challenging the norms
- Leading and setting new standards of excellence
- Collaborating with others
- Integrity, accountability and transparency in all that we do.

Objectives

To realise our vision and mission we have set ourselves the following objectives:

1. Maintain target and non-target fish stocks at sustainable levels
 2. Minimise our environmental impacts to as low levels as are possible, with the aim to have no adverse effects on the marine environment
 3. Engage in effective relationships and shared work programmes
 4. Enhance our reputation within New Zealand and around the world
 5. Verify our performance against world's best practice standards
 6. Manage the organisation effectively and efficiently to deliver the desired outcomes.
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How are we going to get there?

Strategic Areas

To tackle the challenges posed by our vision and mission, we have defined the following five strategic areas and identified measures of success to track how we are progressing against our goals and objectives:

1. Fisheries Management
2. Environmental Management
3. Collaboration & Reputation
4. Third-party Validation
5. Organisational Management

1. Fisheries Management

To enable deepwater fisheries to be managed sustainably, in conjunction with MPI, we will:

- Undertake risk assessments of data-deficient deepwater fisheries and develop effective strategies and work plans to establish the sustainable performance of these fisheries
- Continue and further enhance the science and management processes for the main deepwater fisheries and actively promote these successes
- Continue collaboration with MPI on joint work programmes, fisheries science and management measures
- Continue to contract and partner with science service providers to apply innovative fisheries science to inform management decisions
- Maintain and, where required, enhance our operational procedures and catch limit agreements
- Maintain open and transparent fisheries management processes

Measures of success:

- Effective, focussed and affordable scientific work programmes, providing results to inform management
 - Effective communication and dialogue between MPI and industry and other key participants
 - Sharing of agreed workplans between MPI and DWG, including contracting of scientific projects
 - Regular monitoring, surveys and stock assessments of the main commercial species that ensure management measures are informed by the best available science
 - Target and main bycatch fish stocks are maintained at sustainable levels
 - Bycatch of lesser preferred species is minimised
 - Utilisation of non-target species is optimised
 - Management decisions are responsive to new robust information.
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2. Environmental Management

To continue to reduce environmental impacts to as low levels as possible, we will:

- Evaluate environmental interactions in deepwater fisheries to develop a clear, effective and affordable strategies on how to monitor, manage and mitigate these, as and where necessary
- Provide, in conjunction with MPI and DOC, systems and support to train operational managers and vessel crews on how to manage and mitigate environmental risks
- Maintain real-time communication with vessel managers and crews and provide support to manage incidents or knowledge gaps
- Maintain close work plans with MPI and DOC to collaboratively monitor and further improve fleet and vessel performances
- Maintain open and transparent fisheries management processes
- Publicly promote success stories where our management measures have been effective in minimising our environmental interactions.

Measures of success:

- DWG is proactive, preventative and responsive to environmental risks
 - Management decisions are informed by and responsive to the best available science
 - All participants in deepwater fisheries have a clear understanding of our environmental interactions and are actively and effectively minimising all environmental impacts and reducing the risks to protected species, in particular
 - DWG has a clear strategy and processes for mitigating adverse effects on the environment by deepwater fisheries
 - Independent monitoring establishes that we are having no adverse effects on protected species – seabirds and marine mammals in particular
 - Improved public awareness and understanding of our interactions with protected species and the marine environment in general and of the measures we have in place to minimise these
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3. Collaboration & Reputation

To build effective relationships and shared work programmes with government agencies, we will:

- Maintain and enhance constructive and effective working relationships with Government and government agencies, in particular with MPI, DOC and MfE
- Engage to ensure that science work programmes are efficient and relevant to strategic and tactical management needs
- Continue to deliver on the commitments we give to Government and government agencies including science, innovation and self-management.

Measures of success:

- Government trusts and relies upon DWG to deliver robust outcomes in support of their conservation and sustainability programmes
- Science programmes deliver focussed and relevant outcomes for management needs
- Management decisions are informed by and responsive to the best available science.

To enhance our reputation within New Zealand and around the world, we will:

- Maintain active promotion of the sustainable management of New Zealand's deepwater fisheries
- Respond to negative publicity and misinformation about New Zealand deepwater fisheries
- Align with and support like-minded groups to deliver sustainable fisheries management outcomes
- Seek further opportunities to build constructive relationships with groups who have an interest in the marine environment
- Support training programmes including post-graduate scholarships.

Measures of success:

- Improved public understanding and perception of New Zealand's deepwater fisheries
 - Improved levels of trust in New Zealand's deepwater seafood industry
 - International recognition for our sustainable fisheries management performances.
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4. Third-party Validation

To verify our performance against world's best practice standards, we will:

- Maintain Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification and extend this to other fisheries
- Evaluate options and implement plans to assess further fisheries against world's best practice standards
- Develop additional options to assure our customers of the provenance and performance of our fisheries
- Actively participate in MSC and ASF governance
- Publicly promote the high standards that we have set for our fisheries, how we are achieving these, and noting those that are above what are required under New Zealand law.

Measures of success:

- Our main fisheries are MSC certified without conditions
 - Further fisheries are progressed towards MSC or a similar standard through Fisheries Improvement Plans
 - International recognition for the high standards our sustainable fisheries are achieving.
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5. Organisational management

To manage DWG effectively and efficiently to deliver the agreed outcomes, we will:

- Rigorously pursue measurable success in the five strategic areas
- Responsibly manage the organisation's finances and keep to approved budgets
- Recruit, train and contract diligent and capable personnel
- Maintain regular communication with Directors and Shareholders
- Implement Board and Shareholder decisions as directed
- Review our performance to identify areas for improvement.

Measures of success:

- Effective communication and dialogue amongst quota owners
 - Agreement amongst shareholders to provide a unified and coordinated approach to managing our fisheries
 - Contractors deliver outcomes within agreed timelines and budgets
 - Cost efficient operation of the organisation.
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