

Webinar 5 – Where to From Here?

18 August 2025

Aotearoa Marine Carbon Forum (AMCF) webinar series.

This summary draws on attendance records, the transcript, and the webinar slides detailing content and structure.

Webinar Structure

- **Facilitator:** Katherine Short, F.L.O.W. Collaborative Ltd.
- **Outline:**
 - Introductions: Steering Group, Forum, and UNESCO support
 - About AMCF and its conceptual framework
 - Interest in the forum and webinar series
 - Main topic: next steps for AMCF
 - Discussion and questions

The preceding webinars focused on "Intro to AMCF" (30 April), "Offshore" (19 May), "Coastal" (23 June), and "Governance and Finance" (14 August).

Purpose

- To engage the community, inform, and build support for a national Marine Carbon Forum for New Zealand.
- To provide independent, evidence-based analysis of nature-based marine carbon dioxide removal (mCDR) solutions in NZ's coastal waters and ocean as part of a national strategy.
- To gather feedback, discuss the future direction of AMCF, and explore coordination and assessment needs for mCDR activities.

Content

- **Steering Group Introduction:** Led by Prof Cliff Law (NIWA/University of Otago) and Katherine Short (F.L.O.W. Collaborative Ltd).
- **UNESCO Support:** Endorsed by NZ National Commission for UNESCO and the UN Decade of Ocean Science (Global Ecosystem for Ocean Solutions – GEOS).
- **Forum Objectives:** Develop a mCDR strategy integrating mātauranga Māori, enhance scientific evidence, connect experts and kaitiaki, align research/policy, facilitate international collaboration.
- **Assessment Framework:** Draft structure for a national mCDR assessment, including:
 - Macroalgae, ocean abiotic, ocean biotic, coastal, blue carbon
 - Efficacy, additionality, permanence, scalability

- Community input and Māori perspectives
- Risk, co-benefits, monitoring, R&D, economics, regulation, verification
- **Knowledge Status:** Most mCDR techniques are at lab or model stage; none are ready for deployment at scale due to gaps in science, engineering, validation, and impact understanding.
- **Discussion Points:** The need for a coordinated assessment, key criteria, lead agency options (government, research, iwi, collaborative), and ways stakeholders could contribute.

Attendance

- **Consistent Interest:** 300 people registered for the series.
- **Attendees:** 145 unique participants across webinars.
- **International Participation:** 10% from 14 countries, notably USA, UK, Australia.
- **Webinar 5:** Attendance report lists 42 named attendees, comprising academics, consultants, iwi/Māori representatives, government officials, and others.
- **Institutions Represented:** NZ universities, Crown Research Institutes, government agencies, and several international research organizations.

Discussion

- Invited input on future topics, questions, and hopes for AMCF.
- Discussed the need for a national mCDR assessment, potential criteria, and appropriate coordination agency/entity.
- Suggested involving ministries/agencies in co-design and considering a collaborative or Māori-led approach.
- Challenges and cautions around how such an assessment, or Forum would be funded.
- Strong agreement on the need for a high integrity model and independence.
- Current research is largely biological/geophysical, with less focus on financial and governance aspects.

Conclusions

- Substantive and diverse interest exists in developing a NZ Marine Carbon Forum.
- Scientific evidence for mCDR is progressing, but large gaps exist, particularly around deployment readiness and multidimensional impacts.
- Strong emphasis on integrating Māori perspectives and ensuring robust, multi-sectoral collaboration for future assessments and strategy-making.
- The path forward requires consensus on assessment criteria, coordination structures, and expanding research to policy, financial, and governance domains.
- AMCF is actively seeking wider community engagement, contributions, and feedback on its future direction.