

CASE STUDY

We developed project processes, templates and training for New Zealand's largest gold recovery operation



Overview

Found a little over an hour's drive north of Dunedin, Macraes Operation is New Zealand's largest active gold-producing mine. Operated by OceanaGold, it has produced over five million ounces (141+ tonnes) of the precious metal since opening in 1990, unearthing this incredible value while contributing to the local economy in a number of other ways: community investment, a strong donation program, and the employment of over 600 people between the mine and OceanaGold's Dunedin office.

The process of operating and optimizing gold recovery is one of simultaneously running a number of smaller projects. OceanaGold ran a significant number of small- to medium-sized projects valued from \$5k to \$1 million.

As the number of projects rose over time, so too did operational complexity. While OceanaGold boasted a talented, supportive and highly engaged team, it saw an opportunity to improve its internal project management expertise and develop the processes, tools and templates required to deliver these projects efficiently.

The organisation was eager to improve the capability of the operational staff who ran their projects by providing a structure and applying established project management theory. **They wanted help to develop the new process and tools that were necessary to achieve these enhancements.**

So in early-2022 they turned to our team at Millpond.

Approach

OceanaGold requested our assistance to define a set of structured yet flexible processes capable of implementing and managing the full spectrum of small- to medium-sized projects that the Macraes Operation dealt in. The company was looking for a consistent formula that could be applied across all projects, and that would provide both structure of governance and ease of management.

Once these processes, tools and templates were implemented, we'd need to deliver training on project management fundamentals to an audience of 30+ people to ensure the newly developed processes were understood and properly applied.

During the research phase we identified a number of opportunities, including:

- Establishing project processes and templates.
- Improving in-house knowledge and skills on how to develop project processes and templates, and general project management fundamentals.
- Dedicating staff and resources exclusively to project management.
- Improved governance.

Once we had gathered an understanding of the base from which we were working, we began to develop a complete solution. Between March and May 2022 we:

- Met with key stakeholders to establish desired outcomes.
- Developed and built a definitive – yet appropriately adaptable – process for projects valued between \$5k and \$1m.
- Created 12x custom project management templates, including:
 - An eight-hour onsite process workshop.
 - A four-hour virtual process/template follow up.
 - A two-hour 'final review'.
- Developed and applied the material created during the process workshop to the new process and templates.
- Developed a project management fundamentals (PMF) slide deck tailored to OceanaGold.
- Delivered two 1.5-day PMF training sessions featuring OceanaGold-specific templates.

Results



Improved capability of the OceanaGold team through project management fundamentals training and the development of bespoke project processes, tools, and templates.



Staff involved in project management were better able to understand and implement these valuable changes.



Invaluable input from key stakeholders, and an engaged and supportive management team were critical to the success of this engagement.

Summary

When asked what they enjoyed most about working with us, OceanaGold highlighted the flexibility of our approach, the mix of in-class and virtual training, and the fact that the level of information was perfectly pitched for the PMF training that they realised they needed. The PMF delegates were invested in the training from the start, making our job so much easier.

Now armed with a method to consistently manage projects, OceanaGold can mine more efficiently, effectively and productively than ever before.

“It was great how Millpond modified the process to fit with the business and showed us how to use it. **The shared ownership of the final process gave us the confidence in an effective outcome**”



“Before Millpond worked with us, it sometimes felt as if it was a matter of luck which projects got through. Now, the process is more systematic and key projects go through the Millpond process. The implementation of a crusher unit (which is a capital project worth \$0.5m due mid-Sept) is currently going through the process and is on time and on budget due to clear visibility, transparency, and better governance.”

Quenton Johnston, Process Manager, Macraes Processing Plant, OceanaGold.