

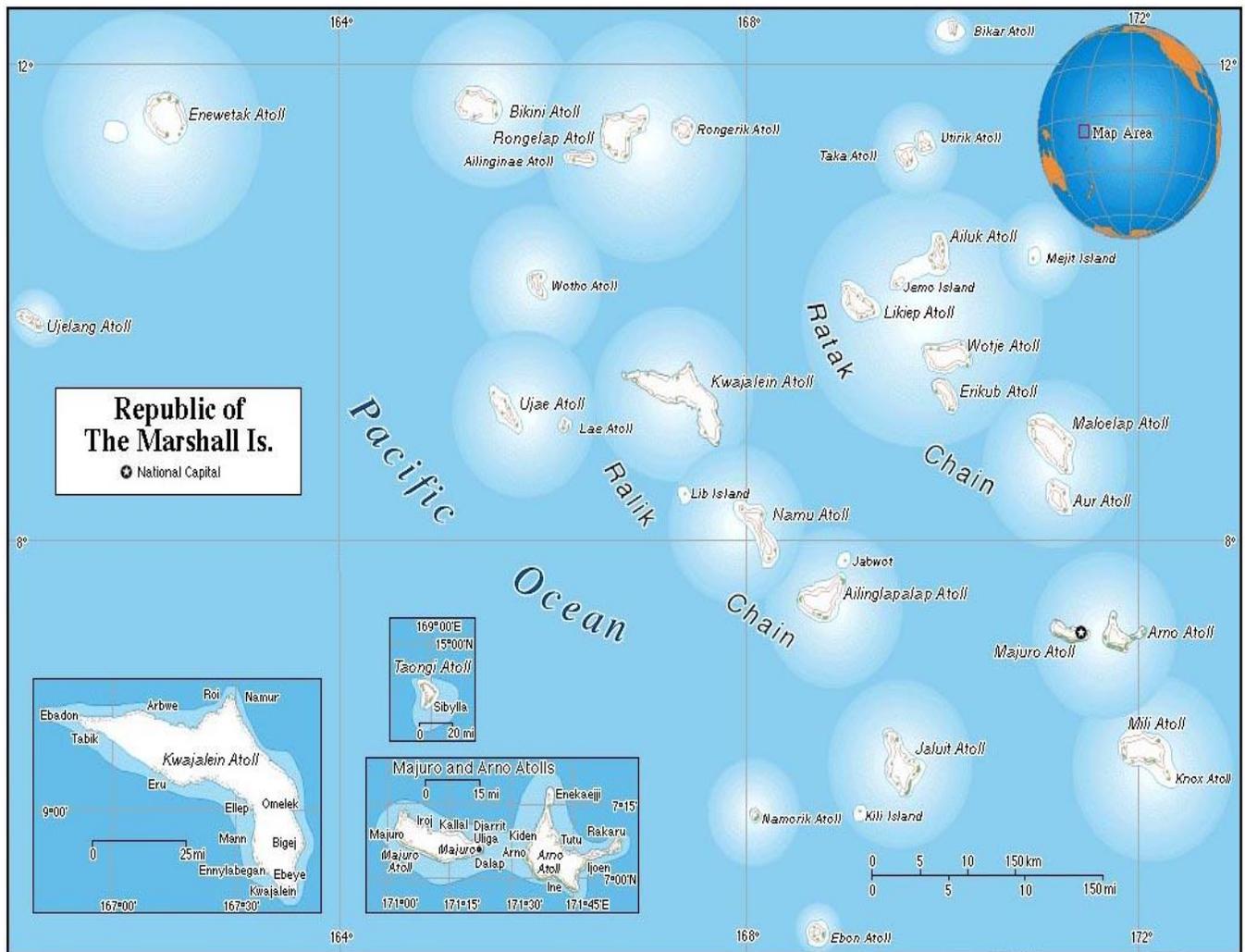


# National Strategic Plan 2020-2030

Republic of the Marshall Islands

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# MAP OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Yokwe kom aolep,

On behalf of the people and government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands I am pleased to present to you the RMI National Strategic Plan (NSP) 2020-2030. The NSP is designed as our apex planning document outlining the RMI's over-arching Policy Framework and Objectives.

The NSP provides a roadmap for progress regarding our National priorities in Strategic Areas of Social Services and Cultural Identity, Economic Development, Infrastructure, Environmental Awareness and Climate Change and Governance. Furthermore, the NSP is designed to align with the priorities and frameworks set forth in national policies, sectoral plans, and international agreements.



This Plan builds on the lessons learned from our previous NSP which guided our development efforts between 2015-2017, including alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Our country faces unique challenges, including geographic isolation, rising sea levels and climate change impacts. The NSP is designed to provide guidance in meeting and overcoming these challenges through prioritizing funds and other resources.

The government is committed to the realization of the Objectives of the NSP through the linkages to the annual planning and budgeting process. We will monitor our progress to ensure government funds are used for the benefit of all RMI citizens. Additionally, the NSP is operationalized through annual ministry planning and budgeting.

Success, however, is dependent on collective ownership and partnerships between the people and the national/local governments, community leaders, the private sector and civil society. The NSP will provide guidance to our development partners so that the RMI can implement projects through a holistic development approach in the face of the critical issues facing us. Our development partners will also need to ensure their programs are aligned to our National Priorities and Strategic Policy Objectives.

This National Strategic Plan is both aspirational and ambitious. It is the responsibility of each one of us to ensure success. I would like to sincerely thank all who have contributed to the development of the NSP through your inputs and valuable contributions. My sincere appreciation, too, to the drafters of this document, as well as for the support provided by UNDP.

Together we have the capability to realize our potential and work towards the RMI that all of us desire.

Ilo Kautiej,

  
David Kabua  
President

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands wishes to thank the SDG-NSP Steering Committee for their guidance and oversight in designing and developing this document. The consultations and the development were done through Sub-committees, which were structured around the different Pillars. The Chairs of the Sub Committees, comprising of experts from the diverse strategic areas, are acknowledged for their leadership and coordination. The Committee comprised of:

### **Leadership:**

- President – Chair
- Chief Secretary – Vice-Chair
- Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade – Vice-Chair
- Economic Policy, Planning and Statistics Office – Secretariat

### **Members:**

- Deputy Chief Secretary (Ebeye Office)
- Director, Economic Planning Policy and Statistics Office
- Secretary, Ministry of Culture and Internal Affairs
- Director, CCD
- Secretary, Ministry of Finance, Banking and Postal Services
- Secretary, Ministry of Works, Infrastructure and Utilities
- Auditor General
- NGO Representative
- Chamber of Commerce Representative

RMI government would also like to acknowledge the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Fiji for sponsoring the Technical Assistance.

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## ABBREVIATIONS and ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CM	Cabinet Minutes
CMI	College of the Marshall Islands
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EPA	Environmental Protection Authority
EPPSO	Economic Policy, Planning and Statistics Office
ESP	Education Sector Plan
EU	European Union
FIC	Forum Island Countries
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GHG	Greenhouse Gases
GNI	Gross National Income
HDI	Human Development Index
HRD	Human Resource Development
HRH	Human Resource for Health
HRM	Human Resource Management
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IWRM	Integrated Water Resource Management
JNAP	Joint National Action Plan
KAJUR	Kwajalein Atoll Joint Utility Resources
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAWC	Majuro Atoll Waste Company
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MEC	Marshalls Energy Company
MICNGOS	Marshall Islands Council of Non-Governmental Organizations
MICS	Marshall Islands Conservation Society
MIDB	Marshall Islands Development Bank
MIJ	Marshall Islands Journal
MIMA	Marshall Islands Mayors' Association
MIMRA	Marshall Islands Marine Resources Authority
MIR	Marshall Islands Resort
MIVA	Marshall Islands Visitors Authority
MOFBPS	Ministry of Finance, Banking, and Postal Services
MOFAT	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
MOHHS	Ministry of Health and Human Services
MOCIA	Ministry of Culture and Internal Affairs
MOJIL	Ministry of Justice, Immigration and Labor
MONRC	Ministry of Natural Resources and Commerce
MOWIU	Ministry of Works, Infrastructure and Utilities
MSI	Mauritius Strategy of Implementation

MTBIF	Medium Term Budget and Investment Framework
MWSC	Majuro Water and Sewer Company
NCCPF	National Climate Change Policy Framework
NCDs	Non-Communicable Diseases
NEMS	National Environment Management Strategy
NGOs	Non-Government Organizations
NIIP	National Infrastructure and Investment Plan
NSDS	National Sustainable Development Strategy
NSP	National Strategic Plan
NTA	National Telecommunication Authority
NTC	National Training Council
ODA	Overseas Development Assistance
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
CCD	Climate Change Directorate
PIFS	Pacific Island Forum Secretariat
PNA	Parties to the Nauru Agreement
PPA	Pacific Power Association
PSC	Public Service Commission
PSS	Public School System
RMI	Republic of the Marshall Islands
ROC	Republic of China (Taiwan)
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SE4All	Sustainable Energy for All
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SOE	State Owned Enterprise
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
SPREP	Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Program
SPTO	South Pacific Tourism Organization
TVET	Technical/Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UN/ESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
US	United States
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USP	University of the South Pacific
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organization
WUTMI	Women United Together Marshall Islands

## INTRODUCTION

How do we Marshallese envisage our future? What kind of society do we want to become? How can we maintain and enhance a united and inclusive Marshallese identity? What are the transformations needed to improve our social and economic situation? How can we ensure sustainable development in the face of the growing concerns for the survival of the country from the existential threat of climate change and sea level rise, in addition to the unresolved nuclear legacy we continue to endure?

These are some of the main issues The National Strategic Plan (NSP) 2020–2030 addresses.

This NSP is a result of a national consultative process among government ministries and agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) the private sector and all relevant stakeholders, and provides a broad consensus on the necessity for Marshallese to clearly define the future of the country. The process provided the basis upon which this NSP: its Vision, Objectives, Context and Strategies were developed.

The NSP is designed as a framework to coordinate the articulated long-term development goals and objectives of the RMI government at the national level. The NSP will be used by government leaders ***as the Roadmap for development and progress*** in the long-term (2020–2030) and will be continually updated for use in meeting longer term objectives as the RMI moves forward with meeting national priorities and development objectives.

The NSP will enable RMI government leaders to articulate the direction of priorities over the coming decade, and can now clearly outline the chronological pathway for implementation of national priorities.

## COUNTRY PROFILE

Independence	:	21 October 1986
UN/ESCAP Membership	:	31 July 1991
Capital	:	Majuro (7N 171E)
Geographical Location	:	Central-North Pacific
Constitution	:	Mixed Parliamentary and Presidential System
Parliament	:	Unicameral, 33 members elected every four years
Official Languages	:	Marshallese and English
Land Area	:	180 square kilometers (70 square miles)
Exclusive Economic Zone	:	2.1 million square kilometers (1.3 million square miles)
Population	:	54,705 (2019) <sup>1</sup>
GNI per Capita	:	\$4,860 (Atlas method, current US\$ as of 2018) <sup>2</sup>
GDP	:	\$201.7 million (in FY2015 constant prices) <sup>3</sup>
Annual Average GDP Growth	:	3.0% (FY2016-2018) <sup>4</sup>
GDP by Institutional Sector	:	Public Sector 43.6%, Private Sector 31.4%, Others 25% <sup>5</sup>
Labor Force	:	Total 13,060, Male 8,458, Female 4,602 <sup>6</sup>
Labor Force Participate Rate	:	Total 41.7%, Male 53.6%, Females 29.7% <sup>7</sup>
Life Expectancy at Birth	:	Male 71.3, Female 72.5 <sup>8</sup>
Human Development Index	:	0.698 (ranked 117 of 189 countries) <sup>9</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Based on Office of the Chief Secretary analysis, *Republic of the Marshall Islands Population: Historical Review and Projections to 2027*. January 2018.

<sup>2</sup> World Bank Country Profile: Marshall Islands ([www.databank.worldbank.org](http://www.databank.worldbank.org))

<sup>3</sup> RMI Economic Statistics Tables: FY2018 ([www.econmap.org](http://www.econmap.org))

<sup>4</sup> Ibid (footnote 3)

<sup>5</sup> Ibid (footnote 3)

<sup>6</sup> RMI Census 2011

<sup>7</sup> Ibid (footnote 6)

<sup>8</sup> Ibid (footnote 6)

<sup>9</sup> United Nations Development Program ([http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr\\_theme/country-notes/MHL.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/MHL.pdf))

## NATIONAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK

This document is an embodiment of the progressive sequence of development in the RMI, builds upon previous policies and plans. Past planning documents used to provide direction for this current plan include:

- First Five-Year Economic Development Plan: 1986–1991
- Second Five-Year Economic Development Plan: 1992–1996
- Public Sector Investment Program: 1997
- National Sustainable Development Strategy 2000
- Vision 2018: Strategic Development Plan Framework 2003–2018
- National Strategic Plan 2015-2017

The RMI Cabinet, on May 29, 2019, adopted the **RMI National Planning Framework** (C.M. 123 (2019)<sup>10</sup>, and reaffirmed the NSP as the apex planning document with a high-level strategic focus addressing all developmental activity both public and private, including external projects. The Planning Framework establishes a framework for sector and thematic level planning contributing to the alignment of all planning and budgeting with the NSP including the implementation of Three-Year Rolling Planning and Budgeting at the Ministry Level.

### **NSP Critical Design Features**

The NSP 2020-2030 includes the following key design components:

- Spans a 10-year timeframe
- Sets the national vision and long-term development goals
- Identifies Sector Over-Arching Goals
- Specifies the Sectors, Strategic Areas and related Policy Objectives
- Provides a guide for the allocation of budget resources through the MTBIF and annual budget appropriations.

Further, that ‘resilience’, in all its dimensions including, environmental, social, economic resilience, would be the foundation of the NSP. The NSP contains references to building resilience, as a development necessity. There is a recognition that challenges faced by RMI are not just from climate change and natural disaster hazards but also from socio-economic factors.

The cascading design of NSP 2020-2030 highlights that national priorities must align with sector strategies and further into organizational plans at the operational level. This is critical to the success of realizing the Goals and Policy Objectives of the NSP.

The NSP 2020–2030 is defined around **5 Pillars**, comprised of **24 Strategic Areas** in total. Each **Strategic Area** includes its own Over-Arching **Goal** and related **Policy Objectives**, as detailed in **Figure 1** below.

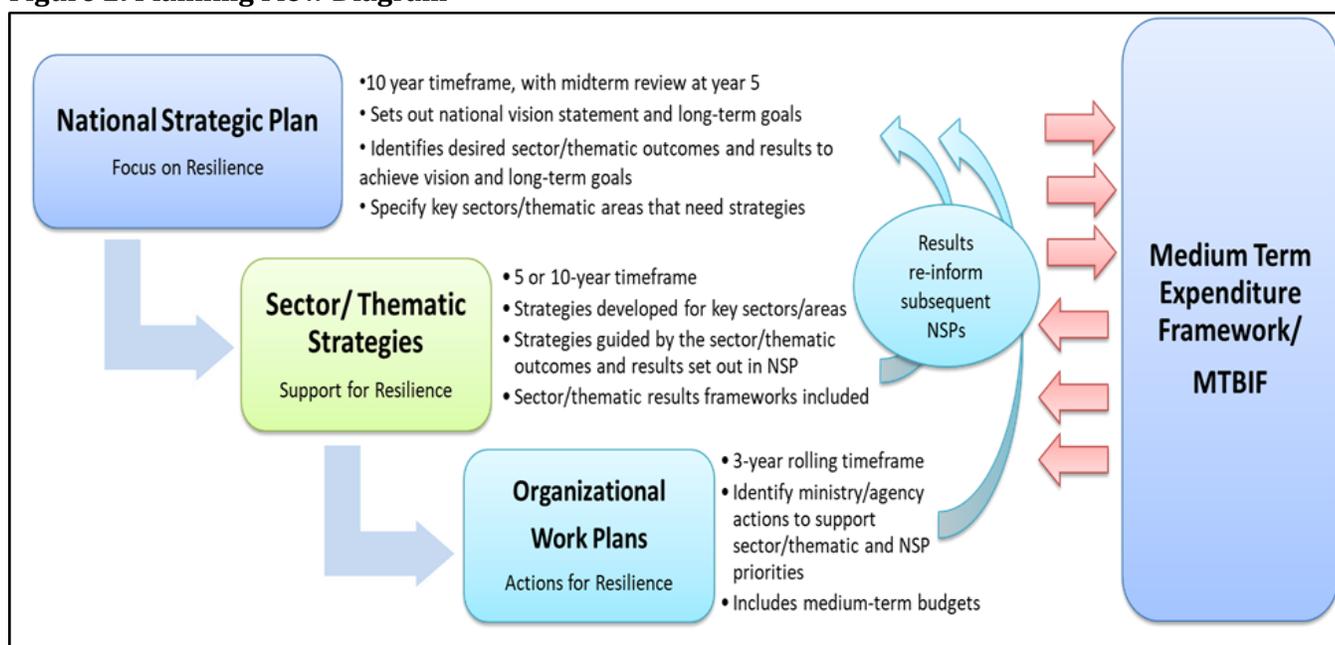
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<sup>10</sup> RMI (Confidential) C.M. 123 (2019) National Planning Framework, May 29, 2019

<b>Figure 1: NSP Pillar Information</b>			
	<b>Pillars</b>	<b>Strategic Areas</b>	<b>Policy Objectives</b>
<b>1</b>	Social and Culture	1. Health	7
		2. Education and Training	7
		3. Social Justice and Inclusion	4
		4. Culture and Traditional knowledge	4
<b>2</b>	Environment, Climate Change and Resilience	1. Atoll Environment	6
		2. Climate Change	5
		3. Disaster Risk Management	4
		4. Radiation Contamination	3
<b>3</b>	Infrastructure	1. Transport	3
		2. Energy	3
		3. Water and Sanitation	5
		4. Waste Management	5
		5. Information and Communication Technology	4
		6. Public Facilities	3
<b>4</b>	Economic Development	1. Land	4
		2. Agriculture	4
		3. Marine Resources	3
		4. Trade, Investment and Tourism	6
		5. Financial Sector and Services	3
<b>5</b>	Governance	1. Public Administration	5
		2. Public Financial Management	7
		3. Law, Justice and Public Safety	4
		4. Judiciary	3
		5. International Relations and Security	5
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>24 Total Strategic Areas</b>	<b>105</b>

The planning process, illustrated in **Figure 2** below, shows the link between the NSP, Sector/Thematic Strategies, Ministry/Organizational Work-plans and budgets and the Medium-Term Budget and Investment Framework (MTBIF). An inventory of Sector Strategies is located in **Annex 1**. A listing of the status of Ministry/Agency Plans is located in **Annex 2**.

**Figure 2: Planning Flow Diagram**



## **NSP VISION STATEMENT**

The NSP Vision Statement focuses on continuing to build a resilient, productive and self-supportive RMI. As such, it is founded on the attributes of self-reliance, mutual respect, tolerance and integrity in line with constitutional obligations and international promises. The Vision Statement encompasses, in summary, the priorities and aspirations of the ongoing efforts at development in the RMI.

### **NSP VISION STATEMENT**

***“Kallib Bwe Kwon AKEO”***

***Komelele 1: Jerbal ko ad rej monakajāne Ilju eo ad.***

***Komelele 2: Eltan Peid enaaj lamlame ilju eo ad.***

***In our own hands is our future.***

The NSP Vision is founded on the Constitution of the Marshall Islands and the Vision 2018 “Declaration to the Marshallese.” **Annex 3** includes the Preamble to the RMI Constitution and the Vision 2018 Declaration to the Marshallese People.

## **NSP OBJECTIVE**

### **NSP OBJECTIVE**

***Sustainable, Equitable and Measurable Development  
Reflecting the Priorities and Culture of the Marshallese People***

Our people and culture are the source of inspiration for the priorities of the NSP. Through successful implementation, the NSP moves Marshallese society so that all citizens achieve their potential through opportunities provided by the promise of sustainable development.

This objective empowers all citizens with both responsibility and opportunity, and provides for every citizen the opportunity to enjoy improved quality of life in all areas including health, education, energy, food security, law and order, gender equality, employment opportunities and disaster mitigation. Furthermore, this empowerment is more deeply broadened by embracing our culture as a unifying force for sustainable development.

## NSP CONTEXT

The NSP National Context is based on the ideas of Social and Economic Empowerment, Resilience, Adaptation to Climate Change, Security and Human Development. As one of the only four atoll countries in the world, we face threats to our existence and national survival from a variety of issues including the impacts of climate change and sea level rise. The issue of the RMI's nuclear past and its continuing legacy strikes a sensitive chord in our society. The NSP, takes cognizance of these issues and growing challenges in trying to chart out a development path for the country and our people.

### Shaping the Context

This sub-section provides a snapshot of the issues that shape the context of this NSP. Additional background information is located in **Annex 4**.

**Geography presents challenges for development:** Our country will forever remain small and isolated, making transport and trade with major markets costly. While communication with the outside world has also been historically costly and inconsistent, the investment in submarine fiber optic cable in 2010 dramatically improved connectivity with the rest of the world. It is imperative that improvements continue in the domestic telecommunication and information technology services. As a low-lying atoll nation vulnerable to the damaging effects of climate change and natural disasters, with sea-level rise posing a direct threat to our very existence makes the development of a competitive, productive economy all the more challenging.

**Geography also provides real opportunities:** Our strategic location in the central Pacific, large ocean area, and natural resources provide excellent platforms for a better economy for the people.

**High reliance on external resources and imports:** Reflecting our isolation and narrow resource base, the economy remains highly dependent on international support, mostly in the forms of grants, which has been equivalent to 35 percent of GDP over the past decade. Approximately half of our annual budget is funded from external sources. Additionally, as a small island economy with a narrow resource base, access to international markets is crucial. The RMI consistently imports much more than it exports, relying on imported supplies for food, consumer goods, machinery, and petroleum products with limited scope to produce much of these commodities locally.

**Rural-urban disparities continue to exist:** This is the case in both the urban centers and outer islands, and there is a clear trend of urban migration, with Majuro and Kwajalein atolls now home to three-fourths of our population. The economies of the outer island communities have not fundamentally changed over the past century, with these communities relying mostly on copra and handicraft production and limited commercial fisheries and farming activities for their livelihoods. Subsistence fishing and farming remain mainstays of daily life.

**Urban economies remain non-diversified.** The urban economies in Majuro and Kwajalein rely heavily on government bureaucracy and the Kwajalein missile base for employment and income. These economies are dominated by the wholesale and retail trade, construction, banking and insurance, and commercial fisheries operations.

**Human capital remains underdeveloped:** At the heart of all development is human development, and at the heart of human development is early childhood and maternal health, nutrition, and care. While RMI's broad human development indicators such as infant and child mortality rates and educational attainment have steadily improved since independence, the overall progress in building human capital can still be improved. We need to redouble efforts to ensure that every child born in the RMI is provided the proper health, nutrition, and care especially in the first 1,000 days of life and that educational opportunities are accessible to all. Such an investment will have a greater impact on long term social, economic, and development prospects.

## 1. SOCIAL AND CULTURE PILLAR

The Pillar consists of four Strategic Areas:

1. **Health**
2. **Education and Training**
3. **Social Justice and Inclusion**
4. **Culture and Traditional Knowledge**

The resilience of the people of any country is a measure of their true social capital and wealth. Enhancing the health, education and quality of life of all people, is central to building a fair and progressive nation.

### Pillar Over-Arching Objective

**Healthy, Peaceful and Inclusive Societies for Sustainable Development**

#### 1.1 Strategic Area: Health

##### **GOAL: Healthy Lives and Well-being for All Ages**

##### **Policy Objectives**

- 1) *Strengthened response to non-communicable diseases, including nutrition, mental health, and injuries*
- 2) *Improved maternal, infant, child and adolescent health*
- 3) *Strengthened response and resilience to communicable disease, environmental health, and health emergency preparedness*
- 4) *Strengthened planning, management and administration of Human and Financial resources*
- 5) *Provision of quality health care infrastructure, especially cancer care, for all Marshallese*
- 6) *Strengthened outer island health services*
- 7) *Address issues of climate change and human health*

The goals of the Ministry of Health and Human Services underscore the theme that "Kumiti Ejmour" or Health is a shared responsibility. The "kumit" lifestyle is one where every Marshallese supports one another in every effort to improve healthy lifestyles now and in the years to come.

Additionally, the 'Healthy Islands' concept has remained an inspiration for RMI and the Pacific. We remain committed to applying a Healthy Islands focus for health policies. This concept has played a significant role in energizing the approach to Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs). It has framed the approach health leaders have taken to engaging with other sectors, and framed the largely successful efforts in support of bringing global attention to the ongoing NCD epidemic. There is widespread consensus that the Healthy

Islands concept is strong and helpful and it should be maintained and supported. The breadth of this concept is only now being realized, with its weave of health, environmental, and Pacific cultural concepts.

The RMI continues to witness a surge in NCDs and vector borne diseases including Dengue fever, Zika virus and Chikungunya. The introduction of COVID 19 in late 2019 prompted government planning and preparedness response. With the infectious nature of the COVID 19 virus, and with no current vaccine, this vector borne disease may continue to be part of RMI's Health Sector planning for at least the medium-term future. Overall, for vector- borne diseases, whether projections are positive or negative depends on the disease, region and extent of change.

## 1.2 Education and Training

### **GOAL: Inclusive and Equitable Education and Lifelong Learning Opportunities for All**

#### **Policy Objectives**

- 1) *Improved early childhood development*
- 2) *Increased learning and student achievement in primary and secondary schools*
- 3) *Enhanced post-secondary and continuing education opportunities that provide in-country access to obtain qualifications such as certificates, diplomas, undergraduate and postgraduate degrees*
- 4) *Enhanced skills and attributes necessary for a dynamic workforce and resilient economy*
- 5) *Ensure schools are well equipped with facilities, resources and quality teachers to foster a more effective learning environment*
- 6) *Incorporate sports as an important component of the school system.*
- 7) *Address TVET and Workforce Development issues through the NTC, and STEM program*

Education and training are a shared responsibility that requires the collective and whole-hearted effort of schools, higher education institutions, national and local governments, communities, parents and civil society organizations.

Yearly assessment of results has remained static for multiple years despite reforms and the re-crafting of Education curriculums. Outer island schools continually face a shortage of qualified teachers. There is support for the integration of technical and vocational education in the Education Sector Plan (ESP), recognizing that skills training and career planning should begin during primary and secondary years and continue through the provision of life-long training and re-training options for adults.

The ESP, currently under development, aims to provide the Public School System (PSS) a workable road map toward constructing and implementing an educational system that recognizes the unique challenges and visions of our people. The plan recognizes the desire for a curriculum that is culturally appropriate and focused on implementation strategies that will improve all students' lives.

The ESP stresses the importance of adopting a standardized and internationally recognized TVET accreditation system. This will enable students to better access further training and secure employment at home and abroad and will focus on expanding educational opportunities for students.

## 1.3 Social Justice and Inclusion

### **GOAL: Equality, Justice, and Empowerment for All**

#### **Policy Objectives**

- 1) *Improve access to justice for RMI's vulnerable populations*
- 2) *Ensure provisions and opportunities for equitable participation of all persons in society*
- 3) *Build social empowerment strategies into nationwide frameworks*
- 4) *Strengthen actions for accessing restitution for those most affected by the RMI's nuclear legacy*

Justice, fairness, and equity are at the heart of any democratic society. There is increasing awareness about issues such as gender, disability and the more vulnerable in society. The Policy Objectives detailed in this Strategic Area focus on being inclusive and providing opportunities for all.

## 1.4 Culture and Traditional Knowledge

### **GOAL: Integrate Marshallese Culture, Customary Law and Traditional Practices in all Facets of Development**

#### **Policy Objectives**

- 1) *Undertake preservation of traditional knowledge-natural resources and historical sites (men ko bwinnir).*
- 2) *Maintain and preserve native Marshallese language.*
- 3) *Promote cultural industry- amimono (trademark).*
- 4) *Maintain traditional consumption and production of food and medicine.*

In the face of rapid globalization, it is more challenging for people around the world to maintain and pass on traditions and cultures. As the Marshall Islands, like much of the world, becomes more of a melting pot, cultural preservation of language, knowledge, values and customs becomes increasingly more difficult.

The RMI National Cultural Policy and Strategies underscores the need for the safe upkeep and management of culture. Preservation of RMI's history, historical places and arts are critical for social, education and economic reasons. Strengthening language is a necessary building block for common understanding, expression and identity. This policy also emphasizes that the RMI cultural identity needs to be better promoted for the economic benefit of our indigenous Marshallese society.

## 2. ENVIRONMENT CLIMATE CHANGE AND RESILIENCY PILLAR

The Pillar consists of four Strategic Areas:

1. **Atoll Environment**
2. **Climate Change**
3. **Disaster Risk Management**
4. **Radiation Contamination**

Building resilience of our people and ecosystems is necessary for sustainable development. Protecting our natural capital and strengthening our human capital is essential for meeting our national development objectives and ensuring the sustainability of economic growth regardless of the environmental impacts we may face in the future.

## **Pillar Over-Arching Objective**

### **Enhance Resilience of RMI and its Environmental Assets to the Impacts of Climate Change and Natural Disasters and its Environmental Assets through National, Regional and International Efforts**

The Goal focuses on adaptation and resilience to the looming threat of climate change, as well as natural disasters that can potentially impact development.

The Policy Objectives in this Pillar entail greater climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts. These efforts focus on increased renewable energy generation, increasing green investments, protecting biodiversity, improving waste management and mainstreaming climate change and environmental consideration into frameworks, policies and plans.

#### **2.1 Atoll Environment**

##### **GOAL: Protection, Management and Sustainable use of RMI's Atoll Environment Resources**

###### **Policy Objectives**

- 1) Improved protection, conservation and sustainability of atoll environment and natural resources*
- 2) Strengthened management of waste, chemicals, pollutants and nuclear radiation*
- 3) Meet obligations to relevant national, regional and international treaties, agreements and frameworks*

Protecting our natural environment is essential to ensuring well-being and development that will be enjoyed by present and future generations.

#### **2.2 Climate Change**

##### **GOAL: Holistic Response to Climate Change for Sustainable Social, Economic Development and Well-Being of RMI and its People**

###### **Policy Objectives**

- 1) Adaptation and resilience actions to current and future impacts of climate change*
- 2) Mitigation of Green House Gas (GHG) emissions in pursuance of RMI's NDC targets and pathway to net zero emissions by 2050*
- 3) Strong advocacy, diplomacy and regional/global leadership to enhance urgent global climate action*
- 4) Strengthened security and survival of RMI to the existential threats of climate change*
- 5) Continued national advocacy, awareness and education on climate change and resilience building.*
- 6) Increased climate finances to enable necessary response to climate change impacts on RMI's socio-economic development*

A holistic response requires a strengthened coordination and decision making across all stakeholders including government, private sector, NGOs and civil society. Additionally, we will mainstream climate-related risks into planning and budgeting at all levels and in all relevant sectors. We must ensure relevant organizations are adequately resourced and avenues for sustainable financing are secured.

## 2.3 Disaster Risk Management (DRM)

### **GOAL: RMI Manages Disaster Risk for the Current and Future Well-Being of the Marshallese People**

#### **Policy Objectives**

- 1) *Enhanced resilience to disasters and risks*
- 2) *Strengthened disaster preparedness, response and recovery*
- 3) *Greater coordination, nationally and internationally on DRM efforts*

Improved national and local capacity to undertake vulnerability and adaptation assessments and planning is critical for disaster risk management. Additionally, we need to ensure all stakeholders are integrated into the planning and implementation of disaster risk and adaptation as needed. An example of disaster risk management could be the design of an updated building code for disaster and climate-proofing, backed by appropriate legislation.

## 2.4 Radiation Contamination

### **GOAL: Marshallese have the Capacity to Monitor, Understand, and Respond to the Incidence of Radiation Contamination for the Current and Future Well-Being of the Marshallese People**

#### **Policy Objectives**

- 1) *Undertake environmental surveys focused on radiation monitoring, including data analysis and interpretation*
- 2) *Establish the necessary legal and policy frameworks to minimise future risks from radiation*
- 3) *The necessary policies, regulations, strategies or plans are available for the detection, assessment, response and recovery after radiation emergencies*
- 4) *Upskill people on nuclear technology used for peaceful purposes*
- 5) *Enhance capacity of stakeholders and community to manage radiation contamination*

There is ongoing concern about the impacts of lingering radiation in the environment on the health of communities and local food sources in the RMI. It is important that there is a plan to monitor the levels of radiation in our environment, especially the marine environment which is the lifeline for our people. Some potential dangers have been exposed through recent disclosures about the low-level radioactive waste facility on Runit Island (Enewetak Atoll), due to sea level rise and increased tidal fluctuations as a result of climate change. Lingering radiation on other atolls continues to prevent safe habitation of those islands and needs to be addressed.

We now face the compounded risk from the nuclear testing impacts and climate change. Both risks require support from the international community. These two threats present challenges both in the present and the future, requiring a multi-dimensional response. As a result, our development focus includes the current and potential impacts of these threats to our resilience and basic survival.

### 3. INFRASTRUCTURE PILLAR

The Pillar consists of six Strategic Areas:

1. **Transportation (air, land, sea)**
2. **Energy**
3. **Water and Sanitation**
4. **Waste Management**
5. **Communications**
6. **Public Facilities**

#### **Pillar Over-Arching Objective**

**Provide Efficient, Effective, Resilient, Sustainable and Affordable Services and Facilities that Promote Sustainable Economic Growth**

Any infrastructure development must ensure healthy ecosystems are maintained and that scarce resources such as water are protected. Infrastructure development must also focus on reducing exposure to damage from natural hazards such as coastal inundation, flooding, erosion and contamination from ineffective sanitation and waste disposal.

Infrastructure gaps remain significant. Without a dramatic increase in infrastructure investment, from a variety of financing sources, lack of infrastructure will continue to hamper our ability to achieve and sustain the rates of growth necessary for economic sustainability.

We remain among those countries most vulnerable to the effects of climate change and related natural disasters. However, addressing our nation's need for infrastructure in the short term must not come at the expense of future generations. In line with the **TiLe TiL Eo** (Long-term strategy), we will embark on a low-carbon, blue-green economy development trajectory that emphasizes efficient use of natural resources.

#### 3.1 Transportation

**GOAL: Sound and Efficient Transport Infrastructure that Supports Social and Economic Development**

##### **Policy Objectives**

1. *Efficient and reliable air and sea connectivity to the outer islands and the world*
2. *Compliance with all applicable (international) maritime and civil aviation safety standards for the ports*
3. *Reliable roads for efficient movement of people and goods and services*

Providing efficient and effective transportation facilities to connect our atolls and linking us to international markets is challenging. This reflects both the inherent cost of providing low-volume services to remote places, and the market structure where insufficient competition amongst a small number of service providers inflates costs.

The current high costs and low frequencies undermine the viability of investment opportunities and remain a significant concern. Improvements in transportation are crucial to addressing the geographic factors that make economic development so challenging especially when it comes to ensuring that the positive impacts are realized outside of the urban centers.

Given our location and distance from trading partners, efficient and affordable air and sea transport is vital. Air connectivity is currently limited to two international airlines and one domestic carrier. The cost of air travel to and from Majuro is a major contributor to the cost of local goods and services and an inhibitor for tourism and trade. Sea transport is vital for the greater connectivity to the outside world as well as between the outer islands.

## 3.2 Energy

### **GOAL: Clean, Reliable, Affordable, Accessible, Resilient and Sustainable Energy Services for Economic Development**

#### **Policy Objectives**

- 1) *Improved enabling frameworks for reducing dependence on imported fossil fuel for electricity generation*
- 2) *Increased energy efficiency in households, businesses, government, transport and other sectors*
- 3) *Reliable, sustainable and affordable energy supply*

Our Electricity Roadmap provides a strategic framework to enable us to meet our climate change targets and to strengthen our role as a climate leader. This roadmap will allow the RMI and our development partners to work together to achieve a common vision for the RMI electricity sector.

Over the last 15 years, progress has been made to develop renewable energy. Almost all households on the outer islands, previously without electricity supply, now have solar home systems, and several larger solar projects totaling around 1 megawatt (MW) have been built on Majuro.

## 3.3 Water and Sanitation

### **GOAL: Access to Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation Systems for the Economic, Social Development and Well-Being of all Marshallese**

#### **Policy Objectives**

- 1) *Effective management of fresh water resources*
- 2) *Constant access to drinking water that meets World Health Organization standards*
- 3) *Improved sanitation for better health and well-being*
- 4) *Comprehensive management of waste water*
- 5) *Management of urban drainage and surface waters for safe public exposure*

The Water and Sanitation Strategic Plan (2017-2027) establishing the most appropriate water and sanitation services for Majuro Atoll over the next 20 years has been developed. It is part of the first phase of a Capital Improvement Program by Majuro Water and Sewer Company (MWSC) to improve water and sanitation services to Majuro Atoll. Additionally, there is ongoing improvement work on Ebeye regarding water and sanitation.

### 3.4 Waste Management

#### **GOAL: Establish Reliable Infrastructure for Effective Management of Waste, Chemicals and Pollutants**

##### **Policy Objectives**

- 1) *Enhance accessible community collection services*
- 2) *Assess and promote sustainable and sanitary landfill applications and operation*
- 3) *Promote local recycling*
- 4) *Carry out appropriate incineration for medical waste and waste to energy conversion*
- 5) *Explore effective facilities and schemes to promote facilities and processes*

Waste disposal remains a critical issue, especially in the urban centers. The current dump site in Majuro has not only become an eyesore but a major hazard. The possible strategies for the next 10 years, which focus on sustainable disposal, processing, including waste to energy, and waste export are potential options for action.

### 3.5 Information and Communication Technology

#### **GOAL: Modern, Efficient, Resilient and Affordable Telecommunications Network and Services for Greater Social and Economic Prosperity**

##### **Policy Objectives**

- 1) *Strengthen legal and regulatory framework*
- 2) *Provide resilient platforms for efficient and affordable connectivity*
- 3) *Improve outer island connectivity*
- 4) *Revise ICT Policy 2012 and existing telecom laws and regulations for greater relevance to current setting*

Geographical features and population dispersion present significant challenges for the provision of affordable telecommunications services. The importance of modern mobile technological solutions for increased and improved connectivity to the outside world and the outer islands cannot be over emphasized.

### 3.6 Public Facilities

#### **GOAL: Sound, Resilient, Efficient Public Facilities for Sustainable Social and Economic Development and Well-Being**

##### **Policy Objectives**

- 1) *Strategic and resilient infrastructure planning and investment*
- 2) *Well-designed, built and maintained public facilities (roads, runways, buildings, amenities, schools, dispensaries, seawalls etc.)*
- 3) *Raise building standards through implementation of a Building Code*

Strategic infrastructure planning that takes into consideration social, environmental and economic costs. Analysis will need to be completed to ensure we can reap the greatest possible benefit from infrastructure development. Planning will help us to avoid the negative impact of poorly planned infrastructure such as coastal erosion, pollution and other negative impacts. Building an effective, integrated, maintained and sustainable infrastructure, including public facilities is needed to improve overall infrastructure resilience in the Marshall Islands We will integrate climate-sensitive approaches to existing laws and planning processes,

such as building codes. We will work with individuals and communities at all levels to improve natural resource management and mitigate, the impacts of climate change and other environmental hazards.

## 4. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PILLAR

The Pillar consists of five Strategic Areas:

1. **Land**
2. **Agriculture**
3. **Marine Resources**
4. **Trade, Investment and Tourism**
5. **Financial Sector and Services**

### Pillar Over-Arching Objective

**To Achieve an Economy that Underpins a Resilient, Productive, and Self-Supportive Nation Supported by Implemented Legislation, Policies, and Conditions for an Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Growth, that will help Mobilize Investment both Domestic and Foreign to Create Decent Jobs, Drive Greater Productivity and Promote Better Living Standards**

Our vision is an economy that underpins a resilient, productive, and self-supportive nation. This will require efforts across a range of sectoral and cross-sectoral policy areas, planning and coordination. There is a need to identify a set of coherent, complementary policies and investments on the part of Government that will help to create the right conditions for an inclusive and sustainable economy. An underlying aim is the need to create the right conditions to mobilize private investment, both domestic and foreign, so that high priority areas including the creation of decent jobs, driving greater productivity and better living standards can be realized.

The five Strategic Areas in this pillar are important for catalyzing economic growth and unlocking the potential for greater trade and investment.

### 4.1 Land

#### **GOAL: Enhance Access to Land**

##### **Policy Objectives**

- 1) *Greater opportunities to utilize land for economic growth*
- 2) *Promote greater awareness of land rights and opportunities through awareness and partnership*

Access to land remains a longstanding underlying challenge to both investment and development. One solution would be to design innovative long-term land leases and include provisions for timely and updated information on available land for investments.

There is a need to streamline processes and regulations for land registration, allowing for more efficient use of properties and facilitate improved access to credit by allowing land to be used as collateral. This needs to be done in a culturally appropriate manner which requires new approaches and extensive consultation between landowners, the private sector and the policymakers. The provision of strategic infrastructure assets, access and retention of land resources, at reasonable costs and with secure tenure, will be pursued for the benefit of all Marshallese.

## 4.2 Agriculture

### GOAL: Enhancing Agricultural Development

#### Policy Objectives

- 1) *Improve production, supply and distribution of nutritious food*
- 2) *Promote environmental sustainability*
- 3) *Enhance capacity of agriculture sector stakeholders*
- 4) *Develop enabling policies and legislation.*

Agricultural production (excluding fisheries) represents a relatively small proportion of the RMI economy (around 4% of GDP), but is a critical source of livelihoods especially on the outer islands. There is some underutilized land which offers potential for increased output of agricultural food crops, but this is limited, and soil conditions are generally poor. The principal commercial crops are coconuts and breadfruit.

Our people have been involved in copra production since the 1850s and the atolls are widely planted with coconut trees, however, copra currently accounts for only about 1% of GDP. Nevertheless, the coconut is still considered the “tree of life” with high potential to produce multiple valuable products both for food security and income generation. Consequently, the value chain of copra and coconut plantations rehabilitation and replanting continue to be championed as key pathways to promote economic development and income generation.

Copra processing is done primarily through the Tobolar Copra Processing Authority, a State-Owned Enterprise (SOE). Tobolar guarantees the purchase of all coconuts harvested in the RMI and is responsible for collecting, transporting and processing the raw material, paying farmers for their produce, and selling the final products.

An issue to be addressed is the government subsidy for Tobolar. This reliance on government subsidies leads to inefficiencies which have led to negative economic repercussions for the copra processing industry. The economic viability of Tobolar is an issue to be addressed at both the national and sector levels. There are opportunities for growth in the sector, and this needs to be explored for both food security and commercial production.

## 4.3 Marine Resources

### GOAL: Sustainable and Responsible use of Marine Resources

#### Policy Objectives

- 1) *Maximize the long-term value from its fisheries for the benefit of the economy and people of RMI*
- 2) *Conserve and manage the aquatic resources for current and future generations.*
- 3) *Enhance professionalism, transparency and accountability in the management of fisheries resources.*
- 4) *Maximise income and livelihood opportunities through sustainable coastal fisheries*

Fisheries are the most commercially valuable natural resource in the RMI. Fees for commercial fishing have become one of the largest sources of government revenue. There is a need to continue efforts to maximize fishing revenues in a way that considers the sustainability of fisheries and the needs of fishing companies and investors. RMI will pursue opportunities for:

- Further private sector development and investment in fisheries-related activities

- Public policy initiatives to stimulate increased economic activity via incentives to encourage greater transshipment, onshore fish processing and vessel support services, in particular
- The ongoing maturing of the regional structures that govern oceanic fisheries royalties, including the Parties to the Nauru Agreement's (PNA) Purse Seine and Longline Vessel Day Scheme.

#### 4.4 Trade, Investment and Tourism

##### **GOAL: Local Economic and Employment Growth**

###### **Policy Objectives**

- 1) *Increase import substitution and production and export of locally manufactured goods*
- 2) *Establish more sustainable and eco-friendly tourism*
- 3) *Promote fair and friendly business environment*
- 4) *Promote MSMEs and women entrepreneurs*
- 5) *Promote partnerships among public-private and Civil Society Organizations*
- 6) *Enhancement and protection of consumer interests and rights*

We in the RMI are blessed with great natural beauty and pristine environment that offers great potential for harnessing the “blue economy” as well as sectors such as tourism, and trade and investment

The tourism sector has untapped potential in contributing to income and employment creation. We can promote tourism around the beauty of our atolls for diving, surfing, sport fishing and other ecotourism attractions. There is potential to market tourism with a focus on niche opportunities using technological innovations. This needs to be developed hand in hand with investments in enabling infrastructure, including accommodation facilities. There is potential for greater local participation and joint venture investments so that inclusive ecotourism destinations are developed allowing all to share in our rich culture and tradition.

#### 4.5 Financial Sector and Services

##### **GOAL: Enhance Financial Sector Stability and Improve Financial Services.**

###### **Policy Objectives**

- 1) *Strengthen financial sector oversight*
- 2) *Improve access to affordable and competitive financial services*
- 3) *Protect and develop links to the international financial system*

Access to affordable financial services is important for people to manage their finances and for micro, small and medium enterprises to develop. Financial institutions are in the best position to tailor products and services that promotes greater access to financial services that meet the social and economic development needs of the people of the RMI.

Global connectivity of the financial system is critical to facilitate the flow of trade and payments, and correspondent banking relationships for local banks, need to be maintained. Regulatory and supervisory oversight of the financial system needs to be strengthened to address the challenges of money laundering and terrorist financing and to safeguard the stability of the financial system. Innovative channels of distributing financial services in rural and urban areas including the outer islands should be encouraged through the use of technology. Building financial capability through financial literacy in the communities and schools is an

important tool for imparting financial “know how” allowing for effective utilization of financial services by all stakeholders.

## 5. GOOD GOVERNANCE PILLAR

The Pillar consists of five Strategic Areas:

1. **Public Administration**
2. **Public Financial Management**
3. **Law, Justice and Public Safety**
4. **Judiciary**
5. **International Relations and Security**

### Pillar Over-Arching Objective

**To Apply Good Governance to all Areas of Government and Society, Ensuring the Rule of Law Applies to Every Citizen, Ensuring Effective Measures are in Place to Eliminate any Corruption or Illegal Conduct**

Strengthening the machinery of government at all levels and the instalment of transparent and accountable systems that support effective service is vital for achieving high levels of administrative and institutional performance. The RMI recognizes that improving policy development and enhancing implementation will improve our governance mechanisms. Additionally, strengthening institutional performance management and monitoring systems are crucial elements underpinning good governance, and form a foundation upon which any long-term development process is based.

### 5.1 Public Administration

#### **GOAL: Provide High Quality, Accountable and Transparent Services**

##### **Policy Objectives**

- 1) *Improve practices to achieve an effective, ethical, and transparent public service, local governments and related public agencies*
- 2) *Enhance capacity of public servants and employees of public agencies, including in particular those in the outer islands*
- 3) *Strengthen oversight, audit, alignment and coordination across and within the public service and related public agencies*
- 4) *Strengthen the connection and cooperation with civil society, private sector and outer islands*
- 5) *Strengthen the capability of accountability and integrity institutions to address corruption and unethical practices*

The NSP includes an emphasis on modernizing the public service and the introduction of new public-sector management practices. Transparency, accountability and integrity serve as the primary elements of this drive towards improved institutional performance.

## 5.2 Public Financial Management

### **GOAL: Sound and Efficient Public Financial Management**

#### **Policy Objectives**

- 1) *Promote stable growth through responsible fiscal policy targeting stability in inflation*
- 2) *Strengthen budget management and financial oversight for planned priorities*
- 3) *Enhance SOE financial performance and service delivery*
- 4) *Ensure public debt is sustainably managed and finances are directed towards projects with positive economic returns*
- 5) *Improve revenue generation*
- 6) *Strengthen dialogue between national and local government and the private sector, and enact a robust governance framework for effective partnership.*
- 7) *Strengthen accountability and oversight in the PFM*

In 2012, a Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) study reviewed the Public Financial Management (PFM) system and highlighted areas of needed reform. Based on the PEFA, the government developed a PFM Reform Roadmap 2014–2016 (the Roadmap), consisting of 30 reform components, including promoting better fiscal responsibility and debt management.

In December 2015, the Roadmap was endorsed by the Cabinet. A PFM Reform Steering Committee chaired by the Chief Secretary was established in March 2016 to provide high-level management. The Ministry of Finance, Banking and Postal Services (MOFBPS) was tasked to lead efforts to implement the Roadmap. The implementation of the PFM roadmap, began in 2016 and continues with assistance from the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the World Bank and the European Union.

## 5.3 Law, Justice and Public Safety

### **GOAL: Robust Law Enforcement and Improved Community Safety**

#### **Policy Objectives**

- 1) *Enable accountable, professional and ethical law making.*
- 2) *Require robust and unbiased enforcement of laws, justice and regulatory processes.*
- 3) *Implement effective systems of corporate regulation*
- 4) *Strengthen the capacity and processes of law making, regulation, enforcement and oversight of relevant agencies*

The rule of law and justice are fundamental principles which underpin democratic governance. We continue to work to make the law more transparent and consultative, producing legislation that is in the interest of all our people. It is also crucial that the law is administered fairly and impartially, with respect for human rights, and without discrimination so that no person is above the law and every person may benefit equally from its administration.

Steps are also underway to strengthen the abilities of law enforcement institutions to deliver personal security, particularly for vulnerable groups, using new and innovative approaches such as community policing and greater border security. The need to enhance maritime patrol, crime prevention, including measures to combat drug, human trafficking is also an area we will address. Furthermore, we continue to be vigilant about cyber-

crime, money laundering and other illegal activities, in order to protect our environment and social fabric for communities and families.

## 5.4 Judiciary

**GOAL: A Court and Judicial System, which is Effective, Impartial, Fair and Transparent**

### Policy Objectives

- 1) *Resolve judicial issues fairly, effectively, and efficiently*
- 2) *Provide access to legal services that are affordable*
- 3) *Ensure judiciary shall remain independent, yet transparent and accountable*

To achieve our goals and objectives our courts must remain independent, and trials must be open and fair. Steps must be taken to strengthen the rule of law at the community level so that people continue to feel safe and are not denied justice. In this context, we recognize the important role played by civil society organizations in advancing justice and the rule of law, and the contribution they make to increasing public trust and awareness.

## 5.5 International Relations and Security

**GOAL: Protect and Promote the National Interests of the RMI Regionally and Internationally**

### Policy Objectives

- 1) *Enhance diplomacy and international relations*
- 2) *Catalyze external support for development from traditional and new partners*
- 3) *Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people*
- 4) *Ensure safe, secure and resilient physical borders*
- 5) *Establish safe, secure and accessible cyber environment*

Security, in all its dimensions: (geopolitical, maritime, border, cyber, drug trafficking, people trafficking, diseases and pests etc.) is a necessary for the protection of the people and the country. This requires effective coordination with relevant agencies internally and externally and effective monitoring.

To achieve our development objectives our global relationships are crucial with regard to the catalysis of funds and technical support. RMI's leadership in critical issues such as climate change has been useful in unlocking greater funds from multilateral and bilateral sources, both traditional and new. At the same time we will continue to navigate our path carefully given the greater geopolitical interest in the region and ensure the long-term sustainability of any arrangements.

## Cross-Cutting Issues

We have identified six cross-cutting issues that are inherent in the NSP. The five Pillars embrace these issues in the identified Policy Objectives. Summary information for each of these cross-cutting issues is provided below with additional information located in **Annexes 5-7**.

## Outer Island Development

This current NSP addresses Outer Island development through a cross-cutting approach in all five Pillars. It is a **NATIONAL PLAN** that is inclusive of the entire country. The Policy Objectives exemplify how the NSP addresses outer island development through the One Nation Development Concept outlined in Vision 2018.

Development of the outer islands is also outlined in several RMI National Policies including (but not limited to) the 2050 Long-Term Climate Strategy, National Adaptation Plan (NAP), Food Security Policy, National Infrastructure and Investment Plan (NIIP), National Environment Management Strategy (NEMS), etc.

The RMI is made up of 29 atolls and 5 islands that includes 24 local government jurisdictions. Of these 24 local governments, there are 22 that are considered to be rural or Outer Islands.

The National Strategic Plan (NSP 2020-2030) continues to embrace the **One Nation Concept and Ten Goals** of Vision 2018 (Annex 5) and integrates these ideas through the five NSP Pillars. The development approach embraces all 24 RMI government jurisdictions as one country, however this does not prevent us from realizing the unique development needs of the rural (Outer Island) jurisdictions.

## Resilience

The NSP 2020-2030 has a definition of resilience relevant to the particular issues of the RMI. Fundamentally, 'resiliency' can be defined as the empowerment of individuals to make the most of opportunities and resources available so that families and communities can adapt to changing circumstances, including the environment. This definition articulates why and generally how we should build resilience.

The challenges we face, not only from growing climate change and natural disaster hazards, but also from socio-economic factors, require a sharper, cross-cutting, and cascading focus on resilience as a development imperative.

Resilience, in all its dimensions, environmental, social, economic, etc., is the overarching strategic foundation priority of this NSP. Adopting a cross-cutting focus on resilience that ensures the security of communities, environments, and economies remains a fundamental focus of all planning and budgeting in the RMI.

Building resilience to the effects of climate change and managing and mitigating disasters from natural hazard risks are imperatives for RMI. In the short to medium term, this requires far more investment in several areas including: coastal protection, climate-proofing critical infrastructure; food, water, and health security; early warning systems and disaster risk-reduction measures. Additionally, a focus on fiscal and financial resilience, innovative financing instruments; and the resilience of the private sector must be implemented.

The continued vitality of the urban centers of Majuro and Ebeye is dependent on improved resilience and livelihoods of the outer islands and their 15,000 people. Not addressing this ensures the continued migration of the Marshallese people away from their land and culture.

Efforts are underway to integrate this focus on building resilience into national policies and plans in all communities. Sectors and thematic plans will further articulate support for building resilience, and organizational level plans will further identify outcomes and actions to support the resilience agenda.

## Adaptation to Climate Change and Sea Level Rise

While sea-level rise is an undeniably real threat for the people who live on islands in the Pacific, the likely impacts of climate change over the next 50 to 100 years are going to have repercussions for the atolls and islands of the Republic of Marshall Islands.

Sea level rise combined with more frequent and severe periodic wave surges are likely to create tipping points for tolerability of habitation. This will be made more pronounced in some atolls by coastal erosion and by more frequent and extended droughts and contamination of fresh water lenses.

RMI therefore faces the stark choice as a low-lying Pacific island nation: either **relocate or find other options**. The RMI is considering whether to relocate all 55,000 citizens (making them climate refugees) or to find other feasible options.

Understanding these risks atoll by atoll will be necessary to allow adaptation measures for well-being and livelihood ('business as usual') measures to be established with local atoll and village groups. This would be done with a view to strengthen resilience, defer the tipping points and provide time to prepare for more extreme measures. The key principles that underpin our approach to climate change adaptation are located in **Annex 6**. Additional information is found in the [National Environment Management Strategy 2017-22](#).

Additionally, RMI continues to call for strong and decisive global action, especially from the larger emitters, to reduce greenhouse gases, the root cause of global warming. Last year, Marshall Islands lawmakers called on the international community to address what they declared to be a "national climate crisis."

## Nuclear Justice

RMI's nuclear legacy cuts across nearly every sector of its society, public and private, as it continues to face outstanding issues as a result of the U.S. nuclear weapons testing program from 1946-1958. Efforts to address nuclear justice for its people have been ongoing for decades and the adoption of the 2017 National Nuclear Commission Act and its establishment of a National Nuclear Commission (NNC) reflected a renewed effort to ensure that its nuclear legacy is never forgotten. Nuclear justice will only be achieved when the health of the Marshallese people and their islands is restored; when displaced communities are returned to or compensated for their homelands; when the full range of damages and injuries stemming from the program is acknowledged and compensated by the U.S. Government; when the record of adverse impacts from nuclear weapons testing is preserved for the benefit of humankind, and when every Marshallese citizen understands the activities that took place in his/her islands and their aftermath and feels empowered to use their voice to advocate for the needs of their communities.

[The National Strategy for Nuclear Justice](#) was adopted in 2019 and addresses five crucial foundations of nuclear justice:

1. Full payment of all past and future awards of the Nuclear Claims Tribunal (Compensation)
2. Quality health care for all Marshallese (Health Care)
3. Reducing the risks of exposure to radiation and other toxins in the environment (Environment)
4. Building national capacity to monitor and understand radiation impacts (National Capacity)
5. Education and awareness of our nuclear legacy (Education and Awareness)

NSP 2020-2030 addresses the core areas of the Nuclear Justice Strategy by integrating these issues into the relevant Strategic Areas and Policy Objectives.

## Human Development

Remoteness and small size lead to there being few education facilities in-country and a severe lack of specialised skills. The limited size of the job market means there are limited opportunities for employment. The close relationships and social structures of small island communities often bring challenges in managing employees. Our people are proud of our cultural roots and the government will ensure that it takes advantage of this heritage in all facets of the development process.

For this development process to be a success, we must embrace the future and exploit innovations in science and technology to complement our cultural strengths. In the RMI, the rate of adoption and integration of science and technology in socio-economic life is very low and the shortage of technically qualified professionals is visible at all levels. From now until 2030, we should invest in capacity building to have adequate, highly skilled scientists and technicians to satisfy the needs of the national economy. There is a need to generate, disseminate and acquire scientific skills as well as to develop technological innovations. We must integrate these innovations into social and economic development.

In order to achieve this objective, we need to develop the teaching of science and technology at secondary and post-secondary levels. We also need to accelerate research and development efforts. These ideas are threaded through the five NSP Pillars. Specific human resources challenges, unique to small island states, and the RMI in particular have been identified. These are detailed in **Annex 7**.

## Security

Security is a broad term that covers a range of issues, the relative importance of these, are specific to each particular situation.

The Pacific Island Forum Secretariat (PIFS) acknowledged the dynamic geopolitical environment that has led to an increasingly crowded and contested region and reaffirmed the need for strengthened collective and cohesive action to effectively manage the regional security environment. At the PIFS meeting in 2018, leaders endorsed the Regional Security Declaration called the BOE Declaration. It identifies six Strategic Focus Areas: climate security, human security and humanitarian assistance, environmental and resource security, transnational crime, cybersecurity/cybercrime and the provision of an enabling environment for implementation.

For RMI these are important issues that are captured throughout the five Pillars of the NSP. These issues are addressed in the various Strategic Areas. In the absence of any 'white' paper or strategy on security the NSP serves as a "roadmap" in addressing some of the critical issues which were discussed during the NSP consultations.

## Monitoring & Evaluation Framework

The RMI National Strategic Plan is much more than just a document. It was developed through an extensive consultation process and is complemented by a **National Monitoring & Evaluation Framework (M&E)**. The goals and policy objectives are the overarching guide for government planning and budgeting over the next 10 years. Furthermore, the M&E Framework aligns the NSP with our regional and international commitments including the Pacific Regional Framework, the Samoa Pathway, and the Global Sustainable Development Goals.

The M&E Framework, forms a second part of the NSP and articulates key performance indicators and targets for monitoring and evaluating progress for the National Policy Objectives as detailed in each Strategic Area. These indicators underpin the **twenty-four NSP Goals**.

The realization of these goals and objectives depends on both government and the people it serves. It requires the active participation of civil society, the private sector, and our international development partners. The goals and policy objectives will be delivered through coordinated and interlinked government planning, budgeting and service delivery. The annual portfolio budgets of line ministries coordinate with the policy objectives for which they are responsible.

Ongoing monitoring and evaluation are critical to successful implementation of this plan. All of the policy objectives are linked to specific measurable indicators targets and milestones which are to be detailed in the M&E Framework. Annual review evaluating baselines against the milestones and targets will help to identify, and evaluate progress against the Goals and Policy Objectives. This approach is focused both on ensuring timely and reliable information is available to inform ongoing planning and budgeting, as well as informing annual progress reports on outcomes and impacts.

The NSP Annual Development Report will be the principal means of communicating progress for the NSP. The process of data collection and analysis to populate the annual report will need to be further embedded into the regular activities of line ministries. Ministries will be expected to establish the **baseline data**, to best track progress against the targets and milestones. This will not only inform the annual report, but will also provide essential feedback to the people responsible for making decisions, programming activities, developing budgets and delivering services.

The Economic Policy, Planning and Statistics Office (EPPSO) and other key government agencies including the Office of Chief Secretary (OCS) are responsible for overseeing the monitoring and evaluation of the RMI NSP. The necessary information for conducting monitoring and evaluation, and completing the Annual NSP Report, including alignment with the *Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*, will form part of the M&E matrices in the M&E Framework. An example of the M&E matrixes is provided as **Figure 3**.

<b>Figure 3: M&amp;E Matrix</b>				
<b>SOCIAL and CULTURAL GOAL 1</b>				
<b>Policy Objectives</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Targets</b>	<b>Status/Analysis</b>	<b>SDGs</b>
Policy Objective for each Pillar	Indicators to be used for M&E	RMI target for 2030 ✓ Milestones RMI Target for 2025 ✓ Milestones RMI Target for 2023 ✓ Milestones	Current status of the baseline indicator (this can include where possible current annual budget for the indicator)	Alignment with SDG Targets and Indicators

The M&E for NSP will:

- Focus on indicators and measure progress against targets and milestones
- Use milestones and targets used to determine progress with regard to policy objectives
- Focus the level of evaluation on the Goals and Policy Objectives

## ANNEX 1: SECTOR STRATEGIES

Sector/Thematic Area	Title	Timeframe
Education	Education Sector Plan	Under development
Health		
Culture	National Cultural Policy	Under development
Gender		
Youth	National Youth Policy	Under development
Nuclear	Nuclear Justice for Marshall Islands	2020–2023
Water and Sanitation	Water and Sanitation Strategic Plan	2017–2027
Energy	National Energy Policy and Energy Action Plan	2016
ICT	National ICT Policy	2012
Electricity	RMI Electricity Roadmap	2018
Climate Change	National Climate Change Policy Framework Long Term (2050) Climate Strategy	2011 2018
Environment	National Environment Management Strategy	2017–2022
Disaster Risk Management	JNAP for DRM and CCA	2014–2018
Marine	MMRA Strategic Plan	2019–2023
Agriculture	Agriculture Strategic Plan	Under development
Tourism	RMI Strategic Tourism Development Plan	Under development
Infrastructure	National Infrastructure Investment Plan RMI National Building Code	2017–2026 2019

## ANNEX 2: MINISTRY and AGENCY PLANS

Ministry/Agency	Main Directional Plan and Coverage
Health and Human Services	Three year Rolling Plan 2017–2019
Public School System	Strategic Plan 2017–2020
National Training Council	Strategic Plan 2019–2021
Office of the Auditor General	Strategic Plan 2014–2019
Office of Commerce, Investment and Tourism	Business Plan 2019–2021
Marshall Islands Police Department	Strategic Plan 2019–2021
Economic Policy, Planning and Statistics Office	Strategic Plan 2019–2021
College of Marshall Islands	Education Master Plan 2019–2029
Environment Protection Agency	Strategic Plan 2018–2021
Foreign Affairs and Trade	Strategic Plan 2017–2023
Finance, Banking and Postal Services	Banking Commission Strategic Plan 2019– 2021 Financial Sector Plan under development
Natural Resources and Commerce	No current plan
Climate Change Directorate	No current plan
Justice, Immigration and Labor	No current plan
Education, Sports and Training	No current plan
Transportation, Communication and Information Technology	No current plan
Works, Infrastructure and Utilities	No current plan

*\*Few Ministries and Agencies have current plans, strategies, etc., and even these are not consistently framed.*

## **ANNEX 3:**

### **PREAMBLE RMI CONSTITUTION AND VISION 2018 DECLARATION**

#### **Preamble of the RMI Constitution**

*WE, THE PEOPLE OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS, trusting in God, the Giver of our life, liberty, identity and our inherent rights, do hereby exercise these rights and establish for ourselves and generations to come this Constitution, setting forth the legitimate legal framework for the governance of the Republic.*

*We have reason to be proud of our forefathers who boldly ventured across the unknown waters of the vast Pacific Ocean many centuries ago, ably responding to the constant challenges of maintaining a bare existence on these tiny islands, in their noble quest to build their own distinctive society.*

*This society has survived, and has withstood the test of time, the impact of other cultures, the devastation of war, and the high price paid for the purposes of international peace and security.*

*All we have and are today as a people, we have received as a sacred heritage which we pledge ourselves to safeguard and maintain, valuing nothing more dearly than our rightful home on the islands within the traditional boundaries of this archipelago.*

*With this Constitution, we affirm our desire and right to live in peace and harmony, subscribing to the principles of democracy, sharing the aspirations of all other peoples for a free and peaceful world, and striving to do all we can to assist in achieving this goal.*

*We extend to other peoples what we profoundly seek from them: peace, friendship mutual understanding, and respect for our individual idealism and our common humanity.*

#### **Declaration to the Marshallese (Vision 2018)**

*To become a country in an inter-dependent world, with an enhanced socio-economic reliance (and) an educated, healthy, productive, law-abiding and God-loving people in which individual freedom and fundamental human rights are protected and culture and traditions are respected, and development and environmental sustainability are in harmony.*

## ANNEX 4: RMI SITUATION ANALYSIS INFORMATION

According to a recent (2017) WB analytical exercise, *Pacific Possible*<sup>11</sup>, relative to a baseline ‘business-as-usual’ scenario, there appears only modest opportunities for the RMI to realize additional economic growth, employment or public revenue generation from the four sectors that were identified as providing the greatest potential opportunity to foster shared prosperity in the region, namely: tourism; access to international labor markets – in addition to the RMI’s existing open access to the United States (U.S.) labor market as part of the Compact of Free Association; information and communication technologies (ICT); and fisheries.

RMI’s population totals around 54,000, of which 28,000 (53 percent) reside in Majuro (the country’s capital) and 10,000 (18 percent) in Ebeye. Urbanization and crowding have intensified over the past 30 years, with migration from the outer islands to the urban centers of Majuro and Ebeye primarily due to: (i) a lack of employment opportunities in other locations; and (ii) greater reliance on the cash economy as compared to a subsistence lifestyle. Between 1962 and 1991 the RMI’s population increased by an average of 4 percent per year but has remained relatively stable since then, as the combination of declining real incomes and rising costs of living has resulted in significant outmigration as Marshallese citizens seek better jobs and educational opportunities abroad, mainly in Hawaii, the U.S. mainland and Guam.

According to the WB Report, hardship is experienced by 51 percent of the RMI population. Inequality between populations in the urban centers and the outer islands is exacerbated by high transport costs and limited access and poor quality of public goods and services in remote areas, while increased crowding in Ebeye and Majuro has also increased inequality in the urban centers. Furthermore, recent poverty assessments have found that informal safety nets are weakening as increased urbanization, westernization and aid dependence have undermined traditional customs and values.

As a result of the combination of small population size, extreme remoteness and dispersion, and environmental fragility, the challenges faced by the RMI are more pronounced and the economic opportunities more limited than those of most other remote regions in the world. The RMI’s economic geography increases transport cost and limits economies of scale which – combined with the RMI’s relatively limited natural resources – result in a narrow production base, constrain the opportunities for exports and make the economy highly dependent on imports. Consequently, the economy is dominated by the public sector, which accounts for around 40 percent of GDP and half of formal-sector employment, while private sector activity focuses on fisheries, retail services, copra and tourism. State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) dominate key sectors of the economy, with transfers to support their continued operational losses having expanded from an average of 4 percent of GDP over the decade from 2005–2014, to an estimated more than 9 percent of GDP in 2019. In terms of the external accounts, most foodstuffs (excluding local foods, such as fish, coconuts and some fruits), fuel, building materials, clothing and manufactured products are imported, while exports are limited to fish and copra products. The nation is thus highly exposed to fluctuations in international food and fuel prices. A large and persistent trade deficit is financed by substantial inflows of foreign assistance – on which the country’s fiscal framework relies – and more recently by increasing government revenues from fishing vessels with access to Marshallese waters.

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<sup>11</sup> Pacific Possible....

According to the UN Human Development Report 2019<sup>12</sup>, Marshall Islands' HDI value for 2018 is 0.698—which put the country in the medium human development category—positioning it at 117 out of 189 countries and territories. Between 2017 and 2018, Marshall Islands' HDI value increased from 0.696 to 0.698, an increase of 0.2 percent. Between 1990 and 2018, Marshall Islands' life expectancy at birth increased by 11.5 years, mean years of schooling increased by 0.1 years and expected years of schooling remained constant. Marshall Islands' GNI per capita increased by about 24.0 percent between 1990 and 2018.

## **ANNEX 5: VISION 2018 ONE NATION CONCEPT**

Vision 2018 states the following:

*We believe that through the adoption of Outer Island Development as a key component of our sustainable development strategy, we would be able to achieve these results. Vision 2018 has identified several key areas of focus with regard to the formulation of strategies for Outer Island Development. These are:*

- Devolution and de-concentration of political and administrative functions
- Infrastructure and maintenance development
- Development of productive resources
- Human resource development

It sets forth ten goals which illustrate the one-nation concept of development that the RMI continues to embrace:

1. Operating in an Interdependent World
2. Enhanced Socio-Economic Self Reliance
3. An Educated People
4. A Healthy People
5. A Productive People
6. A Law-abiding People
7. A God Loving People
8. Respecting Individual Freedom and Fundamental Human Rights
9. Respecting Culture and Traditions
10. Environmental Sustainability

## **ANNEX 6: RMI CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION PRINCIPLES**

For Marshall Islands, key principles that underpin that country's approach to adaptation, are:

1. Right to remain: citizens of RMI have a natural right to remain in their homelands and this right should be protected;
2. Resilience imperative: resilience must be a fundamental focus across all sectors and areas of atoll development; building resilience to climate and disaster risks is an imperative given the high and unique vulnerability of atolls;
3. Integrated adaptation: climate change is complex and multidimensional, therefore efforts to adapt must be multidimensional and integrated, considering both the physical and non-physical;

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid (footnote 9)

4. Knowledge first: RMI would follow a knowledge first principle, using science and evidence-based decision making and identifying key knowledge gaps;
5. Adaptive capacity: adaptive capacity needs to be strengthened to improve the ability to respond to changing circumstances; as conditions are likely to deteriorate, atoll nations will need to be dynamic in their ability to adapt;
6. Consensus and inclusion: adaptation should go hand-in-hand with consultation and consensus building, so that the views of all stakeholders are taken into account; and
7. Technology and tradition: adaptation approaches should embrace innovation and modern technology as well as traditional knowledge.

## **ANNEX 7: HUMAN RESOURCE CHALLENGES**

1. Specific challenges identified for human resource development in Small Island States:
2. Small pool of qualified, skilled people available in the labour market—as a result of being a small country with a relatively low level of education.
3. Critical person risk – as a result of the small and shallow pool, there is critical person risk of individuals who hold exceptional institutional knowledge. If these people were to move on, critical functions would not be fulfilled.
4. Proliferation of projects – in the last decade there has been a proliferation of development partners and projects, resulting in very high demands on the time and attention of key personnel. These demands take the form of administrative requirements, hosting missions, negotiations with development partners and travel to off-island meetings and training courses. This impacts heavily on the capacity of the small professional-level workforce and creates a sense of fatigue.
5. *Ad hoc* training courses and meetings for RMI representatives are offered by development partners. This is not coordinated between development partners, often key people are away for too much time. Short training courses offered either internationally or in-country offer no follow up or embedding of learnings. Training is often poorly targeted, lacking context and too short to have lasting impact.
6. Scholarships are often not targeted to workforce needs—there is no systematic linkage of scholarships and training programs with the strategic workforce needs of the country in many areas, especially the science, engineering and technology.
7. Out migration/ brain drain – many of those who gain qualifications overseas will be attracted to the higher salaries, the lifestyle and the professional culture in the US or in other countries. A significant gap in recruitment of professionals is that there is no direct connection between individual agencies and the students studying overseas to allow recruitment of Marshallese nationals into professional positions. Of obvious concern is the loss of young educated Marshallese people who either choose not to return to the Marshall Islands upon completion of their studies, or else who leave after working there for a short time.
8. Poor recruitment and performance management processes—rarely are the human resource needs of an organisation systematically identified and recruitment of new staff is often done without a clear job description. Additionally, employee performance management systems within the public sector are

inadequate in terms of setting expectations, performing fair and professional performance evaluations and positive or negative consequences for performance.

9. Low participation of women in the sector—particularly the case in the sciences, technical and engineering fields.