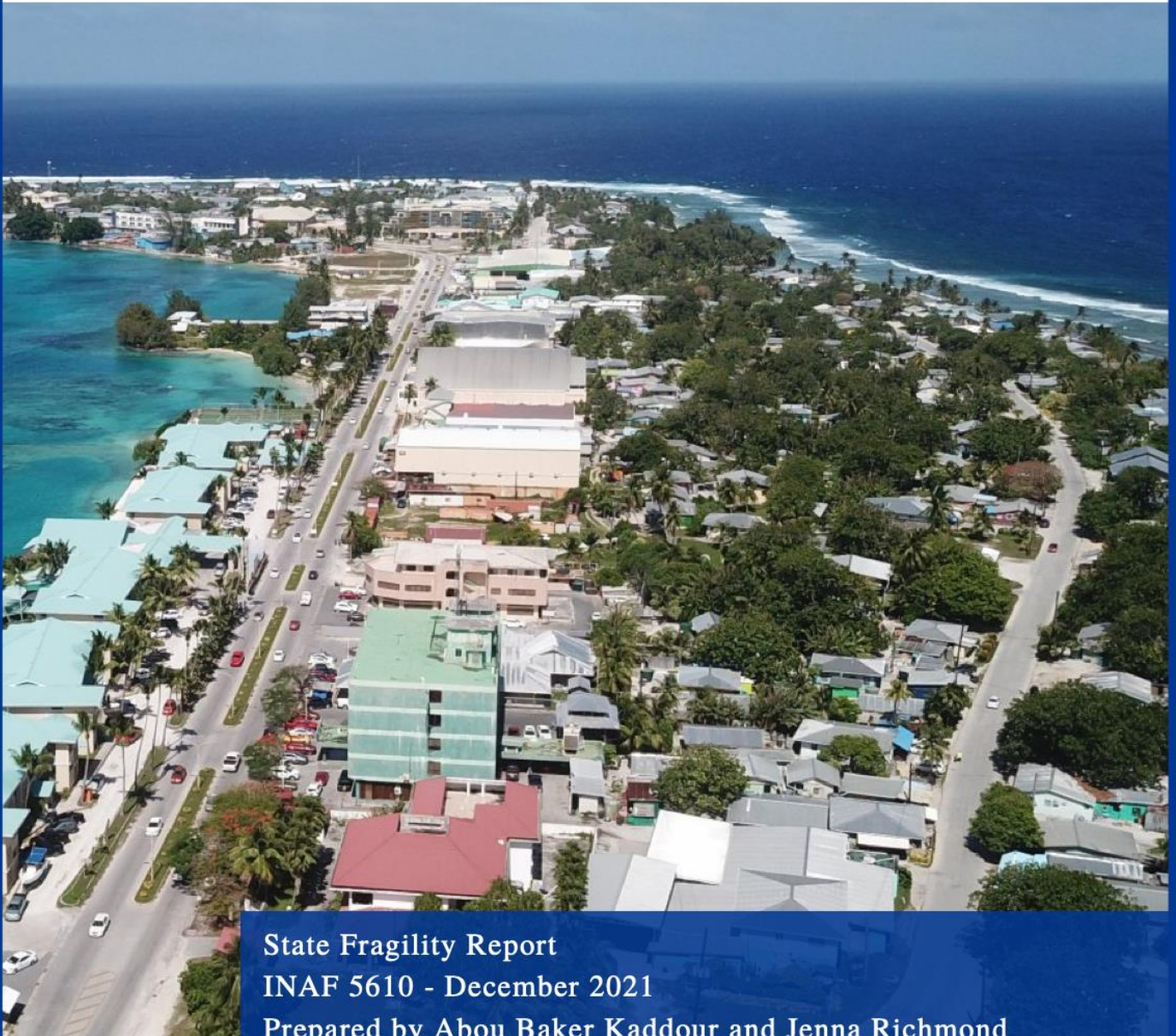




Republic of the Marshall Islands



State Fragility Report

INAF 5610 - December 2021

Prepared by Abou Baker Kaddour and Jenna Richmond

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Disclaimer

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Major Acronyms

ADB: Asian Development Bank	MOCIA: Ministry of Culture and Internal Affairs
ALC: Authority, Legitimacy, and Capacity	MOHSS: Ministry of Health and Human Services
CIFP: Country Indicators for Foreign Policy	NGO: Non-governmental organization
COFA: Compact of Free Association	OAG: Office of the Auditor-General
CSO: Civil Society Organization	PNA: Parties to the Nauru Agreement
EEZ: Exclusive Economic Zone	RMI: Republic of the Marshall Islands
EPPSO: Economic Policy, Planning and Statistics Office	SIDS: Small Island Developing States
FCAS: Fragile and Conflict Affected-Situations	SOE: State-owned enterprise
FDI: Foreign Direct Investment	SPC: Secretariat of the Pacific Community
GBV: Gender Based Violence	UN: United Nations
GDP: Gross Domestic Product	UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund
JEMFAC: Joint Economic Management and Financial Accountability Committee	US: United States of America
MICNGO: Marshall Islands Council of Non-Governmental Organizations	US-AG: United States Army Garrison
MIMA: Marshall Islands Mayors Association	USAID: United States Agency for International Development
MIMRA: Marshall Islands Marine Resource Authority	WB: World Bank
	WUTMI: Women United Together Marshall Islands
	YTYHI: Youth to Youth Health Initiative

Executive Summary

Located in the central Pacific Ocean, the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) is a small island developing state (SIDS) that faces growing fragility. While not listed on most fragile state indices nor imparting negative spillover effect on neighboring countries, the RMI's state of fragility requires attention from the international community in three main aspects. First, SIDS feel the effects of climate change most acutely and serve as an early warning system for other countries. Second, the RMI is a beneficial case study in terms of (1) illustrating climate change adaptation processes relevant to SIDS and other island states and (2) demonstrating techniques on how to garner the international community's support and aid in climate change adaptation. Finally, the RMI's case of fragility illustrates the need for policymakers to look beyond symptoms when assessing state fragility and focus on structural causes.

With the significance of the RMI's fragility established, the RMI is currently facing a moderate level of fragility with primary drivers including governance, economy, and environment clusters. The country is stuck within a capacity trap with low capacity, economic dependency, and isomorphic mimicry. This cycle is perpetuated by the government's reliance on aid actors, creating a feedback loop that reinforces government ineffectiveness. Using four six-month scenarios as a guide, three policy options have been created for this report's end user, the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The policy options include: (1) a disaster risk insurance scheme to support resiliency to natural disasters; (2) an entrepreneurship program to diversify the private sector; and (3) a group of CSOs to collaborate with the government and the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) to strengthen service delivery. Moreover, as a key financier of development projects in the Asia Pacific region, the ADB holds a strong potential for impact due to their acute awareness and attention to SIDS. With a relationship spanning over 30 years, the ADB has the knowledge and capacity to support the RMI in a path towards strengthened capacity, legitimacy, and authority.

Map of the Republic of the Marshall Islands¹



Methodology²

The methodology employed to produce the analysis presented in this report follows the Country Indicators for Foreign Policy's (CIFP) framework, operating out of Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada. Qualitative and quantitative data on six structural clusters of indicators as well as key stakeholders and events were collected to capture the current status, as well as trends, in the RMI's fragility. These clusters are security and crime, human development, economic development, demography and environment. Data and information collection relied on mixed primary and secondary sources. To note, limitations arose during data collection due to a lack of up-to-date sources and lack of inclusion in particular indexes. The data gathered within the six clusters, and beyond, was then reprocessed and amalgamated into the ALC (Authority, Legitimacy, Capacity) framework. A detailed description of the ALC is available in the Structural Analysis Section (p. 14). The outcomes of the ALC analysis were informed by academic literature on fragile states pertaining to small developing states, aid effectiveness, isomorphic mimicry, and capacity traps in fragile states (Annex 1). Scenarios were then formulated to aid in deriving three policy options for the end user.

Background

The RMI is located near the equator in the Pacific Ocean as part of the Micronesian group of islands³. The 181 km² of total landmass is divided amongst 29 atolls^a and 5 individual islands, covering a total of 470,000km² of ocean territory and 1,900,000 km² of Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)⁴. Almost all atolls and islands are less than 200 meters wide, and 2 meters above sea level⁵. Geographically remote, the closest economic centers are Honolulu and Tokyo which are both approximately 3,200 kilometers away⁶. The RMI gained independence in 1986 after 42 years under United States Trusteeship. The latter concluded by the signing of a Compact of Free Association (COFA), under which the United States (US) provides financial assistance and is responsible for defense⁷. The COFA is set to be renegotiated in 2024 and the US and the RMI have established a Trust Fund that would continue to provide financial assistance in case of cessation of COFA payments⁸. With this long history of aid from the US, the RMI economy has become highly dependent on government expenditure. Fisheries are an important economic driver, and the country hosts the world's largest tuna transshipment port in the capital Majuro⁹. However, natural structural issues such as lack of land, low soil nutrients, remoteness and import dependence contribute to a lack of economic development and diversification in the island nation. Climate change further exacerbates the RMI's fragile economic situation. High levels of youth unemployment and outward migration to the US are also notable stress factors. Furthermore, the government lacks capacity in addressing most of these previously mentioned issues.

Stakeholders

The stakeholders most relevant to the proposed policy options are identified below. In addition, Annex 2 includes an expanded list of primary and secondary stakeholders.

^a An atoll is a ring-shaped coral reef, island, or series of islets.

End User

The ADB was established in 1966 with the aim of expanding economic growth and cooperation among Asian countries. It is comprised of 68 members— 49 of which are regional and 19 are non-regional¹⁰. The RMI is a regional member and as of April 2021, the ADB’s portfolio included a total of 84 projects worth \$197.42 million, in the RMI¹¹ (see Annex 3). Beyond its general developmental mandate, the ADB specifically addresses SIDS in their Strategy 2030¹² plan and their Fragile and Conflict Affected-Situations (FCAS) and SIDS Approach, in which the RMI is classified as both a SIDS and FCAS¹³. In addition, the Pacific Approach, 2021-2025 serves as an operational framework for 12 Pacific Island countries and tackles Pacific-Island specific areas of focus such as supporting private sector operations, education and skills, social sector services, disaster risk reduction, and economic recovery¹⁴.

Primary Internal Stakeholders

Executive Branch: The head of the RMI government is President David Kabua who was elected in November 2019. As a presidential republic with non-partisan parliamentary elections, the RMI has unofficial groupings that act as coalitions as opposed to official political parties¹⁵. Some influential families are tied to particular coalitions (see Annex 6), however, there is no clear power basis for coalitions allowing senators to easily move between coalitions¹⁶. With only local and national level government, the Executive Branch exerts a substantial amount of influence.

Legislative Branch: The RMI’s legislative branch consists of a bicameral parliament of the Nitijela and Council of Iroij. The Nitijela, a body of 33 elected senators, carries most legislative power¹⁷. In contrast, the Council of Iroij consists of 12 tribal chiefs who presides over customary law and traditional practices, including land tenure¹⁸. While the legislative powers of the Council of Iroij are quite limited, the existence of the Council in the Constitution preserves space for traditional systems to be maintained.

Government Departments: The Marshall Islands Marine Resource Authority (MIMRA), Ministry of Culture and Internal Affairs (MOCIA), Ministry of Health and Human Services (MOHSS), Office of the Auditor-General (OAG), and the President’s Office, which houses Economic Policy, Planning and Statistics Office (EPPSO) are very influential departments. MIMRA manages fisheries which form a significant portion of the government revenues¹⁹. EPPSO produces various census, food security and poverty related reports. In addition, human development efforts are mostly housed with MOHSS and MOCIA, including the Youth Services Bureau and Gender and Development Office. OAG, on the other hand, is an independent agency that conducts audits of all departments.

Civil society: Civil society groups are a key element of service delivery in the RMI. Local groups such as Women United Together Marshall Islands (WUTMI) and Youth-to-Youth Health Initiative (YTYHI) often fill in government service delivery gaps. In addition, civil society actors such as the Marshall Islands Mayors Association (MIMA) help strengthen local governance capacity and facilitate annual dialogue with national leadership²⁰ while the Marshall Islands Council of Non-Governmental Organizations (MICNGO) works toward expanding the capacity of local civil society organizations²¹.

Pacific International Incorporation (PII): Owned by Jerry Kramer and his family, PII is the largest private sector employer in the RMI²². The construction company owns multiple properties in the RMI and

in Guam²³. PII has also conducted high-level construction projects such as the Embassy of the United States in Majuro and the security upgrades of the embassy. More information can be found in Annex 2.

Primary External

United States: Under COFA, the US is responsible for all defense related matters in the RMI, as well as providing about US\$70 million in assistance annually²⁴. The current COFA agreement is set to be renegotiated in 2024²⁵. While the relationship with the US and the RMI is mostly positive, the issue of compensation for nuclear tests conducted by the US on the islands between 1946 and 1958 is a source of disagreement.²⁶ Other key stakeholders that fall underneath the US as a whole include:

- *JEMFAC:* The Joint Economic Management and Financial Accountability Committee manages and promotes the effective use of the financial assistance provided under COFA.²⁷
- *US-Army Garrison Kwajalein:* The US Army Garrison (US-AG) on the Kwajalein atoll is a US army base that hosts the Ronald Reagan Ballistic Missile Defense Test Site²⁸. An agreement allows the US to use the atoll base until 2066 with an option of extension until 2086.²⁹
- *US Embassy:* US Ambassador to the RMI, Roxanne Cabral, is responsible for US diplomatic engagement with the RMI.

Marshallese Diaspora in the United States: Marshallese can live and work freely in the US under COFA, making it the primary destination for emigration. Almost one third of the Marshallese population live in the US, producing remittances which formed 13% of the RMI's GDP in 2019³⁰. Establishing a clear trend on the extent of the diaspora's political involvement was not possible due to limited data. It is expected, however, that the importance and role of the Marshallese diaspora will grow as emigration increases.

Taiwan^b: The RMI recognizes Taiwan as an independent state and maintains a strong diplomatic and economic relationship with the country. Taiwan is also considered one of the largest donors to the RMI³¹.

International agencies: The RMI maintains active relationships with many multilateral organizations, especially for foreign aid purposes. The World Bank (WB), the ADB, UN Development Program are some of the most active organizations in the RMI.

SPC: The Secretariat of the Pacific Community is part of the Pacific Community, a development organization in the Pacific with 26 country and territory members³². With a focus on technical and scientific work, the SPC supports various regional development initiatives focused on topics such as gender and youth. The latter is significant in the RMI context as the SPC's Pacific Youth Development Framework 2014-2023³³ helps provide much needed focus on RMI youth issues.

Fragility Risk Assessment

Legend			
Level of Risk	Low	Medium	High
<i>Measures level of risk with respect to its effect on overall fragility</i>	<i>No significant risk (effect) on fragility</i>	<i>Poses risks on fragility, but not significant</i>	<i>Poses significant risk on fragility</i>

^b The authors do not seek to express opinions regarding the status of Taiwan; and recognize it in line with its status per the United Nations.

Direction of Risk <i>Measures trend, irrespective of risk levels (can be high risk, yet improving)</i>	↑ Improving; positive effects	● Stable; no significant effects	↓ Worsening; negative effects
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This Fragility Risk Assessment includes six cluster tables with key structural indicators, the cluster's impact on fragility (Level of Risk) and the cluster's general trend direction (Direction of Risk). Through cluster analysis, the primary drivers of fragility in the RMI are economic development, governance, and the environment. In addition, the secondary drivers of fragility are demography and population, security and crime, and human development. Additional information on clusters can be found in Annex 6.

Primary Drivers of Fragility

Economic Development ↓			
Indicator	Decadal Trend		
Growth in Gross Domestic Product (GDP), annual percentage change ³⁴ <i>World Development Indicators</i> <i>2020 rate in Parenthesis</i> ³⁵	2009	2014	2019
	3.2	-0.95	6.5 (-3.3)
Central Government expense (% of GDP) ³⁶ <i>World Development Indicators</i> <i>Measures dependence of the economy on government spending</i>	2009	2014	2019
	56.5	50.0	62.6
Central government debt, total (% of GDP) ³⁷ <i>World Development Indicators</i>	2008	2012	2016
	63.0	49.2	48.7
Foreign direct investment, net inflows (% of GDP) <i>Row 1: Marshall Islands</i> ³⁸ <i>Row 2: Average of Pacific SIDS</i> ³⁹ <i>World Development Indicators</i>	2009	2014	2019
	9.8	4.97	1.7
	7.2	5.6	4.1
Net ODA received (% of central government expenses) ⁴⁰ <i>World Development Indicators</i> <i>Measures dependence of a country on foreign aid</i>	2009	2014	2019
	72.3	61.2	44.1
Net ODA received (% of GNI) <i>Row 1: Marshall Islands</i> ⁴¹ <i>Row 2: Average of Pacific SIDS</i> ⁴² <i>World Development Indicators</i>	2009	2014	2019
	32.2	24.4	22.5
	12.7	9.8	9.96
Personal Remittances Received (% of GDP) <i>Row 1: Marshall Islands</i> ⁴³ <i>Row2: Average of Pacific SIDS</i> ⁴⁴ <i>World Development Indicators</i>	2009	2014	2019
	15.8	14.3	13.13
	7.8	6.96	7.6

Remoteness, dependence on foreign aid, and lack of high value addition from private sector activities affect the RMI's prospects of economic development. The RMI government is the largest employer in the country, followed by the US-AG Kwajalein⁴⁵. Almost all 'large' economic activity is run by the government through 11 State-Owned-Enterprises (SOE)⁴⁶, resulting in large dependence on the government expenditure for economic activity. Most SOEs have negative financial flows and require

subsidies to maintain operations⁴⁷. However, MIMRA is the exception and maintains positive financial standing through selling fishing rights and operating the world's largest tuna transshipment in the Majuro Port⁴⁸. Revenues from fishing rights form 14% of government revenues⁴⁹, making it an important economic driver. While the government is putting considerable efforts into developing the tuna industry (see Annex 6), revenues and returns are not enough to mitigate the negative effects of other sectors.

Geologically, atolls and islands are mainly limestone or sand. This results in poor soil quality which inhibits agricultural expansion and diversification⁵⁰ and limits agriculture to subsistence and very low export activity⁵¹ (see Annex 6). High transportation cost and labor shortage in rural islands are also cited as impediments to expanding rural economic agricultural activity⁵². Rural islands depend on fisheries for subsistence as well (see Annex 6). MIMRA supports fishing activities by transporting fish to be sold in urban fish markets of Ebeye, on Kwajalein Atoll, and in Majuro, the capital⁵³. However, there are still issues with fuel prices and availability that sometimes inhibit vessels from collecting fish from outer islands for sale in urban fish markets⁵⁴.

The RMI also faces difficulties due to a small private sector. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is inhibited due to laws preventing purchase of land by non-Marshallese (see Annex 6)⁵⁵. Consequently, a large majority of the private sector is influenced by Jerry Kramer and his family, owners of Pacific International Incorporation, and other many other businesses⁵⁶ (see Annex 2). Also, access to land is more challenging as land for private use is rented through agreements between owners and renters, while for public use, it is acquired by providing compensation for landowners⁵⁷. The absence of land registries⁵⁸ further complicates the ability of acquiring land for private use.

Environment ↓			
Indicator	Value		
Lack of Coping Capacity score on INFORM Risk Index⁵⁹ <i>Measures the coping capacity to natural disasters in a country. Scale: 1 (best) to 10 (worst).</i>	6.2		
Disaster Risk Reduction score on the INFORM Risk Index⁶⁰ <i>Measures the availability/readiness of disaster risk reduction measures in a country. Scale: 1 (best) to 10 (worst).</i>	7.3		
Physical Vulnerability to Climate Change Index⁶¹ <i>Ranks countries-based vulnerability to extreme weather events, as well as expected long-term effects from climate change.</i>	2 nd		
Average Sea Level Rise⁶²	Average of 7mm annual rise since 1993.		
Environmental Performance Index Score⁶³ <i>Measures environmental performance based on subset of indicators that include policy, regulations, physical status etc.</i>	30.8		
Percentage of population with access to electricity in 2019⁶⁴	Total	Urban	Rural
	95%	96%	92%

The environment is a major concern for fragility in the RMI, both structurally, and in relation to the country's ability to respond to environmental challenges, including natural disasters. Water

contamination, the prevalence of natural disasters, and sea level rise are the main factors of environmental fragility in the RMI. In its previous responses to natural disasters the government openly asked for, and relied heavily on, international organizations' assistance.⁶⁵ Rising seawater levels, floods, and king waves threaten contaminating freshwater aquifers, which are already scarce, and contaminate^c the only water treatment system in the country which is already constrained⁶⁶. Moreover, water around the Kwajalein atoll is contaminated due to sewage and waste disposal, and fish caught around those areas were found to have high levels of metal contamination making them not fit for human consumption⁶⁷.

Environmental degradation and climate change threaten subsistence and economic agricultural activity⁶⁸. The RMI also experiences regional discrepancies in environmental conditions: the north gets less rainfall than the south, and therefore is more prone to drought⁶⁹. This results in internally displaced people⁷⁰. Climate change is expected to change sea currents and result in conditions that would push tuna fish to the high seas, taking away the RMI leverage in using its transshipment port and selling fishing rights⁷¹. Also, islands affected by nuclear tests have yet to recover from nuclear contamination⁷². The government, however, is very active in addressing environmental issues, within the constraints of its capacity. The government already has in place a National Climate Change Policy Framework, as well as Long Term Climate Strategy, that seeks to respond to short-term and long-term risks of climate change⁷³. Its National Environment Management Strategy 2017-2022 also tries to address immediate, as well as long-term issues of environmental degradation⁷⁴.

Governance •			
Indicator	Value/Decadal Trend		
Government Effectiveness⁷⁵	2010	2015	2020
<i>World Governance Indicators</i> <i>Measures perceptions of the quality of public services and quality of policy formulation and implementation. Scale: -2.5 (low) to 2.5 (high).</i>	-1.3	-1.6	-1.4
Control of Corruption Estimate⁷⁶	2010	2015	2020
<i>World Governance Indicators</i> <i>Measures perceptions of the extent to which public power is exercised for private gain. Scale: -2.5 (low) to 2.5 (high).</i>	-0.3	- 0.1	0.0
Voice and Accountability (of citizens) in Decision Making⁷⁷	2010	2015	2020
<i>World Governance Indicators</i> <i>Measures perceptions of citizens' participation in government and freedoms of expression and association. Scale: -2.5 (low) to 2.5 (high).</i>	1.1	1.2	1.1
CPIA Quality of Public Administration⁷⁸	2011	2016	2020
<i>World Governance Indicators</i> <i>Captures the extent to which civilian central government staff is structured to design and implement government policy and deliver services effectively. Scale: 1 (low) to 6 (high).</i>	2.0	2.0	2.0

^c Although freshwater availability is a major issue, projects are underway to address this issue. See Annex 6.

CPIA Budgetary and Financial Management⁷⁹	2011	2016	2020
<i>World Governance Indicators</i> <i>Captures the extent to which there is a comprehensive and credible budget linked to key policies, effective financial management systems, and timely and accurate accounting and fiscal reporting. Scale: 1 (low) to 6 (high).</i>	2.5	2.5	2.5
Proportion of seats held by Women in National Parliaments (%)⁸⁰	2010	2015	2020
<i>World Development Indicators</i>	3.0	9.1	6.1

The RMI's democratic system functions relatively well with elections held regularly and peaceful transfers of power between governments⁸¹, however, the government struggles in terms of policy implementation, resources, and financial management. As such, governance is a primary driver of fragility and ranked high risk and stable because the aforementioned issues are chronic and significantly impact service delivery, rent creation, and climate resiliency. For example, CPIA rankings have been stagnant since 2011⁸² which points to the government's limited robustness. This is significant as there have been multiple external aid projects targeting RMI governance (see Annex 2 & 3). Additionally, RMI's 2020-2030 National Strategic Plan reveals that almost half of government ministries lack directional plans which are crucial to maintaining sufficient capacity to implement key policies and strategies⁸³. This forward outlook is important as COFA grants have been reducing in size over the years creating greater financial strain on government functioning⁸⁴. Improved financial management is also necessary due to corruption being a chronic issue. The Office of the Auditor-General has invested in various employee training programs such as fraud examiner certifications⁸⁵ and prosecuted more fraud cases in 2019 and 2020⁸⁶. Nonetheless, high-ranking public officials are rarely prosecuted⁸⁷. To note, there is not enough available information to distinguish if corruption is concentrated in certain ministries.

In addition, with a small, homogenous population, the RMI political sphere is tight-knit and personal. Most Presidents come from influential clans creating an elite interest in maintaining status quo (see Annex 6). In terms of citizens' interest, the voice and accountability indicator points to moderately good representation in the political sphere. MIMA, for example, has annual dialogue with the national government via the RMI Executive Leadership Conference with mayors often raising local level concerns. However, equal gender representation is poor and signifies a larger crosscutting horizontal inequality of gender inequality. For instance, efforts in 2017 to adopt electoral quotas for women in the Nitijela failed alongside non-discrimination legislature against sexual orientation and disabilities⁸⁸.

Secondary Drivers of Fragility:

Human Development •			
Indicator	Value/Decadal Trend		
Human Development Indicator⁸⁹	2017	2018	2019
<i>UNDP Human Development Report 2020</i> <i>Composite index of key human development measures. Index score of 0-1, with increasing scores indicating greater human development.</i>	0.699	0.702	0.704

School Enrollment, Primary Level	2011	2015	2020
<i>Row 1: Net Enrollment Percentage⁹⁰</i>	94.1	73.2	-
<i>Row 2: Gross Enrollment Percentage⁹¹</i>	94.7	84.7	74.9
<i>World Development Indicators</i>			
Infant mortality (per 1000 live births)⁹²	2009	2014	2019
<i>World Development Indicators</i>	31.7	30.0	26.4
Percentage of Children under 5 years of age who are stunted, modelled estimates⁹³	2010	2015	2020
<i>FAOSTAT</i>	37.6	35	32.2
Prevalence of Obesity in the Adult Population (18 years and older), Percentage⁹⁴	2006	2011	2016
<i>FAOSTAT</i>	47.3	50.1	52.9
CPIA Gender Equality⁹⁵	2011	2016	2020
<i>Measures institutions and programs that exist to enforce gender equality laws and policies</i>	3.0	3.0	3.0
<i>World Development Indicators</i>			
Poverty	National: 7.9, Rural: 22.1		
<i>Row 1: Basic Needs Poverty, (% of total population)⁹⁶</i>	Majuro: 16, Kwajalein: 13, Rural: 70		
<i>Row 2: Distribution of Poor by Area as a percentage⁹⁷</i>			
<i>RMI HIES 2021</i>			
People using at Least Basic Drinking Water Services	2010	2015	2020
<i>Row 1: Percentage of Total Population⁹⁸</i>	88.0	88.3	88.6
<i>Row 2: Percentage of Rural Population⁹⁹</i>	94.1	94.3	94.4
<i>World Development Indicators</i>			
People Using at least Basic Sanitation Services	2010	2015	2020
<i>Row 1: Percentage of Total Population¹⁰⁰</i>	81.7	83.0	84.2
<i>Row 2: Percentage of Rural Population¹⁰¹</i>	59.0	58.9	58.8
<i>World Development Indicators</i>			

Human development poses a medium, stable risk to fragility in the RMI. While indicators such as HDI, life expectancy¹⁰² and infant mortality are improving, trends for gender equality and rural/urban service delivery are stagnant while food security worsens. As noted above, gender equality is a significant issue. Despite gender parity in school enrollment, the RMI has incredibly high rates of GBV as 48% of women have experienced physical violence by a partner in their lifetime¹⁰³. With the CPIA gender equality rating remaining stagnant in the past 10 years, the government does not have sufficient capacity to address this issue. As of 2017, the Office of Gender and Development faced limited financial and human resources¹⁰⁴. Also, the RMI National Strategic Plan 2020-2030 does not state any overall sector strategy for gender to further progress the 2015 National Gender Mainstreaming Policy and the 2019 Gender Equality Act¹⁰⁵.

The rural-urban divide is another key issue. Due to remoteness and infrastructure, the government has difficulties reaching the rural population easily. Lower rates of basic sanitation services and higher rates of poverty in rural communities illustrate a service delivery gap to approximately a quarter of the population. Nonetheless, the government is vocal about seeking assistance for improving rural

development¹⁰⁶. In addition to the rural-urban divide, the RMI's remoteness effects health care and food security trends. The MOHSS has acknowledges this issue in their sectoral strategic plans and they also provide annual diabetes and cancer funding support to Kwajalein Diak Coalition, a local NGO that promotes healthy living¹⁰⁷. Also, food security is addressed in the recent 2021-2031 Agricultural Sector Plan¹⁰⁸, however, climate change related storms and droughts are likely to exacerbate food insecurity.

Security and Crime •			
Indicator	Value/Decadal Trend		
Political Stability/No Violence¹⁰⁹ <i>World Governance Indicators; scores in percentiles. Measures political stability and violence.</i>	2009	2014	2019
	96.68	82.86	77.4
Number of Sworn-in Police Officers¹¹⁰ <i>Measures ability of law enforcement.</i>	200+		
Organized Crime Index's Criminality Score¹¹¹ <i>Measures the prevalence of organized crime on a scale of 1 to 10 (best to worst).</i>	2.32		
Organized Crime Index's Resilience Score¹¹² <i>Measures resiliency to organized crime, including political willingness to fight organized crime. Scale: 1 (best) to 10 (worst).</i>	5.04		

While security and crime are not a significant concern for the RMI's fragility, the lack of capacity to address security threats, including natural disasters, is of concern. National security is primarily provided by the US, with the US maintaining military presence at the RMI's Ronald Reagan Missile Test Range, and its accompanying US-AG in Kwajalein¹¹³. The RMI continues to demand additional compensations for nuclear tests conducted by the US on the islands, however, the US has so far been reluctant to reopen compensation claims¹¹⁴. While this might create political tension between both states, US military presence on Kwajalein is maintained, regardless of COFA, through 2066, with the possibility of extension until 2086¹¹⁵. Natural disasters are also a major internal security concern and are cited to produce internally displaced persons¹¹⁶. Although the RMI subscribes to the Pacific Catastrophe Risk Insurance Company (PCRIC), the coverage is not comprehensive of all-natural disasters, and does not include private citizens and business in its policy¹¹⁷.

In relation to crime and legislation, drug smuggling and human trafficking are cited by various sources as security concerns¹¹⁸. The RMI does not have sufficient capacity to address these issues, however, they are not at fragility inducing levels. Likewise, the RMI has had difficulty addressing GBV due to capacity constraints¹¹⁹ despite passing a Domestic Violence Prevention and Protection Act in 2011. Further improvements have also been called for regarding anti-gender discrimination legislation and strengthening capacity to address human trafficking¹²⁰. With no major developments expected on these cluster issues, security and crime is ranked stable. To note, although the political stability indicator has a decreasing trend, it is difficult to establish a clear trend since the scores are measured in percentiles. Thus, the decrease is potentially relative to other countries which improved, rather than an absolute decrease.

Demography and Population ↓			
Indicator	Value/Decadal Trend		
Population, Total¹²¹	2010	2015	2020

<i>World Development Indicators</i>	56,361	57,444	59,194
Youth Bulge	2011	2016	2018
<i>Row 1: Percentage of Youth (15-24) in Total Population¹²²</i>	18	19	21
<i>Row 2: Percentage of Children (<14) and Youth (15-24) in Total Population¹²³</i>	58	58	59
<i>Pacific Data Hub (2011-2018- Estimated Values, 2019-2021- Forecasted values)</i>			
Dependency Ratio (15-64)¹²⁴	2011	2015	2018
<i>Pacific Data Hub (2011-2018- Estimated Values, 2019-2021- Forecasted values)</i>	72	73	72
Urban Population (% of Total Population)¹²⁵	2010	2015	2020
<i>World Development Indicators</i>	73.6	75.8	77.8
Life Expectancy at Birth¹²⁶	2010	2015	2019
<i>UNDP Human Development Report 2020</i>	71.8	73.1	74.1
Ethnic Makeup of the RMI¹²⁷	90% Marshallese; remaining 10% Includes American, Filipino, Chinese, New Zealander, Australian, Korean other Micronesian, Kiribati, and Fijian		
<i>US Department of State 2008</i>			
Physical Distribution of Total Population (% of Total Population)¹²⁸	Majuro- 52.3%, Kwajalein 21.5%, 26.2% Rural		
<i>RMI 2011 Census</i>			
Population, Marshallese residing in the United States¹²⁹	2000	2010	
<i>US 2010 Census Brief</i>	6,650	22,434	

Demographic factors are a secondary driver of fragility. Although life expectancy is improving, the cluster's overall trend is worsening due to migration and the youth bulge. Over the past 50 years, internal migration from rural atolls to the urban atolls has resulted in over three-quarters of the population now living on Majuro and Kwajalein¹³⁰. This creates strain on urban infrastructure. In addition, the poverty distribution and basic service delivery indicators illustrate how this unequal rural-urban divide has become a source of horizontal inequality. Regarding external migration, trends contributed to dramatically lower annual population growth rates according to the EPPSO Census Report¹³¹. Most of the Marshallese diaspora live in the US as habitual residents due to immigration privileges granted through COFA. The upcoming 2024 COFA renegotiations may alter these immigration privileges, however, other factors such as livability of the land¹³² and lack of jobs¹³³ contribute to emigration push factors.

Another key demographic factor is the youth bulge. Various definitions exist such as using the 0-14 category¹³⁴ or a threshold of the 15-24 age category exceeding 20% of the total population size¹³⁵. Regardless, the RMI clearly faces a youth bulge with 59% of the population below the age of 25 and 37% below the age of 14. This increases pressure on social services such as schooling and childcare¹³⁶ as well as youth unemployment which was 63% in 2014¹³⁷. In response, the government created the RMI

National Youth Policy 2009-2014 and a National Action Plan on Youth Employment 2017-2019¹³⁸, however, both are outdated. A new youth policy was expected in 2019¹³⁹, yet it is still under development which reflects poorly on the MOCIA's Youth Services Bureau. The delay may also speak to a continued lack of political will, which UNICEF noted in relation to the 2009-2014 policy¹⁴⁰.

Structural Analysis

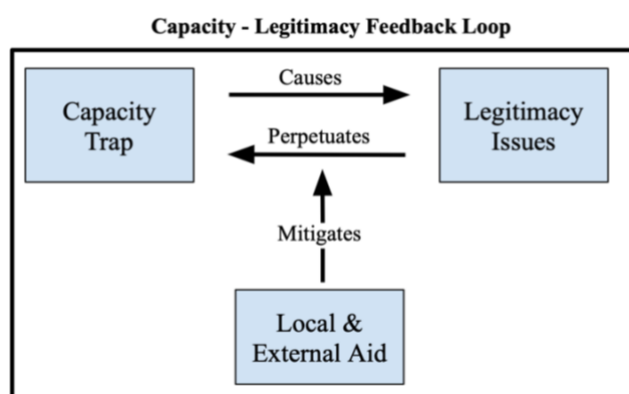
Using the CIPF's framework, ALC analysis has been conducted to rank each category's impact on the RMI's fragility and indicate future trends^e. The ALC Model table shows rankings and ALC definitions and Annex 4 presents an ALC breakdown by cluster.

Capacity: The RMI is stuck within a capacity trap, which refers to "countries that have failed to improve state capacity to provide security and social services and that consequently have failed also to establish state legitimacy."¹⁴¹ As a SIDS, however, the RMI diverges from Takeuchi et al. (2011) concept by only lacking capacity in relation to service delivery, not security (see Annex 1). The RMI government maintains its main functions, albeit in a poor manner that is highly dependent on local and international aid actors. Structural constraints create challenges to expanding economic activity, building resiliency to economic shocks, and service delivery. Additionally, capacity issues stem from chronic governance issues such budgetary and fiscal management and public administration quality. Together, these propel the Capacity-Legitimacy Feedback Loop (see Annex 5 for comprehensive diagram). The ADB notes that the government has been supportive of key institution reforms, yet "local capacity constraints present challenges to this process"¹⁴². Therefore, aid effectiveness is primarily hindered by capacity constraints rather than political will, although political will is still influenced by corruption issues and local elites desire to maintain power and status quo. Furthermore, capacity is worsening due to the growing severity of climate change effects and declining COFA grants. With COFA being renegotiated in three years, funding may reduce further. Aid

ALC Model ^d	
Authority	The power to enact binding legislation over a population, possession of a monopoly over the legitimate use of force on national territory, and the capability to provide a stable, secure environment in which public, private and civil society interests can be realized.
	Status: High & Stable
Legitimacy	The ability of a state to generate public loyalty, support, and acceptance of citizens through a voluntary, reciprocal arrangement of effective governance and citizenship, and the international recognition thereof.
	Status: Moderate-High & Stable
Capacity	The power or faculty of a state to mobilize and use resources, a basic competence in political and economic management and administration, and in regulating domestic affairs and conducting international transactions.
	Status: Low & Falling

^d Definitions are from INAF 5610 PowerPoint slides produced by D. Carment (2021). Online access not available.

^e As the RMI is not included in most major fragile state indices, ALC rankings have been produced primarily through analysis of quantitative data and qualitative data, including events-based analysis.



dependency will persist, however, as the RMI relies on other donors, to a lesser extent, like Japan, Taiwan, Australia, and the ADB¹⁴³.

Legitimacy: Another contrast to Takeuchi et al.'s capacity trap is that the RMI has not failed to establish legitimacy because civil society and international organizations are filling service gaps. For example, WUTMI created the first center to support women and children's survivors of

violence¹⁴⁴ and the YTYHI supports prevention of teen pregnancy and substance abuse. By being a vocal advocate for assistance and helping provide a secure environment, the state's support for these types of organizations helps enhance the government's legitimacy¹⁴⁵. However, this service delivery mitigation is problematic since isomorphic mimicry¹⁴⁶ persists while output legitimacy is maintained, and bypassing government institutions risks long-term fragmentation of aid and further weakening of domestic capacity¹⁴⁷ (see Annex 1).

Authority: Similar to legitimacy, the RMI diverges from Takeuchi et al.'s (2011) capacity trap concept as security and crime are not major drivers of fragility. The RMI's national defense is maintained by the US, and they do not face any border conflict issues due to being a SIDS. Although there is small crime, there are no major internal conflicts, and the government has a legitimate monopoly on the use of force. This aligns with small developing states literature (see Carment et al. in Annex 1) which argues that these states rarely face fragility in all ALC areas, and that improved governance is a major factor that could reduce or mitigate fragility¹⁴⁸. Furthermore, authority is ranked high and stable as the state abides by democratic values with periodic elections, systematic and peaceful power transfers, and a robust civil society, as evidence by a high Freedom Houses' civil liberties score¹⁴⁹.

Scenarios: December 2021 - June 2022

In addition to the scenarios presented below, see Annex 7 for extended scenarios descriptions.

Most Likely

The RMI will experience further strain on its national government budget with crude oil prices remaining high around the current level of US\$70 per barrel¹⁵⁰. Being fully dependent on petroleum imports for energy and spending a large portion of GDP on these imports, service delivery will be negatively impacted by financial constraints, especially rural islands. The tuna industry will also be affected by these prices, however, vaccination efforts, low COVID-19 case rates, and MIMRA's efforts to expand will mitigate major negative impacts. Regarding farming, the recently announced Agriculture Sector Plan 2021-2031¹⁵¹ is not expected to have major effects on the agriculture sector in the coming six months due to its infancy. Similarly, while COP26 resulted in increased awareness of the RMI's climate change crisis, it is unclear if major funding or actions will be taken in the coming months. Nonetheless, the RMI will likely host their second Climate Change Week in May 2022, further engaging youth in the national conversation on climate change and raising local and international awareness.

A decrease in oil prices will reduce financial constraints on government services, especially concerning rural service delivery. In addition, lower oil prices and low COVID-19 cases will fuel the resumption of pre-COVID levels of the tuna transshipment industry, yielding higher

Best Case

government revenues. Regarding the environment, COP 26 will increase climate adaptation funding, however, resources are not likely to be mobilized in the next 6 months. Nonetheless, predictable funding will help the government's fiscal planning and produce greater momentum behind the RMI's second annual Climate Change Week. Youth demands would be addressed through greater climate action as well as the release of the delayed RMI National Youth Policy. This would be a positive development on the youth file which constitutes a large demographic.

Worst Case

While a COVID-19 breakout is unlikely, lowered economic activity due to the pandemic will persist. Paired with current or increased oil prices, the government will face serious capacity constraints due to a lower budget. Current rising inflation rates in the US, along with the effects of high oil prices on the economy will also decrease remittances to the RMI, which made up 13% of GDP in 2019¹⁵². In addition, the level of awareness of SIDS and the RMI raised at COP26 will not lead to an increased interest in climate resiliency projects in the short term from external stakeholders. Although there are various ongoing climate related projects in the RMI, more infrastructure improvements are needed to improve service delivery capacity. Consequently, the government's lack of ability to garner international support for climate projects will increase citizens, and particularly youths, demands.

Wild Card

The RMI would experience droughts in their dry season from December to April. Although a La Nina year, the RMI has experienced droughts in both El Nino and La Nina weather conditions. Since 79.4% of the population depend on rain catchment as a source of drinking water and 52% of the population rely on subsistence farming¹⁵³, the effects of drought would have widespread impacts on the general population and increase food insecurity. A drought would likely garner discontent amongst voters towards the government as there have been multiple droughts in recent years and the government has been unable to dramatically improve emergency response delivery, especially to rural areas. Consequently, low government capacity will perpetuate dependency and reliance on external aid donors to help fill service gaps and assist in disaster response.

Policy Options^f

Policy options are ranked by order of effectiveness in addressing key fragility risks.

Option 1:

Work with, and finance, the RMI Government, Environmental Protection Agency, Climate Change Directorate and Ministry of Finance to establish a parametric disaster risk insurance policy for households and farmers, with a focus on providing low insurance premiums for rural households and farmers.

Policy Option: This policy option aims to create a parametric^g disaster risk insurance program within the

^f Policy options were chosen based on primary drives of fragility in the Marshall Islands with considerations given to efforts underway by the Government or other entities in addressing some of these issues. Therefore, areas such as fisheries and water contamination were not addressed in these policy options (See Annex 6).

^g Parametric insurance is based on the occurrence of a natural disaster rather than the size of damage incurred from the disaster. It can yield faster financial compensation since it is less reliant on inspection that requires time and resources (See Ramachandran, V., & Masood, J. S. (2019) in endnotes).

RMI. Creating a more inclusive, localized insurance policy would reduce the annual costs of natural disaster, especially for rural households and farmers who are disproportionately affected due to lack of resilient infrastructure ¹⁵⁴. The presence of disaster risk insurance would also contribute to other positive outcomes: induce post-disaster economic activity through efforts of rebuilding, which would be funded by insurance compensation; reducing strain on urban areas through the reduction of internally displaced persons. The insurance policy would be directly funded by the ADB^h, along with contributions from the Government of the RMI. ADB contribution would assist in making the policy viable and subsidizing premiums for vulnerable populations. The ADB can also provide additional financial and capacity building assistance to the Environmental Protection Agency and the Climate Change Directorate to expand weather data measurement capacity. Consistent timely data would then be used to establish the parameters necessary for a parametric disaster risk insurance policy.

ALC Targets/Cluster: Capacity; Legitimacy/ Environment; Security & Crime; Economic Development

Relevance: The RMI is exposed and highly vulnerable to natural disasters including king tides, cyclones, floods, and droughts ¹⁵⁵. This prevalence to natural disasters, along with remoteness, makes it unattractive for international insurance companies. When insurance policies are available, they either include high premiums owing to high risk, or are not applicable to private citizens due to the absence of a building code on the RMI ¹⁵⁶. The ADB is in the process of renewing its disaster risk strategy, first introduced in 2004 ¹⁵⁷. At COP 26, the ADB announced the Community Resilience Partnership Program that seeks to invest in, and enhance, adaptation and resilience at the community level ¹⁵⁸. Both the ADB's Strategy 2030 and Pacific Strategy 2021-2025 place considerable emphasis on the importance of expanding disaster risk mitigation/adaptation policies and practices ¹⁵⁹.

Entry Points: The RMI government is in the process of developing and publishing a building code.

The government has also emphasized the importance of expanding disaster risk reduction as a whole in the RMI's 2020-2030 Strategic Plan, along with consideration of providing land as collateral for disaster and crop loss insurance ¹⁶⁰. Finally, the recently published Agriculture Sector Plan 2021-2031 places great emphasis on expanding agriculture to increase economic activity and food security ¹⁶¹. CSOs active in farming can also play a role in building trust and inducing buy-in from farmers and other citizens.

Risks: Risks associated with this policy are threefold. First, even if the program is supported by the government, premiums might be expensive given the prevalence of natural disasters in the RMI and the small size of the population. Second, this policy risks discontinuation if there is cessation of funds from the ADB. Third, cross-subsidization, essential for supporting rural households and farmers, is especially difficult since all citizens of the RMI are usually affected by the same natural disaster events. Consequently, large one-time payments of insurance funds that might render the policy unfeasible.

Evaluation: This policy would be evaluated by the extent to which it increases resilience in the RMI, and in particular, the resiliency of rural households and farmers. This would be measured by number of

^h It is common practice for international organizations to fund insurance policies on behalf of countries. The World Bank funds the PCRIC policy that the RMI subscribes to. See Ramachandran, V., & Masood, J. S. (2019) in end notes for further details.

households, farmers, and businesses, disaggregated by rural/urban, that subscribe to the policy.

Option 2:

Work with the Ministry of Resources and Development, EPPSO, and MOCIA's Youth Services Bureau and Office of Gender and Development to develop and implement a program of entrepreneurship training and start-up business funding, with focus on key equity groups.

Policy Option: This policy option aims to increase economic diversification and job opportunities within the RMI through creating a program that provides entrepreneurship training and start-up business funding. The training program would build Marshallese's knowledge and skills to support small business development. In addition, equity group engagement would be promoted through reserving a certain number of training spots for youth and women. Upon training completion, participants would be eligible to apply to the start-up business fund of loans or grants depending on their submitted application and business plan. As a result, private sector growth and activity would trickle down through the economy, producing a multiplier effect on private business and an injection of funds into retail markets. The ADB's support would entail the following actions: (1) Supporting the Program's design, structure, and evaluation mechanism (2) Providing human resources to support Program implementation, (3) Providing financial, organizational, and human resources to build the government's capacity to deliver the Program overtime independently, (4) Providing funding for the grants and loans.

ALC Targets/Cluster: Capacity; Legitimacy/ Economic Development; Human Development

Relevance: Private sector expansion and diversification aligns with the ADB's Private Sector Development Initiative within the ADB's Pacific Approach 2021-2025¹⁶². This initiative focuses on supporting assessing the business environment, business law reform, and economic empowerment of women. The Pacific Approach also targets youth employment through social service assistance; thus, it is also an area of concern for the ADB.

Entry Points: With the Foreign Investment Business License Act¹⁶³ prohibiting (though not strictly) foreign direct investment in many small businesses and services, this represents an opportunity for start-up business funding. The ADB's financial contributions to the funding program will allow the government to support small businesses start-ups such as retail shops, bakeries, laundry services and help address poor access to finance for these types of companies. In addition, youth entrepreneurship is a priority outcome area of the SPC's Pacific Youth Development Framework 2014-2023¹⁶⁴, a regional framework coordinated by the Pacific Youth Council and SPC between governments (including the RMI), development partners, and youth networks. Furthermore, skills training will also support Taiwan's two-year Women Business Start-Up Small Loan Revolving Fund which started in July 2021¹⁶⁵.

Risks: The risks associated with this policy option include the inherently risky nature of entrepreneurship, weak government capacity to sustain the program, and difficulties in measuring program results that are long term in nature. Participants also face the structural challenges inherent within the RMI economy, including lack of export opportunities, expensive imports, and a small local economy.

Evaluation: Program success can be evaluated through the amount of training participants, the number of funded projects, and total funding dispersed per year. In addition, funding projects can be evaluated by

the amount of part-time and full-time jobs created, sales achieved, and opportunities pursued (ex. partnership or distribution agreements, request for proposals).

Option 3:

Work with the OAG and other relevant authorities on increasing the involvement of CSOs in auditing the government's service delivery performance, including through issuing reports on recommendations for improvement.

Policy Option: This policy aims to support, both financially and through capacity building, a group of CSOs coalition (hereafter CSOs group) on expanding their activities to include auditing the government's service delivery performance from a societal point of view. The group would work closely with the OAG for: (1) Guidance and expansion of capacity, through training, in conducting audits, and (2) Acquiring the necessary data and information. These audits would yield reports that provide recommendations on how the government can improve its services. This would account for societal needs, especially those of rural islands that might experience lack engagement due to remoteness. In return, the exchange of data and information between the government and CSOs might increase the quality of data since it would be measured against what CSOs report. This would also enhance the existing audits conducted by the OAG. Also, support for such a policy might also include mechanism to ensure that the process is internally driven and is provided with long-term sustainable funding.

ALC Targets/Cluster: Legitimacy/ Governance; Human Development

Relevance: Although the government does engage with local population and has a general positive relationship with CSOs, there is no mechanism where CSOs engage on a systematic basis with regards to the government operations. In addition, MICNGO supports internal capacity building of CSOs, but not capacity for external auditing practices. The government and the OAG are active in tackling corruption. Engaging CSOs would, therefore, further strengthen audits and help improve government accountabilityⁱ. The CSOs group might have access to information on the local level that the OAG office might not, for example, small bribes for service delivery.

Entry Points: The ADB is highly active in promoting transparent governance in the Marshall Islands, with governance, writ large, as a key priority in both its Strategy 2030 and Pacific Approach 2021-2025¹⁶⁶. Additionally, the largest segment of ADB's funding to the RMI since 1990 targeted public sector management (see Annex 3). The RMI is generally accepting of the ADBs efforts to collaborate with on improving governance capacity in the nation. Likewise, the RMI government has also identified improving governance in its Strategic Plan 2020-2030 ¹⁶⁷.

Risks: External support for activities that put the government under the spotlight might be seen as an encroachment on the government. Meanwhile, if the support is provided through government channels, it risks being subject to sanctions shall disagreement arise between the CSOs group and the government. Moreover, the reports published might be disregarded and/or undermined as a 'non-formal' source of

ⁱ Although aid would target CSOs groups and thus bypass national and local government institutions, this will not provoke negative long-term consequences that Chasukwa and Banik (2019) (see Annex 1) discuss. Rather, these audits will help strengthen government accountability and performance over time through a sustainable, internal mechanism that provides recommendations to government service delivery and performance.

audit in comparison to the OAG audits. Finally, activities will be reliant on external funding, which would cease with shifting priorities.

Evaluation: This policy would be evaluated by the extent to which the CSOs group are provided with the capacity and financial and technical means to conduct service delivery audits. This will include number of CSO members provided training, number of CSOs members reported using techniques acquired from the training, and number of reports produced by the CSOs group.

Annex 1: State Fragility Theoretical Linkages

Capacity Traps - (Takeuchi et al., 2011)¹⁶⁸	
Definition	Capacity traps are defined by Takeuchi et al. as “countries that have failed to improve state capacity to provide security and social services and that consequently have failed also to establish state legitimacy.”
Impact in the RMI	<p>The RMI aligns with the above definition as the state has struggled to improve its service delivery despite years of external aid specifically targeting governance related issues. The state faces challenges of poor infrastructure, strategic directives for ministries, resource constraints, and financial mismanagement. However, the RMI's capacity trap also differs because the RMI does not face any internal conflict, border issues or other major security related issues that cause service delivery to weaken. Additionally, various aid actors fill the service delivery gaps, mitigating the government's legitimacy.</p> <p><i>More details regarding this impact are in Annex 5 and the Structural Analysis Section.</i></p>
Isomorphic Mimicry- (Pritchett et al., 2012)¹⁶⁹	
Definition	“Systemic isomorphic mimicry, wherein the outward forms (appearances, structures) of functional states and organizations elsewhere are adopted to camouflage a persistent lack of function.” Isomorphic mimicry can cause a capability trap to become sustainable, wherein “agents of development inadvertently promote and solidify isomorphic mimicry by rewarding organizations that adopt “modern” or “best practice” forms or notional policies”.
Impact on the RMI	The RMI has isomorphic mimicry as their input legitimacy is much greater than their output legitimacy. For example, while there is a 2015 National Gender Mainstreaming Policy and the 2019 Gender Equality Act, there are high rates of GBV ¹⁷⁰ and multiple barriers to women fully participating in the economy such as maternity leave policies, property inheritance and pension drops during maternity leave ¹⁷¹ . Additionally, the RMI has legislature criminalizing domestic violence, however, a lack of capacity impacts the police domestic violence unit's response as well as the Attorney General's Office prosecution ¹⁷² .
Fragility Traps in Small Developing States - Carment et al. (2020)¹⁷³	
Definition	Research based on the CFP found that Small Developing States (SDS) are all impacted by weaker economic and environmental performance while having better performance in terms of security. Additionally, SDS that are more fragile tend to have poor capability and legitimacy, which highlights governance issues.
Impact in the RMI	RMI can be considered a SDS and fits within the SDS criteria outlined by Carment et al. Economic development, environment and governance are the three primary drivers of fragility identified in this brief. In addition, the RMI has capacity and legitimacy issues which are typical of more fragile SDS. Security is also not a strong contributing factor in the RMI's current fragility status.

Costs of Failing Island States – Chauvet and Collier (2008)¹⁷⁴	
Definition	Chauvet and Collier established that “being the neighbour of a failing island state did not induce any loss of growth.” This suggests that the costs that failing states place on their neighbors applies in situations of “land contiguity—through trade, for example—rather than reputation.” Consequently, this raises concerns about island state intervention as Chauvet and Collier state that “donors have an incentive to intervene to protect the legitimate interests of neighboring states.”
Impact in the RMI	As the RMI has no shared land borders with other countries, there are no negative spillover effects onto neighbors making the local population acutely feel the costs of fragility. In addition, the lack of spillover effects onto neighboring states creates less incentive for donor intervention. Nonetheless, addressing fragility in the RMI is crucial and significant (See Executive Summary for further details).
Aid Effectiveness – Chasukwa and Banik (2019)¹⁷⁵	
Definition	In discussion of aid bypassing national and local government institutions, Chasukwa and Banik warn about negative long-term consequences including “fragmentation of aid, lack of coordination among aid industry actors, and a general weakening of policy space and domestic capacity to formulate and implement development policy.”
Impact in the RMI	The RMI is currently facing a capacity trap wherein local and external aid groups fill in service delivery gaps. Therefore, Banik and Chasukwa’s findings are extremely relevant as they illustrate the need for concerted, capacity building efforts. Otherwise, these long-term consequences could create new feedback loops of dependency, such as policy development as the RMI’s policy creation and implementation weakens over time.

Annex 2: Stakeholders

Primary Internal:

Pacific International Incorporation (PII): The Incorporation has multiple subsidiaries operating in the RMI, Guam and the Federated States of Micronesia: Marshall Insurance Agency, Pacific Unique Travel Agency, Pacific Wheels, Pacific International (Guam) Inc., Kramer Corp., Waffle-Crete International Inc., Majuro Marine Inc., Ajejdrikdrik Inc., Kabua & Kramer Corp., Diamond K Wholesale, Nimitz Towers and Guam Apartments¹⁷⁶.

Secondary Internal:

Most existing secondary internal stakeholders were moved to primary internal due to the large category of civil society.

Secondary External:

Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA): The PNA is the largest tuna cartel in the world, and includes eight Pacific countries as its members, and collectively controls about 60% of the western and central Pacific tuna supply, amounting for 25-30% of the world's tuna supply¹⁷⁷. The PNA's head office was recently inaugurated in Majuro, the RMI's capital. The PNA regulates the amount of tuna fished by its member states, thus, having considerable impact on RMI's economy considering the importance of tuna fisheries in the RMI.

Japan's Overseas Fisheries Cooperation Foundation (OFCF): has a partnership with the Marshall Islands Marine Resource Authority since 1992. OFCF assists MIMRA in maintaining ships and vessels; community shipping vessels; ice processing centers and provides technical advice¹⁷⁸.

World Bank: As of June 2021, the WB had eight active projects in the RMI, worth US\$143 million. The breakdown of these project is as follows: energy and extractives 24%; transport 23%; health 11%; education 7%; governance 6%¹⁷⁹.

Other External Organizations: For the purposes of this brief, only highly relevant stakeholders, with agency of change with respect to the policy options, were identified. It is important to note that many international and regional organizations are active in the Marshall Islands.

Marshall Islands: Cumulative Loans, Grants, Equity Investments, Technical Assistance, and Trade and Supply Chain Finance and Microfinance Program Commitments^{a, b, c, d}

Sector	No.	Total Amount (\$ million) ^e	% of Total Amount ^e	COVID-19 Response (\$ million) ^e
Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Rural Development	9	9.86	4.99	–
Education	6	22.17	11.23	–
Energy	6	17.65	8.94	–
Finance	3	1.47	0.74	–
Health	9	18.62	9.43	1.86
Industry and Trade	2	0.99	0.50	–
Information and Communication Technology	–	0.08	0.04	–
Multisector	3	2.42	1.23	–
Public Sector Management	31	80.87	40.96	22.43
Transport	5	9.32	4.72	–
Water and Other Urban Infrastructure and Services	10	33.97	17.20	1.70
Total	84	197.42	100.00	25.99

– = nil, COVID-19 = coronavirus disease, DMC = developing member country, TA = technical assistance.

^a Grants and TA include ADB-administered cofinancing.

^b Includes sovereign and nonsovereign loans and technical assistance.

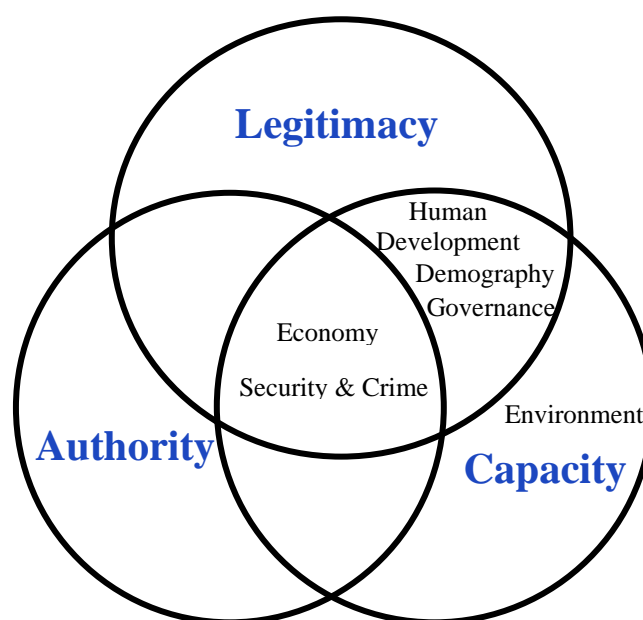
^c Using primary sector in reporting of commitments.

^d Financing for TA projects with regional coverage is distributed to their specific DMCs where breakdown is available.

^e Numbers may not sum precisely because of rounding.

Annex 4: ALC by Cluster Diagram

1. **Human Development:** As illustrated in the indicator tables, government has poor capacity as it faces difficulty providing public services to the population, especially rural areas, and addressing gender inequality. Looking at the MOHSS, the most criticized ministry¹⁸¹ the Ministry of Health has semi consistent annual reporting and has three year rolling strategic plans with the latest being for 2017 to 2019¹⁸². While this supports input legitimacy, a WHO Country Strategy Report for 2018-2022¹⁸³ noted that there are fund shortages which contribute to fragmented health service delivery. The Ministry's response to



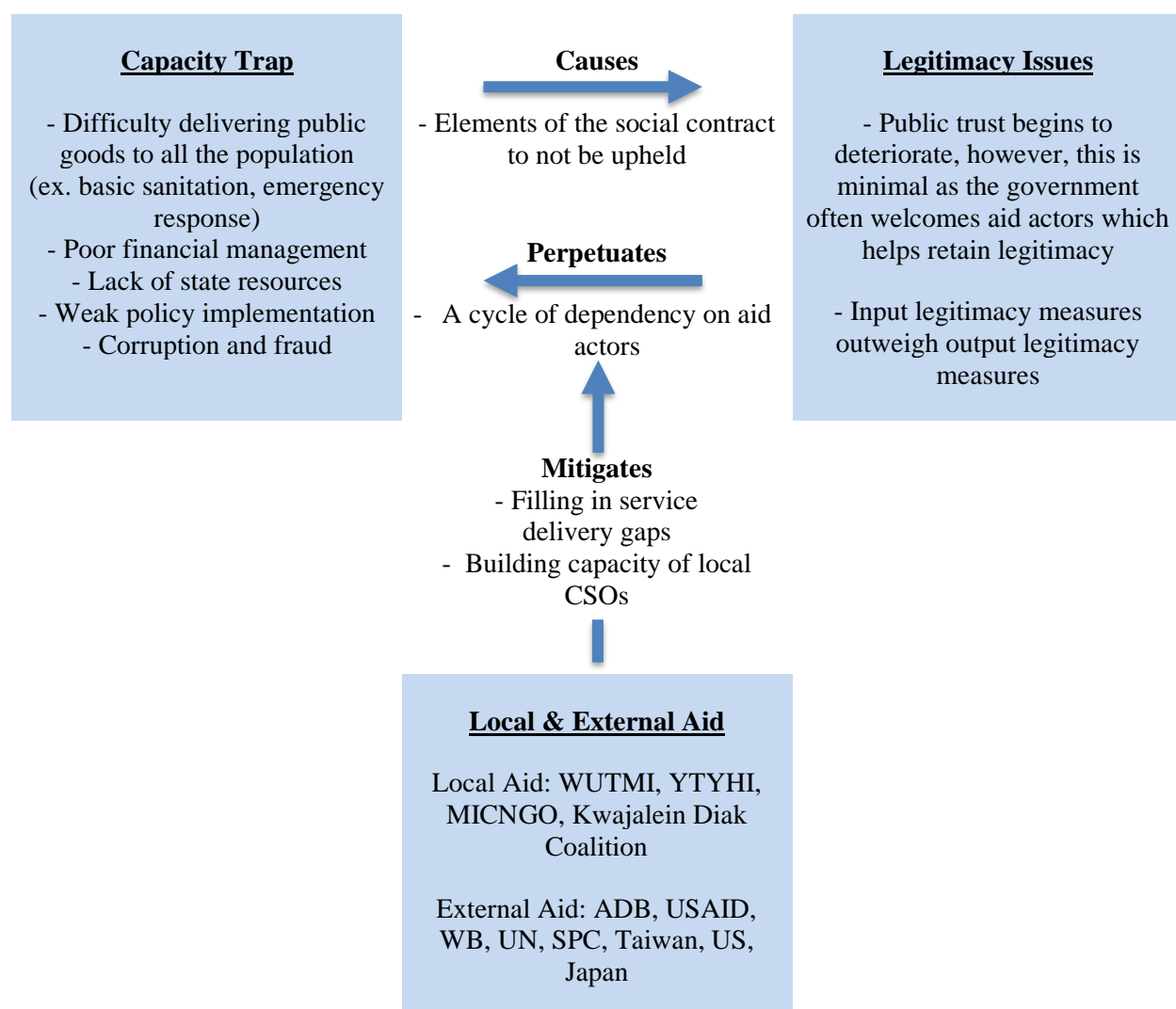
- emergencies is on an ad hoc basis and not well coordinated either¹⁸⁴. As a result, NGOs and external aid often fill the gap with 60% of health expenditure being footed by external aid¹⁸⁵. Thus, the government's lack of capacity does not impact their output legitimacy as severely due to mitigation from aid actors. However, should the government remain reliant on aid groups filling service gaps, as some stagnant indicator trends point towards, long-term negative consequences could emerge such as lack of coordination amongst aid actors¹⁸⁶. Depending on the severity of climate effects and the extent of international aid, the government's legitimacy in the eyes of the public could decrease more if dependency is not addressed.
2. **Demography:** The government has shown a lack of capacity, and possibly unwillingness, to address key issues within the youth demographic including a lack of policy implementation as mentioned in the demography cluster. With a delayed RMI National Youth Policy and outdated National Action Plan on Youth Employment, both input and output legitimacy are affected. Output legitimacy is mitigated by the SPC's Youth Development Framework 2014-2023¹⁸⁷ which consists of regional by the Pacific Youth Council and SPC between governments, development partners, and youth networks to improve youth employment, youth health, and increase youth participation in governance and environmental affairs. However, as Chasukwa and Banik (2019)¹⁸⁸ point out, reliance on regional frameworks can contribute to weakened capacity to develop and implement domestic development policy. Moreover, the capacity of the RMI government needs to be strengthen in terms of policy creation and delivery to respond to the social contract, which supports job creation, not being upheld for a large portion of the population. As the youth demographic ages and creates a large portion of the voting bloc, the government will need to listen and be proactive about youth needs and demands.
 3. **Governance:** The government has faced chronic issues of resource constraints, poor financial management, and policy implementation. These capacity issues have reduced the government's effectiveness and consequently, their legitimacy. Legitimacy is also weakened by chronic fraud and corruption, although fraud detection and prosecution have been increasing. However, service

delivery mitigation from aid actors maintains moderate levels of legitimacy. Another contributing factor to the RMI's relatively high degree of legitimacy is the country's ethnic homogeneity and entrenchment of the traditional clan system within the Constitution via the Iroij Council. The council's existence preserves space for traditional systems of power to be maintained. This, paired with stable service delivery mitigation trends have led to legitimacy being ranked as stable. In recent years, legitimacy was likely harmed by the introduction of Bill No. 6 in 2016. Aimed to stop absentee voting, this bill sought to reduce the influence of the diaspora and prevailed for three years. This signifies that elites view the diaspora as a threat to status quo, likely because many mayoral and parliament seats are tight races and decided by 10 to 100 votes¹⁸⁹. The Bill was eventually deemed unconstitutional by the RMI Supreme court in 2019, which demonstrated the RMI's strong, independent courts, which Freedom House scorings confirm¹⁹⁰. However, it is telling that the President's Office noted that the overturning of Bill No. 6 would not take effect in time for the 2019 elections.

4. **Economy:** While the government shows willingness and action in expanding economic activity, structural and governance issues that hinder such efforts. The government lacks the capacity to enact transformational economic policies and instead directs its attention, rightfully, to economic sectors with large returns, such as fisheries. While the government maintains its authority over economic policy and economic activity, this authority is challenged by its reliance on foreign aid. Consequently, economic activity is largely reliant on government expenditure. Thus, legitimacy and authority can be challenged in the case of economic shocks, especially, through illegal and activities. Moreover, urban/rural divide presents substantial economic cleavages between the respective populations, especially in light of the lack of government capacity to deliver services to rural islands. These economic cleavages are further exacerbated by the dependence of rural agriculture and fisheries on urban islands for marketing. While these cleavages would affect Legitimacy of the government in rural islands, non-governmental organizations fill the gaps of capacity, thereby, maintaining legitimacy of government as the provider of economic activity and development for its population.
5. **Security & Crime:** The government lacks the capacity to respond to increasing challenges presented by a large ocean territory and a growing rural population. In addition, there is unwillingness or inability to enact and/or enforce certain laws, i.e. GBV and human trafficking, which affects legitimacy. Similarly, the absence of these laws also affects their authority to act on crimes and practices that would otherwise be covered by these laws.
6. **Environment:** The government shows willingness in enacting sound environmental policies, however, owing to lack of resources and technical capabilities, its capacity is largely hindered. However, this does not affect legitimacy and/or authority as it has been successful in filling gaps through engagement with local and international NGOs, CSOs, and organizations. Moreover, the government is significantly vocal on issues surrounding climate change in international forums, which further enforces its legitimacy.

Annex 5: Capacity Trap Diagram

This figure summarizes the linkages between the RMI's capacity trap and legitimacy problem. As noted in the Structural Analysis Section, the RMI does not experience the Capacity Trap exactly as outlined in Takeuchi et al. (2011).¹⁹¹ A lack of security is not an issue for the RMI as the US manages its external security and they have no shared land borders with other countries. Rather, the government lacks capacity to deliver basic services due to various reasons (outlined below) which weakens state legitimacy as the social contract is not fulfilled. This cycle is mitigated by external and internal aid actors who fill service delivery gaps which slows down the deterioration of state legitimacy while also creating strong dependency on aid groups. However, this reliance on aid group mitigation also creates long-term consequences of "fragmentation of aid, lack of coordination among aid industry actors, and a general weakening of policy space and domestic capacity to formulate and implement development policy."¹⁹²



Annex 6: Additional Cluster Information

Economic Development:

Fisheries:

Based on MIMRA's 2020 annual report ¹⁹³, the Authority has proven somehow resilient against the backdrop of COVID-19 by implementing new measures such as trading of the Vessel Day Scheme (permits to fish in certain days) between holders. MIMRA also maintains special relationships with clients, such as Japan, which is granted exclusive use of certain fishing technologies in the RMI waters. Japan, on the other hand, regularly provides financial and technical assistance to MIMRA.

MIMRA is involved in 3 joint venture fish processing plants with the Pan Pacific Foods, Pacific International Incorporated, Kendall Micronesia Incorporated. The Authority also operates its own coastal fish market facility. MIMRA recently established the Competent Authority which will oversee the implementation of regulations and practices in its joint ventures that align with European Union food security and other standards. The EU is the world's largest seafood market and is already engaged with the RMI and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to enhance the RMI's tuna transshipment industry. MIMRA also plans to establish the Pacific Islands Tuna Provisions limited liability company that aims to expand the RMI's post-harvest Tuna industry by pursuing Tuna value chain opportunities and conservation programs.

The fishing industry is also a big employer in the RMI. While official numbers are scarce, sources cite that in 2014, there were a total of 678 people employed by the biggest RMI-based fishing companies, with the following breakdown¹⁹⁴: Marshall Islands Fishing Venture (MIFV) 388; Koo's Fishing Company (KFC) 220; and Pan Pacific Fisheries Inc. (PPF) 170. KFC, however, reported that although their loining plant had a capacity of 400 people, attendance was usually at 140 people, in best conditions. Migration to the US was cited by government officials as a reason for lack of skilled workers ¹⁹⁵. On the micro level, 48.9 % of total households in the RMI reported fishing; of which 64.1% fished for subsistence purposes; 34.8% fished for both subsistence and income; and 1.1% fished for income only ¹⁹⁶.

Agriculture:

Structural issues of land availability and poor soil quality render the country highly dependent on food imports; with the RMI producing only 20% of its food needs ¹⁹⁷. Over 60 per cent of the RMI's total land area is covered by coconut palms, hence, making coconut an important agricultural product ¹⁹⁸.

Agriculture is considered an important subsistence activity, especially for rural islands; while economic activity is limited to a small amount of, mainly coconut and copra (coconut shells), exports ¹⁹⁹. While coconut production, processing and export as a whole form only 1% of the RMI's GDP²⁰⁰, micro level data highlights its importance: 52% of households were engaged in agriculture, mainly for subsistence, 42% for subsistence only, 10% for both income and subsistence, and less than 1% for income alone²⁰¹. Copra production in rural areas is nearly ten times higher than in urban areas²⁰².

Land ownership and private sector activity:

Land in the RMI is 97 percent privately owned²⁰³. Three traditional clan titles control land in the RMI: Iroij (chief), Alap (landowner or clan elder) and Ri-jerbal (land steward). The Iroij has the highest authority and he or she controls all affairs concerning land rights²⁰⁴. Land can be used for public purposes in change for payment of compensation²⁰⁵. Foreigners can rent land from owners directly, however, this is

hindered by the lack of an official land registry²⁰⁶. In order to encourage local ownership of businesses in the RMI, the government, through its Foreign Investment Business License Act, prohibits the establishment of, or investment in, the following businesses by foreigners²⁰⁷:

- Small scale agriculture and marine culture for local markets
- Bakeries and pastry shops
- Motor garages and fuel filling stations
- Land taxis operations, not including airport taxis used by hotels
- Rental of all types of motor vehicles
- Small retail shops with a quarterly turnover of less than USD 1,000 (including mobile retail shops and/or open-air vendors/take-outs)
- Laundromat and dry cleaning, other than service provided by hotels/motels
- Tailor/sewing shops
- Video rental
- Handicraft shops
- Delicatessens, Deli Shops, or Food take-out.

It is worthwhile mentioning that the Act is not consistently enforced, and foreign investors may enter in partnerships with local Marshallese business active in the areas mentioned above ²⁰⁸.

Environment:

The population of RMI drinks approximately 1 million gallons of water daily. Jointly, the existing water reservoir is only able to store 23 million gallons of water which is less than a month's supply in times of drought ²⁰⁹. Projects are underway to address water availability issues by the RMI in partnership with the Green Climate Fund ²¹⁰. Moreover, the ADB is expecting to also conclude a water supply and sanitation project in Ebeye Island in the Kwajalein atoll ²¹¹. The latter is the atoll hosting the US Army Garrison, while Ebeye island is the RMI's second largest city after Majuro.

The effects of the nuclear testing by the US still affects the RMI, to some degree ²¹². Contaminated material and debris was housed by the US army underneath a large concrete dome-like structure. The dome has shown some cracks, which prompted many locals, scientists and environmental activists to sound their fear that climatic events might severely damage the structure and release the contaminated material into the Pacific Ocean and local eco systems ²¹³.

Security and Crime:

The RMI lacks the capacity to monitor its 1,900,000 km² EEZ. It does so by relying on external support under the US Coast Guard and the Oceania Maritime Security Initiative (OMSI) ship rider agreements which allow local law enforcement officers to embark on US Coast Guard and Navy vessels for law enforcement purposes ²¹⁴. In addition, Australia, France, New Zealand, and the US also cooperate as the Quadrilateral Defense Coordination Group to coordinate maritime security efforts in the region ²¹⁵.

Governance:

Within the RMI, the key elite groups are based on the traditional clan systems. As Marshallese culture focuses on oral history, many sources of information are incomplete, non-academic, or based on structural anthropology which holds a systems approach and does not explicitly mention the specific clan names. Consequently, there is not a clear source listing all the royal clans nor recent accounts of the Council of

Iroij members. However, a primary source does note that there were originally eight clans (jowi) and now there are over 50 clans²¹⁶. There is intermarriage between clans with no notable instances of animosity wherein certain clans with not intermarry due to hostilities. These clans are based on matrilineal lineage, however, most chiefs (Iroij) and paramount chiefs (Iroijlaplap) are male. While difficult to identify, the key elite groups in the RMI are based on the traditional clan system as most presidents have been traditional chiefs. For example, first President Amata Kabua came from a long line of Chiefs and his great great grandfather was King Kabua the Great²¹⁷. Additionally, two other RMI Presidents are from the Kabua family and many other family members are in the Cabinet and local positions of power. Another important family is the Heine's who pushed a non-confidence vote when one of the three family members was not given a Cabinet Position in 2016²¹⁸. Only a few exceptions of non-royal presidents exist such as the election of former President Note (2000-2007) who was the first commoner to be elected²¹⁹.

Human Development:

Diabetes:

While stunting in children, caused by poor nutrition, is steadily reducing, over half the RMI adult population are obese. Expensive food imports and the lack of arable land are some of the culprits to this worsening trend. Obesity is concerning because it the main cause of type-2 diabetes which is one of the leading causes of death in the RMI in recent years²²⁰.

Education:

It is unclear based on available data whether decreasing school enrollment has any relationship with the rural-urban divide. However, low secondary enrollment and substantial drop out rates have been a reoccurring issue in the RMI.²²¹ In addition, there is an Education Sector Plan under development and the Public School System has a Strategic Plan for 2017-2020²²². However, UNICEF²²³ notes that reliance on external funding and difficulties providing education on remote islands remain key challenges for the sector.

Demography and Population:

Population Statistics:

The RMI's youth bulge contributes to a high dependency ratio of 69% which is substantially larger than the Micronesian average of 57%²²⁴. In addition, the Marshall Islands median age is 20²²⁵, which underlines the importance of youth policy and addressing this demography's demands.

Migration and Land:

As the Marshallese culture is rooted in land inheritance and tenure practices, migration is creating difficulties for inheritance practices and tracing land rights²²⁶. The main responsibilities of traditional chiefs are the management and distribution of land resources, therefore, challenges such as migration and rising sea levels place strain on the foundations of the Marshallese clan system. In addition, the loss of land, whether by climate change or migration, could contribute to cultural loss which is already an issue as noted in the RMI National Youth Policy 2009-2014. Furthermore, identification with traditional land is important in relation to government as voters may register to vote according to their place of residence or traditional land²²⁷. This gives voters more influence in the elections as they can move their vote to support tight races or particular candidates.

Annex 7: Detailed Scenarios Description

<p>Most Likely</p>	<p>The RMI is likely to experience further strain on their national government budget if crude oil prices remain at the current high level of US\$70 per barrel²²⁸. The RMI is fully dependent on petroleum imports for energy and spends a large portion of their GDP on petroleum import. For example, in 2009 the government spent 24% of its GDP on petroleum imports²²⁹. As a result of these financial constraints, service delivery will be negatively impacted, especially for rural islands. This is supported by MIMRA, who acknowledges that transportation to and from rural islands is sometimes hindered by high gasoline prices²³⁰.</p> <p>It is also likely that high oil prices will affect the tuna industry, especially ships that operate out of the RMI. Overall, however, the tuna transshipment industry in RMI, which accounts for 14% of the government's revenues, has proven to be resilient during the pandemic through facilitating Vessel Day Scheme trading amongst vessels for revenue generation²³¹. While the industry has seen an increase in activity with the easing of COVID restrictions in 2021, it has yet to reach pre-COVID levels and there is still a reduced number of workers at the transshipment port. COVID restrictions will likely continue to ease as vaccination efforts continue and the RMI maintains low COVID-19 case rates. As of late October 2021, the country had only 4 COVID-19 cases, all of which were imported. Notwithstanding the effect of the COVID-19 on the tuna industry, the government has been making efforts to further increase the role of tuna and fisheries in the economy. MIMRA recently established the Competent Authority to oversee the implementation of European Union Standards in its facilities. MIMRA expects that adhering to these standards will facilitate increased processed and fresh tuna and other fish exports²³².</p> <p>Agricultural activity is mostly subsistence, with 10% of households engaged in subsistence and income, and 1% engaged in it only for income²³³. The government has been encouraging an increase in agricultural activity as a way to decrease food insecurity and food imports, preserve traditions of land ownership and expand agricultural economic activity. The recent release of the RMI's first Agriculture Sector Plan 2021-2031 points towards potential positive actions towards ameliorating/increasing agriculture in the RMI²³⁴. Considering the infancy of the plan, however, it is unlikely to result in outcomes in the next 6-8 months.</p> <p>Regarding the environment, the UN Climate Change Conference (COP 26) is likely to result in some increased awareness of the Marshall Islands and their climate change crisis. Despite the representation of SIDS was poor at COP26, the RMI did send a group of delegates. One of these delegates was Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner, the founder of a well-known youth environment NGO within the RMI called Jo-Jikum²³⁵, who completed multiple interviews at COP 26²³⁶ and has been active at past COP events as well. This points toward a further strengthening of the youth voice in climate change matters within the Marshall Islands. In addition, the RMI will host their second Climate Change Week in May 2022. Last year the event included a symposium, arts showcase from Jo-Jikum, and multiple youth-oriented activities such as essay, poster, and art competitions²³⁷. This youth inclusive format will likely remain in May 2022.</p> <p>Lastly, the MIMA holds annual meeting every April and passes resolutions to bring forth at the Annual Leadership Conference with the national government in July. Comments from previous years indicate a lack of follow through from the national government on the approved resolutions, thus, this trend will likely persist²³⁸.</p>
	<p>The best-case scenario for the RMI would be a decrease in oil prices which would reduce financial constraints on government services, especially concerning rural service delivery. Decreased oil prices and the resumption of pre-COVID levels of the tuna transshipment</p>

<p>Best Case</p>	<p>industry would also yield higher government revenues. This is a likely best case as a COVID-19 breakout on the islands is unlikely due to remoteness, current vaccination efforts, and effective government policies in containing the virus by enforcing quarantine laws on all outsiders and those returning to the country. In addition, the establishment of the Competent Authority and the implementation of European Union food quality standards would serve as an incentive to increase investment in the three-tuna loaning and processing plants in the RMI. Pacific International Incorporation, the largest private sector employer in the RMI would expand its investments in the tuna industry, providing 'local' ownership of processing plants (two out of three tuna processing plants are joint ventures with foreign companies and MIMRA)²³⁹.</p> <p>Regarding environment, increased ambition on climate action due to COP26 would further mobilize resources for the RMI to increase their adaptation capacity. While resources are not likely to be mobilized in the upcoming 6 to 8 months, predictable funding would help the government in its fiscal planning. For example, Agriculture Sector Plan would draw increased attention and support from donors (the plan is already supported by the Taiwan Technical Mission²⁴⁰). The involvement of donors, along with attention to SIDS after COP26, would serve to initiate plans to include farmers and private housing in disaster risk insurance schemes. In addition, new climate resiliency funding commitments would likely produce greater momentum behind the RMI's second annual Climate Change Week and increase the number of participants and stakeholders present.</p> <p>Also, youth needs would also be aided through the release of the National Youth Policy. This policy was noted to be under development in the RMI 2020-2030 National Strategic Plan. This would be a positive development on the youth file which consists of a larger portion of the population. Hopefully, the policy would address youth unemployment in a meaningful way to help the government prepare for the large amount of people that will enter the workforce within the next 10 years as the 0-14 demographic ages.</p> <p>In relation to MIMA and their annual meeting in April, the best-case situation would be that the government is receptive to the mayors' constructive feedback from previous RMI Executive Leadership Conferences and act on MIMA resolutions.</p>
<p>Worst Case</p>	<p>While a COVID-19 breakout is unlikely, the effects of the pandemic could persist. If oil prices remain at current levels, or increase, and low economic activity due to the pandemic continues, the government will face serious capacity constraints. The current levels of tuna transshipments could also persist and even decrease with high oil prices. This would result in an increase in unemployment levels in the short-term. Current rising inflation rates in the US, along with high oil prices and its repercussions on the economy would also decrease remittances to the RMI, which made up 13% of GDP in 2019 ²⁴¹.</p> <p>Regarding environment, the worst-case scenario is that the level of awareness of SIDS and the RMI raised at COP26 does not lead to an increased interest in climate resiliency projects in the short term from external stakeholders. Various climate resiliency projects are presently occurring in the RMI, however, more infrastructure improvements are needed to sustain and increase the government's capacity to deliver services. This would result in the RMI's second Climate Change Week in May 2022 having the same or reduced impact if they cannot garner the international community's attention to help mitigate the climate change crisis they are facing. The government's lack of ability to draw in international support for climate change would likely increase citizens, and youth in particular, demands on the government. These demands will further increase if the National Youth Policy is not released, or if no updates on the policy are provided.</p> <p>Lastly, the worst-case scenario in relation to MIMA is that the current trend of minimal government follow through on approved resolutions continues.</p>

**Wild
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The RMI is prone to natural disasters and extreme weather conditions. With the dry season from December to April, they have experienced droughts in both El Nino and La Nina weather conditions with varying degrees and effects. For example, in 2013, about 16,000 people were severely affected by droughts conditions in La Nina, including chronic water shortages ²⁴². Therefore, as this year is a La Nina year, it is possible that the RMI may experience droughts in their dry season. With 79.4% of the population dependent on rain catchment as a source of drinking water, as of 2011²⁴³, the effects of drought would have widespread impacts on the general population. In addition to drinking water, droughts would also negatively impact subsistence farming, of which 52% of the population relies on²⁴⁴, causing increased food insecurity. Beyond immediate needs, these droughts would likely garner discontent amongst the voting population towards both the government as there have multiple droughts in recent years and the government has been unable to improve emergency response delivery. Rural discontent specifically would also grow as emergency response delivery is slower to reach rural communities. The government's lack of capacity would also result in the perpetuation of dependency and reliance on external aid donors to help fill service gaps and assist in disaster response. For example, during the drought of 2016, the US deployed Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to assist the islands. On a positive note, however, these droughts would further confirm the climate change crisis within the Marshall Islands and serve as proof to external aid donors that the RMI needs more climate resiliency programs.

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