



# Republic of the Marshall Islands Sixth National Report Convention on Biological Diversity

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of Environment  
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Islands

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Convention on  
Biological Diversity





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\*Cover photos courtesy of Karl Fellenius

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## **Executive Summary**

This 6<sup>th</sup> National Report for the Republic of the Marshall Islands provides an update on the biodiversity status and trends, as well as progress towards the Strategic Development Goals and the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 including the Aichi Biodiversity Target 2020. This report is divided into five main parts.

Section I reports on the information of the targets being pursued at the national level. These targets were established in the National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBSAP). These targets are categorized under five themes which include: Conservation of Biodiversity and Biological Resources, Protection of Marine Biodiversity, Traditional Culture and Practices, People and Biodiversity, Biotechnology and Biodiversity and Biosafety and Biodiversity. Each theme has various goals which make up the national targets.

Section II provides information on the implementation measures taken, assessment of their effectiveness, associated obstacles and scientific and technical needs to achieve the national targets. This section contains the summary of legislation, policies, regulations, and other documents that have been put into effect to help achieve the goals of the NBSAP. These summarized documents are the measures taken to implement the NBSAP and to help move the Reimaanlok process forward.

Section III Assesses the progress towards achieving each national target. The assessment was derived mostly from the State of the Environment Report published in 2016, progress reported from the Reimaanlok process, activities of the Coastal Management Advisory Committee (CMAC) and legislation passed and implemented. Assessment is an ongoing process.

Section IV is a description of the national contribution to the achievement of each Global Aichi Biodiversity Target. The Global Aichi Biodiversity Targets are grouped under five strategic goals with each goal containing various targets. Most of the efforts to achieve these goals have come through community-based activities with support from the national government and governmental agencies, local NGOs, and academia. The activities that support the Aichi targets have largely been implemented through the Reimaanlok process with the support of CMAC. Legislation and regulations have also played a part in supporting these targets.

Section V is the updated biodiversity profile. The Republic of the Marshall Islands consists of twenty-nine low-lying coral atolls and five solitary low coral islands which rise over 6,000 meters (20,000 feet) from the abyssal plain to no more than a couple of meters above the surface of the equatorial Pacific and comprise the islands known to the Marshallese as Aelōñ Kein. This section summarizes the biodiversity of the Marshall Islands and includes land, marine and general biodiversity.

## ACRONYMS

CIA	Ministry of Culture and Internal Affairs (previously Internal Affairs)
CMAC	Coastal Management Advisory Council
CMI	College of the Marshall Islands
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EPA	Republic of the Marshall Islands Environmental Protection Agency
EPPSO	Economic Policy, Planning and Statistics Office
FAD	Fish Aggregating Device
FSM	Federated States of Micronesia
GEF	Global Environmental Fund
GMO	Genetically Modified Organism
HPO	Historic Preservation Office
IOM	International Office of Migration
IPR	Intellectual Property Rights
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
LRC	Local Resources Committee
MAWC	Majuro Atoll Waste Company
MCT	Micronesia Conservation Trust
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs (Now CIA)
MICS	Marshall Islands Conservation Society
MIMRA	Marshall Islands Marine Resources Agency
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan
NSP	National Strategic Plan
OCIT	Office of Commerce, Investment and Tourism
OEPPC	Office of Environmental Planning and Policy Coordination
PAN	Protected Area Network
PANF	Protected Area Network Fund
PIMPAC	Pacific Islands Marine Protected Area Community
PNA	Parties to the Nauru Agreement
RMI	Republic of the Marshall Islands
RMIEPA	Republic of the Marshall Islands Environmental Protection Agency
SEM Pasifika	Socio-Economic Monitoring
SOE	State Of Environment
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
USP	University of the South Pacific – Majuro Campus
WUTMI	Women United Together Marshall Island

# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



## AICHI BIODIVERSITY TARGETS

### *Strategic Goal A: Address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss by mainstreaming biodiversity across government and society*



#### **Target 1**

By 2020, at the latest, people are aware of the values of biodiversity and the steps they can take to conserve and use it sustainably.



#### **Target 2**

By 2020, at the latest, biodiversity values have been integrated into national and local development and poverty reduction strategies and planning processes and are being incorporated into national accounting, as appropriate, and reporting systems.



#### **Target 3**

By 2020, at the latest, incentives, including subsidies, harmful to biodiversity are eliminated, phased out or reformed in order to minimize or avoid negative impacts, and positive incentives for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity are developed and applied, consistent and in harmony with the Convention and other relevant international obligations, taking into account national socio economic conditions.



#### **Target 4**

By 2020, at the latest, Governments, business and stakeholders at all levels have taken steps to achieve or have implemented plans for sustainable production and consumption and have kept the impacts of use of natural resources well within safe ecological limits.

### *Strategic Goal B: Reduce the direct pressures on biodiversity and promote sustainable use*



#### **Target 5**

By 2020, the rate of loss of all natural habitats, including forests, is at least halved and where feasible brought close to zero, and degradation and fragmentation is significantly reduced.



#### **Target 6**

By 2020 all fish and invertebrate stocks and aquatic plants are managed and harvested sustainably, legally and applying ecosystem based approaches, so that overfishing is avoided, recovery plans and measures are in place for all depleted species, fisheries have no significant adverse impacts on threatened species and vulnerable ecosystems and the impacts of fisheries on stocks, species and ecosystems are within safe ecological limits.



#### **Target 7**

By 2020 areas under agriculture, aquaculture and forestry are managed sustainably, ensuring conservation of biodiversity.



#### **Target 8**

By 2020, pollution, including from excess nutrients, has been brought to levels that are not detrimental to ecosystem function and biodiversity.



#### **Target 9**

By 2020, invasive alien species and pathways are identified and prioritized,



priority species are controlled or eradicated, and measures are in place to manage pathways to prevent their introduction and establishment.



**Target 10**

By 2015, the multiple anthropogenic pressures on coral reefs, and other vulnerable ecosystems impacted by climate change or ocean acidification are minimized, so as to maintain their integrity and functioning.

***Strategic Goal C: To improve the status of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species and genetic diversity***



**Target 11**

By 2020, at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water, and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes.



**Target 12**

By 2020 the extinction of known threatened species has been prevented and their conservation status, particularly of those most in decline, has been improved and sustained.



**Target 13**

By 2020, the genetic diversity of cultivated plants and farmed and domesticated animals and of wild relatives, including other socio-economically as well as culturally valuable species, is maintained, and strategies have been developed and implemented for minimizing genetic erosion and safeguarding their genetic diversity.

***Strategic Goal D: Enhance the benefits to all from biodiversity and ecosystem services***



**Target 14**

By 2020, ecosystems that provide essential services, including services related to water, and contribute to health, livelihoods and well-being, are restored and safeguarded, taking into account the needs of women, indigenous and local communities, and the poor and vulnerable.



**Target 15**

By 2020, ecosystem resilience and the contribution of biodiversity to carbon stocks has been enhanced, through conservation and restoration, including restoration of at least 15 per cent of degraded ecosystems, thereby contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation and to combating desertification.



**Target 16**

By 2015, the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization is in force and operational, consistent with national legislation.

***Strategic Goal E: Enhance implementation through participatory planning, knowledge management and capacity building***



**Target 17**

By 2015 each Party has developed, adopted as a policy instrument, and has

commenced implementing an effective, participatory and updated national biodiversity strategy and action plan.



**Target 18**

By 2020, the traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and their customary use of biological resources, are respected, subject to national legislation and relevant international obligations, and fully integrated and reflected in the implementation of the Convention with the full and effective participation of indigenous and local communities, at all relevant levels.



**Target 19**

By 2020, knowledge, the science base and technologies relating to biodiversity, its values, functioning, status and trends, and the consequences of its loss, are improved, widely shared and transferred, and applied.



**Target 20**

By 2020, at the latest, the mobilization of financial resources for effectively implementing the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 from all sources, and in accordance with the consolidated and agreed process in the Strategy for Resource Mobilization, should increase substantially from the current levels. This target will be subject to changes contingent to resource needs assessments to be developed and reported by Parties.

## **I. Information on the targets being pursued at the national level**

The Republic of the Marshall Islands has adopted national biodiversity targets or equivalent commitments in line with the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Targets. The Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) was prepared through a process of consultation with the communities in six representative atolls and islands of the Marshall Islands and with the various stakeholder groups in Majuro.

These consultations culminated in a National Workshop, attended by representatives of 26 atolls and islands. Vision, goals, and an action plan were decided by the participants of the National Workshop. This was formulated in Marshallese and was translated into English.

In order to keep the meaning conveyed in Marshallese, the English translation can sometimes appear to be trivial or simplistic. This is due to the difficulties of conveying the subtleties and complexities of meaning inherent in a language such as Marshallese, where a simple word can convey a whole range of meanings to fluent speakers of the language.

The Republic of the Marshall Islands completed its NBSAP in 2000. The NBSAP was prepared in response to Article VI of the Convention of Biological Diversity, which requires all contracting parties to:

“(a) Develop national strategies, plans or programmes for the conservation and sustainable use of biological resources . . . ”

and “(b) Integrate, as far as possible and as appropriate, the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity into relevant sectoral or cross-sectoral plans, programmes and policies.”

As of the writing of this report, the NBSAP is in the process of being reviewed and updated. The NBSAP was been managed by the RMI Environmental Protection Agency (RMIEPA) and is now housed at the Office of Environmental Planning and Policy Coordination (OEPPC). The plan reflects and builds national aspirations upon existing national strategies and plans. It involved wide consultation with many sectors of the community and resulted in a strategy and plan which are practical, implementable and sustainable, with a high level of community ownership. The purpose of the NBSAP is to assist the Marshall Islands to plan for the conservation of its biodiversity and for in the sustainable use of its biological resources.

The principles used to develop this plan include:

- Values

The Constitution of the Republic of the Marshall Islands states “all we have and are today as people, we have received as a sacred heritage which we pledge ourselves to safeguard and maintain.” This places an obligation on the country to conserve its biodiversity resources as a sacred heritage from our forefathers, for the benefit of present and future generations.

- Governance and Sovereignty

Responsibility to set the direction for conservation and sustainable use of the Marshall Islands’ biodiversity is a joint responsibility of the central government (Cabinet, Nitijela, and Council of Iroij), and the local governments.

- Responsibility

For conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity lies with all stakeholders: central

## NATIONAL TARGETS

### **STRATEGIC THEME A - Conservation of Biodiversity and Biological Resources**

The desired outcome of this theme is to have lush, green vegetation. This is derived from the Marshallese word “kitokmaro”, which applies to vegetation and has come to mean “green and fruitful”. A well-tended land will be “kitokmaro”, bearing full and healthy fruits for use as food and vegetation providing a pleasant environment for the people.

People of the Marshall Islands have a strong bond with the sea and its many biodiverse resources because their existence has always depended on them. This close bond is expressed by the second part of the desired outcome: a marine environment that is healthy, clean and full of resources.

The third part of the desired outcome is to maintain the resources in a fashion that will allow future generations to harvest and enjoy them as well. The overriding factor for achieving the sustainable use of these resources is for the community to have full cooperation between all users of the resources.

This Theme mainly relates to Aichi Targets – 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 17, 18

This Theme also Relates to Aichi Targets – 9, 15, 19

This Theme relates to Sustainable Development Goals 2, 3, 6, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15

### **Theme A – Goal A- 1 - Activate Traditional “Mo” Conservation Sites**

The term "mo" (or "tabu") in the Marshall Islands is currently understood to refer to a traditional system of chiefly-designated portions of land, a whole islet, or a reef area, as restricted sites for the purpose of natural resource conservation. Yet Marshallese folklore, language, and preliminary ethnographic research reveal that historically, the term has been used more broadly to include special swimming, bathing, and surfing sites for high chiefs, as well as sacred spirit-filled resources – indicating more than a strictly functional or conservation-based purpose. Traditions such as "mo" are being deployed throughout Micronesia and beyond as culturally grounded guiding principles in creating national level conservation plans .<sup>1</sup>

It was determined during the NBSAP process that caring for the resources of the RMI has been neglected as society goes through a transitional period from traditional systems of governance to a more modern system of shared governance. When the modern system of government was established, it inherited some of the duties and responsibilities of the former governing system, but not all. Some functions, such as maintenance of “mo” have ‘fallen through the cracks’ during the process of shifting between the two systems.<sup>1</sup>

There are four actions listed under this goal.

- 1 – An awareness-raising program to promote knowledge and awareness of “mo” among all stakeholders, especially youth.
- 2 – Collecting of information on knowledge and practices of “mo”.
- 3 – Start a national consultation process to look at the relationship between “mo”, the sustainable use of natural resources, and land tenure systems.
- 4 – Incorporate “mo” into legislation and ordinances so that those areas considered to be of biodiversity importance could be designated as conservation areas or “mo”.

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<sup>1</sup> Ahlgren, I. (2012, November 22.) *Understanding “mo” Traditional and Revisionist Conceptions of Conservation Practices in the Marshall Islands*. Retrieved from <https://openresearch-repository.anu.edu.au/handle/1885/116113>.

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets**

1, 6, 7, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 18

**Other related Aichi Biodiversity Targets**

4, 5

**Other relevant information**

This objective supports the commitments made under the new Micronesia Challenge to effectively manage at least 50% of near-shore marine resources and 30% of terrestrial resources by 2030.

This objective also supports the Reimaanlok process.

**Relevant websites, web links, and files**

[Reimaanlok](#)

[Reimaanlok Field Guide](#)

[PAN Act](#)

[PAN Act Amendment](#)

**Level of application:**

- Regional/multilateral
- National/federal
- Subnational

**Theme A – Goal A- 2 - Imposition of Fines and Penalties on Those Who Destroy Our Resources**

This goal was established to express the serious situation whereby there is a breakdown of enforcement of rules and controls for the sustainable use of resources at all levels – national and local government and traditional systems.

There are two actions listed under this goal.

- 1 – Review and revise existing national legislation and local government ordinances.
- 2 – A program to review and revise enforcement procedures at the national and local levels.

**Level of application:**

- Regional/multilateral  
 National/federal  
 Subnational

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets**

1, 14, 17, 20

**Other related Aichi Biodiversity Targets**

11, 18

**Other relevant information**

This Objective supports the Reimaanlok process.

**Relevant websites, web links, and files**

[Reimaanlok](#)  
[Reimaanlok Field Guide](#)  
[PAN Act](#)  
[PAN Act Amendment](#)  
[RMI Fisheries Act](#)

**Theme A – Goal A- 3 - People Taking Initiatives in Planting Trees and Crops**

It was determined by the stakeholders that people had neglected planting of trees and crops. It is therefore emphasized that all individuals should take responsibility for planting of trees and crops to restore the original lush vegetation and replenish food crops.

There are three actions listed under this goal.

- 1 – A program to increase community awareness of the importance of planting trees and crops and organizing communities to initiate community-based actions in Majuro and in the outer islands and atolls.
- 2 – Strengthen the existing Agriculture Extension systems so that they have an active presence in the outer islands and they are able to provide the community-based program with the necessary support.
- 3 – More research on indigenous crop species and farming systems to provide the community-based program with plant cultivars suitable for the local environment.

**Level of application:**

- Regional/multilateral  
 National/federal  
 Subnational

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets**

1, 5, 7, 9, 13, 17

**Other related Aichi Biodiversity Targets**

2, 11, 12, 14, 16, 18

**Other relevant information**

This objective supports the Reimaanlok process.

**Relevant websites, web links, and files**

[Reimaanlok](#)  
[Reimaanlok Field Guide](#)

**STRATEGIC THEME B – Protection of Marine Biodiversity**

It is recognized that the importance of a healthy marine environment has enabled the people of the Marshall Islands to reap the benefits of their country's abundant resources. In order to pass on the same opportunity to the future generations, the present generation has to develop resource use practices that are sustainable, and not use the marine environment as a disposal site for solid and liquid waste.

In order to achieve this, resource users and policy makers need to have a better understanding of the marine ecosystem. This will require capacity building at many levels including decision makers at national and local levels, policy makers, resource owners and users.

Aichi – 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 17, 18, 19, 20

This Theme relates to Sustainable Development Goals 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14



## **Theme B – Goal B- 1 - Training and Capacity Building Toward Conserving Our Resources**

There is a definite need for training in both traditional practices as well as the modern and scientific principles to help revive “mo” and other conservation sites. This is necessary because many of the traditional practices and knowledge about management of marine resources are lost. The reliance on modern methods at the expense of traditional knowledge has led to unsustainable practices. Both traditional and modern systems are necessary. Training and education that bring together the knowledge and methods of the two systems are needed.

There are four actions listed under this goal.

- 1 – Incorporate principles of sustainable resource management, based on traditional and modern knowledge, into the education system.
- 2 – Encourage all university students to take courses in resource management practices in addition to the main areas of study.
- 3 – In-house training for all government staff and decision-makers in the principles of modern and traditional systems of resource management.
- 4 – Combine the program for community awareness with training for resource users in sustainable resource use practices.

### **Level of application:**

- Regional/multilateral
- National/federal
- Subnational

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets**

1, 2, 11, 14, 18, 19

**Other related Aichi Biodiversity Targets**

3, 4, 6, 7, 8

**Other relevant information**

This objective supports the commitments made under the new Micronesia Challenge to effectively manage at least 50% of near-shore marine resources and 30% of terrestrial resources by 2030.

This objective also supports the Reimaanlok process.

**Relevant websites, web links, and files**

[Reimaanlok](#)

[Reimaanlok Field Guide](#)

[PAN Act](#)

[PAN Act Amendment](#)

**Theme B – Goal B- 2 - Sustainable Fishing Practices**

Since traditional fishing practices were not always effective, and because of pressure of increased population, traditional fishing methods were abandoned in favor of modern fishing techniques. These modern methods are more efficient, but unsustainable. There is a need to develop systems that bring together effective modern methods, while applying traditional concepts of sustainability.

There are three actions listed under this goal.

1 – A program of research on fishing methods that combine modern methods with traditional knowledge and skills about sustainable methods of fishing.

2 – A program of community-based education and training in sustainable fishing practices.

3 – Improved enforcement of legislation and ordinances at the national and local levels.

**Level of application:**

Regional/multilateral

National/federal

Subnational

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets**

3, 6, 10, 14, 18, 19

**Other related Aichi Biodiversity Targets**

7, 8, 12

**Other relevant information**

This objective supports the commitments made under the new Micronesia Challenge to effectively manage at least 50% of near-shore marine resources and 30% of terrestrial resources by 2030.

This objective also supports the Reimaanlok process.

**Relevant websites, web links, and files**

[Reimaanlok](#)

[Reimaanlok Field Guide](#)

[PAN Act](#)

[PAN Act Amendment](#)

**STRATEGIC THEME C – Traditional Culture and Practices**

Traditional systems had enabled people to have a sustainable lifestyle. However, due to changes in lifestyles, expectations, and population growth, these traditional systems are no longer able to be sustained. As a result, these are being neglected and considered no longer to be relevant. Combined with the breaking down of the extended family system, the change whereby traditional knowledge was passed on from generation to generation has been broken. There is a need to strengthen research and development on resource use practices so that traditional knowledge is fully integrated with more modern scientific principles.

Aichi – 1, 6, 7, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 18

This Theme relates to Sustainable Development Goals – 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16

### **Theme C – Goal C- 1 - Apply Traditional Skills and Knowledge**

A number of areas need to be addressed if traditional skills and knowledge are applied for the sustainable use of biodiversity resources. These include: education, empowering legislation, clear delineation of roles and responsibilities for resource management issues, and research to bring together traditional skills and modern scientific methods.

There are four actions listed under this goal.

1 – Support current systems of vocational and academic training to incorporate skill development in local housebuilding, canoe-making and handicraft made from local products.

2 – Support current NGO initiatives in promoting local canoe-building skills, and other traditional arts and craftsmanship.

3 – Revise school curricula to promote an understanding of the benefits of using local products.

4 – Review and revise resource management legislation to incorporate traditional concepts of resource management.

#### **Level of application:**

- Regional/multilateral
- National/federal
- Subnational

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets**

1, 4, 7, 9, 13, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20

**Other related Aichi Biodiversity Targets**

This objective does not contribute to any other of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

**Other relevant information**

This objective supports the commitments made under the new Micronesia Challenge to effectively manage at least 50% of near-shore marine resources and 30% of terrestrial resources by 2030.

This objective also supports the Reimaanlok process.

**Relevant websites, web links, and files**

[Reimaanlok](#)

[Reimaanlok Field Guide](#)

[PAN Act](#)

[PAN Act Amendment](#)

**Theme C – Goal C- 2 - Institute Learning of the Culture Through the Traditional Way of Passing Knowledge from Elders to the Young, Through Schools, Community Meetings and Workshops**

*Lutok Koban Alele* is a term used in the Marshall Islands for showcasing cultural strengths and heritage, with traditional knowledge and skills passed down from the elders to their children through storytelling and shared vision. Modern lifestyles mean that many young people no longer have contact with their elders. This is mainly due to migration from the outer islands and rural areas to the urban centers for education and employment, resulting in a breakdown of traditional systems for passing on knowledge and skills from one generation to the next. The solution is to bring in elders to help pass on their traditional knowledge to young people through the school systems, community meetings and workshops.

There are two actions listed under this goal.

1 – Strengthen the curriculum in elementary and high schools by bringing in elder men and women to pass on traditional knowledge about resource management and tractional use of biodiversity.

2 – Strengthen and support current NGO initiatives such as Youth to Youth and the Ministry of Internal Affairs Mobile Team to enable them to extend their activities to include resource management issues.

**Level of application:**

- Regional/multilateral
- National/federal
- Subnational

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets**

1, 18, 19

**Other related Aichi Biodiversity Targets**

This objective does not contribute to any other of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

**Other relevant information**

This objective also supports the Reimaanlok process.

**Relevant websites, web links, and files**

[Reimaanlok](#)

[Reimaanlok Field Guide](#)

[PAN Act](#)

[PAN Act Amendment](#)

**Theme C – Goal C - 3 - A Move Toward More Use of Local Products**

Traditional skills for building of houses, boats and fishing gear are not used any more as new materials are being used instead. Imported tin roofing, plywood, and lumber have taken the place of traditional thatch roof houses. Outboard motorboats have replaced traditional outrigger canoes in much of the urban centers as well as outer island communities.

Traditional fishing traps and other methods have been set aside for modern fishing methods. Research and development are needed to make better use of local products by combining traditional knowledge and modern technology.

There are two actions listed under this goal.

1 – Research and development to make more effective use of local material to meet the country’s needs.

2 – Strengthen current government initiatives to promote more use of local products for food, handicrafts, housing, fishing boats and fishing gear.

**Level of application:**

- Regional/multilateral
- National/federal
- Subnational

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets**

1, 3, 18

**Other related Aichi Biodiversity Targets**

14

**Other relevant information**

This objective also supports the Reimaanlok process.

**Relevant websites, web links, and files**

[Reimaanlok](#)

[Reimaanlok Field Guide](#)

[PAN Act](#)

[PAN Act Amendment](#)

[Office of Commerce, Investment and Tourism](#)

**STRATEGIC THEME D – People and Biodiversity**

The main threats to the sustainable use of biodiversity resources identified by stakeholders were overpopulation and changing lifestyles. As the population increases beyond the carrying capacity of the environment and society, a several changes have occurred. These include increased pollution and waste, and unsustainable exploitation of resources. At the same time, there is a breakdown of social values, mores and extended-family structures, and the loss of social cohesion all of which have contributed to a dependency syndrome.

Aichi – 1, 2, 3, 4, 10, 14

This Theme relates to Sustainable Development Goals – 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16



## **Theme D – Goal D- 1 - Self-reliance Through Traditional Values and Culture**

The people of the Marshall Islands need to become independent. Changes in lifestyle and values have resulted in consumerism and a dependency on outside resources. Reactivation of traditional culture, in partnership with modern technology, will help promote self-reliance.

There are three actions listed under this goal.

1 – Strengthen public awareness and education campaigns to promote understanding of traditional knowledge and skills.

2 – Support government to initiate policies on reduction dependency on imported food and materials.

3 – Strengthen research and development to develop and demonstrate practical benefits of using products and technologies that combine traditional knowledge and modern methods.

### **Level of application:**

- Regional/multilateral
- National/federal
- Subnational

### **Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets**

1, 2, 11, 14, 18, 19

### **Other related Aichi Biodiversity Targets**

3, 4, 6, 7, 8

### **Other relevant information**

This objective also supports the Reimaanlok process.

### **Relevant websites, web links, and files**

[Reimaanlok](#)

[Reimaanlok Field Guide](#)

[PAN Act](#)

[PAN Act Amendment](#)

### **Theme D – Goal D- 2 - Population Awareness**

Overpopulation is a major problem affecting the sustainability of the biodiversity resources of the country. There is an urgent need to reduce the rate of both population increase and urbanization. The population policy needs to be revised and implemented to involve all sectors of the community through an intensive program of awareness-raising and education. This will enable all people to take responsibility for their own actions.

There are three actions listed under this goal.

1 – Revision and implementation of population policy, combined with allocation of adequate resources and monitoring.

2 – Improve employment prospects and services in the outer atolls and islands.

#### **Level of application:**

- Regional/multilateral  
 National/federal  
 Subnational

#### **Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets**

1, 2

#### **Other related Aichi Biodiversity Targets**

This objective does not contribute to any other of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

#### **Other relevant information**

This objective also supports the Reimaanlok process.

#### **Relevant websites, web links, and files**

[Marshall Island Census - 2011](#)

### **Theme D – Goal D- 3 - Working Cooperatively and Justly With One Another**

There needs to be a bond in the community for it to function effectively. Leaders need to be trustworthy. All people need to respect each other. This will help build unity and partnership so that people work together for the common good of the country. This is an issue that affects the system of governance and social structures.

There are no actions listed under this goal.

**Level of application:**

Regional/multilateral

National/federal

Subnational

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets**

1, 3, 4, 18, 19

**Other related Aichi Biodiversity Targets**

17

**Other relevant information**

This objective also supports the Reimaanlok process.

**Relevant websites, web links, and files**

[Reimaanlok](#)

[Coastal Management Advisory Council](#)

**Theme D – Goal D- 4 - Clean Up the Environment**

Immediate action is needed to rid the environment of rubbish and harmful substances. This process must start by people cleaning their own immediate surroundings and to change their personal habits of carefree disposal of rubbish. All sectors, including government and private sector, must exercise greater efforts in addressing the degradation of the environment.

There are five actions listed under this goal.

1 – Strengthen public awareness and education programs for people to clean their immediate environment and reduce their dependence on imported food, non-disposable packaging and other pollutants.

2 – Strengthen current initiatives in the major urban areas to improve solid waste management.

3 – Government policy to discourage use of imported non-decomposable packaging materials.

4 – Allocate adequate resources to regulatory agencies to ensure enforcement of existing legislation and ordinances on pollution and waste disposal.

5 – All public and private sectors to work together to promote “reduce, reuse and recycle”.

**Level of application:**

Regional/multilateral

National/federal

Subnational

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets**

1, 8, 14

**Other related Aichi Biodiversity Targets**

This objective does not contribute to any other of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

**Other relevant information**

This objective also supports the Reimaanlok process.

**Relevant websites, web links, and files**

[Reimaanlok](#)

[Plastic and Styrofoam Ban Legislation](#)

**STRATEGIC THEME E – Biotechnology and Biodiversity**

Biotechnology is in its infancy in the Marshall Islands. Conventional breeding techniques have been used for the improvement of food crops, and to a more limited extent, some marine species. However, there is considerable potential for improvement potential for improving the quality of food crops, marine food resources, and other species through biotechnology. There is also a need to ensure that the genetic diversity of traditional crops, native plants and marine species is conserved for future use.

Biotechnology also offers significant potentials for the use of products for pharmaceutical and other purposes, such as scientific research, cosmetics, and sources of resistance to pests and diseases. The benefits from the use of biodiversity for biotechnological purposes need to be shared with the people of the Marshall Islands.

Aichi – 1, 4, 7, 9, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 19

This Theme relates to Sustainable Development Goals – 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15

### **Theme E – Goal E-1 - Conservation of Genetic Diversity**

The country has limited but significant genetic diversity which provides resources for the people. The diversity of species such as pandanus and coconuts, as well as marine species, provides both food as well as having cultural importance. These could easily be lost through the accidental or deliberate introduction of invasive species.

The country is not fully aware of issues such as the importance of genetic diversity and the impact of biotechnology. For example, there may be significant potential in many of the native species for scientific research for a variety of purposes. It is important that the existing genetic diversity is recognized and not lost. This requires research on conservation and the use of genetic diversity.

There are two actions listed under this goal.

1 – Research, including consultation with elders to document the genetic diversity of significant plant, animal and marine species.

2 – Establishment of “in situ” and “ex situ” gene banks of significant genotypes, of both scientific and cultural importance.

#### **Level of application:**

- Regional/multilateral
- National/federal
- Subnational

#### **Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets**

1, 13, 16, 19

#### **Other related Aichi Biodiversity Targets**

9, 12, 15, 18

#### **Other relevant information**

This objective also supports the Reimaanlok process.

### **Theme E – Goal E-2 - Protection of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)**

Presently, there is no legislation on IPR in the Marshall Islands. The issues involved with IPR concern the protection of traditional knowledge, the use of, and access to, indigenous sources of genetic materials for biotechnology purposes, and the sharing of benefits from bioprospecting. It is important that due attention be given to the protection of traditional knowledge and skills, particularly those that are likely to have a commercial potential, such as traditional medicines. There is also a need to ensure that access to the genetic resources and traditional knowledge is not denied for biotechnology purpose. However, provision is made for the equitable share of benefits of their use between the traditional owners and those developing the biotechnology potential.

There are two actions listed under this goal.

- 1 – Research to document traditional knowledge and skills on the uses of biodiversity.
- 2 – Preparation of legislation on IPR that:
  - a – protects the rights of indigenous owners of genetic resources and traditional knowledge
  - b – provides access to that knowledge and resources with the prior informed consent of the owners and provided that these owners have an equitable share of the benefits from the use of that knowledge and genetic materials.

#### **Level of application:**

- Regional/multilateral  
 National/federal  
 Subnational

#### **Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets**

1, 13, 16, 18, 19

#### **Other related Aichi Biodiversity Targets**

9, 12, 15

#### **Other relevant information**

This objective also supports the Reimaanlok process.

## **STRATEGIC THEME F – Biosafety and Biodiversity**

There are a number of biosafety issues. The most urgent issue is that of quarantine – the deliberate or accidental importation of organisms that may or may not have been genetically modified. This would include exotic species being introduced or native species that have been modified outside the country and reintroduced. Both types of introduction are threats to marine and land biological resources and biodiversity. Invasive species pose one of the biggest threats to the sustainability of biodiversity resources in the country.

The second issue is the possibility of field testing genetically modified organisms (GMOs), that have been modified overseas. At present, there are no restrictions or controls on the importation of these organisms. Biosafety issues regarding restriction and controls along with quarantine issues need to be addressed.

The third issue is that of the biosafety of imported foods. As a country heavily reliant on imported foods, the Marshalls Islands is particularly vulnerable. The country does not have the resources to test the safety of genetically modified foods, neither does it have access to information that allows authorities to know whether imported foods are genetically modified or not, and the potential risks to the environment and human health.

Aichi – 1, 2, 4, 9, 13, 16, 17, 18, 19

This Theme relates to Sustainable Development Goals - 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15

**Theme F – Goal F-1 - To Have in Place Legislation and Regulatory Framework for Biosafety**

The current legislation on biosafety is outdated. It does not deal with the issues of biosafety such as the importation of GMOs or food products derived from GMOs. The legislation does not provide for either environmental or social impact assessments, nor does it clearly define roles and responsibilities of different government agencies.

There are two actions listed under this goal.

1 – Review and revise existing legislation on biosafety would include:

a – Quarantine provisions for the importation of new or genetically modified organisms.

b – Controls over the field testing of genetically modified organisms in the Marshall Islands by local and/or foreign organizations.

c – Controls over the importation of food products from genetically modified organisms. This includes mandatory labeling requirements, or the banning of imported genetically modified foods as appropriate.

d – Provisions for environmental impact assessments and social impact assessments as

well as defining responsibilities so as to avoid conflicts of interest.

2 – Strengthen enforcement procedures for infringement of legislation and regulation.

**Level of application:**

Regional/multilateral

National/federal

Subnational



**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets**

2, 13, 16, 17

**Other related Aichi Biodiversity Targets**

4

**Other relevant information**

This objective also supports the Reimaanlok process.

**Relevant websites, web links, and files**

[Marshall Islands Biosafety Legislative Review](#)

**Theme F – Goal F-2 - Establish Systems to Implement New or Revise Legislation and Regulation of Biosafety**

At the time of the publication of the NBSAP, the system that is responsible for biosafety issues is not adequate for a number of reasons. There is a lack of capacity of accessing risks and dealing with technical issues, such as assessment of possible hazards from genetically modified organisms. This is aggravated by a lack of technical resources and of adequate financial resources. There is a conflict as regulatory functions are assigned to the agency also responsible for production.

There are five actions listed under this goal.

- 1 – Ensure that provisions for regulatory and productions are assigned to separate agencies and to different Ministers.
- 2 – Ensure that adequate training of staff is provided in risk assessment, risk management, environmental impact assessments and social impact assessments procedures.
- 3 – Awareness raising about biosafety issues for political leaders, relevant senior government officials, and the private sector.
- 4 – Ensure funding of biosafety systems though user pay charges or government funding.
- 5 – Establish linkages with national or regional organizations to supplement the technical know-how of biosafety in the Marshall Islands

**Level of application:**

Regional/multilateral

National/federal

Subnational

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets**

2, 13, 16, 17

**Other related Aichi Biodiversity Targets**

4

**Other relevant information**

This objective also supports the Reimaanlok process.

**Relevant websites, web links, and files**

[Marshall Islands Biosafety Legislative Review](#)

## **II: Implementation measures taken, assessment of their effectiveness, and associated obstacles and scientific and technical needs to achieve national targets**

This section contains the summary of legislation, policies, regulations, and other documents that have been put into effect to help achieve the goals of the NBSAP. These summarized documents are the measures taken to implement the NBSAP and to help move the Reimaanlok process forward.

The documents presented in this section are:

- [The National Strategic Plan \(NSP\)](#)
- [Coastal Management Advisory Council \(CMAC\)](#)
- [Reimaanlok](#)
- [Reimaanlok Field Guide](#)
- [PAN Act](#)
- [PAN Act Amendment](#)
- The National Ocean Policy
- [The Micronesian Challenge](#)
- [RMI Fisheries Act](#)
- The RMI Fisheries Act Amendment 2016

### **National Strategic Plan (NSP)**

The NSP was adopted in June 2014. The National Strategic Plan is designed as a framework to coordinate the articulated medium-term development goals and objectives of the RMI government at the national level. The NSP is used by government leaders as the roadmap for development moves towards the scheduled completion of *The Compact of Free Association*, as Amended, funding in 2023.

The NSP enables the RMI government leaders to articulate the direction of priorities in anticipation of 2023. The RMI government, through the NSP, outlines the chronological pathway for implementation of national priorities. The NSP has five (5) thematic areas that include: Social Development, Environment, Climate Change and Resiliency, Infrastructure Development, Sustainable Economic Development, and Good Governance. This theme references and incorporates aspects of the NBSAP.

The section on Environment, Climate Change and Resiliency is divided into three sections: Vulnerability Assessment and Disaster Risk Reduction, Disaster Management and Response, and Conservation Resource Management. This sector's overview states: "Climate Change and Resiliency are two of the most important issues facing the RMI and other low-lying atoll countries. At the 2013 Pacific Islands Forum, held in Majuro, the *Majuro Declaration* was

agreed to by all delegations. As stated in the Forum Final Communique: “The Declaration is intended to highlight the Leaders’ strong political commitment to be the region of Climate Leaders, and is an effort to spark a new wave of climate leadership that accelerates the reduction and phasing down of greenhouse gas pollution worldwide.”

This section contains an overview of the development objectives for each strategic area in the Environment, Climate Change and Resiliency Sector. The identification of these development objectives is the result of a review of current national policies, ministry plans, policy documents, legislation and other relevant documents. Input from stakeholders was also critical in identifying the Environment, Climate Change and Resiliency Sector Development Objectives. The development objectives provide the initial “roadmap” regarding what issues the RMI government has prioritized in this sector.

These development objectives include continued implementation and awareness of the principles of the *Majuro Declaration*, mainstream risk reduction measures into ongoing conservation and resource management, and ensure and maintain the quality of marine waters as appropriate for their planned and actual use including recreational, conservation, fishing, and industrial practices.

The NSP also provides a “snapshot” of the types of indicators to be used for monitoring NSP implementation. The table below from the NSP details those indicators for this section:

<b>TABLE 14: ENVIRONMENT CLIMATE CHANGE AND RESILIENCY SECTOR: NSP INDICATORS SNAPSHOT</b>	
<b>VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT AND DISASTER RISK REDUCTION</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Saltwater intrusion to wells and crops</li> <li>▪ Drinking water quality</li> <li>▪ Storm intensity, erosion, flooding</li> <li>▪ Coral bleaching</li> <li>▪ Rain patterns</li> <li>▪ Air and sea temperatures</li> </ul>	
<b>DISASTER MANAGEMENT AND RESPONSE</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Percentage of JNAP actions mainstreamed into key organizations mandates at national and local levels</li> <li>▪ Level of integration of appropriate traditional knowledge identified in Disaster Risk Management/Climate Change Adaptation programs by local community groups</li> <li>▪ NGOs and national and local government responsible agencies</li> <li>▪ Disaster assessments (preparedness reports, emergency drills and post-disaster reports) indicate a timely and effective response by the public</li> <li>▪ Number of reported cases of water shortages, contamination and related sickness decreased</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Government reintroduction land-use planning and building codes policies during the first three years of JNAP implementation</li> </ul>	
<b>CONSERVATION RESOURCE MANAGEMENT</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maps and datasheets of natural resource and conservation targets and uses</li> <li>▪ Draft management plan, with goals, actions, timelines, and budget</li> <li>▪ Draft management plan ordinances</li> <li>▪ Resource management assessment completed</li> </ul>	
<p><b>For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity</b></p>	

### Target(s) it contributes

Supports Aichi Targets 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17,18, 19

Supports all the SDGs

### Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:

- Measure taken has been effective
- Measure taken has been partially effective
- Measure taken has been ineffective
- Unknown

The implementation of the National Strategic Plan has only been partially successful. The NSP was designed so that the responsible ministries report the measures and actions taken to implement the NSP through a website maintained by the Economic Policy, Planning and Statistics Office (EPPSO). In June 2019, EPPSO conducted a *Stocktake* of the NSP with the following results.

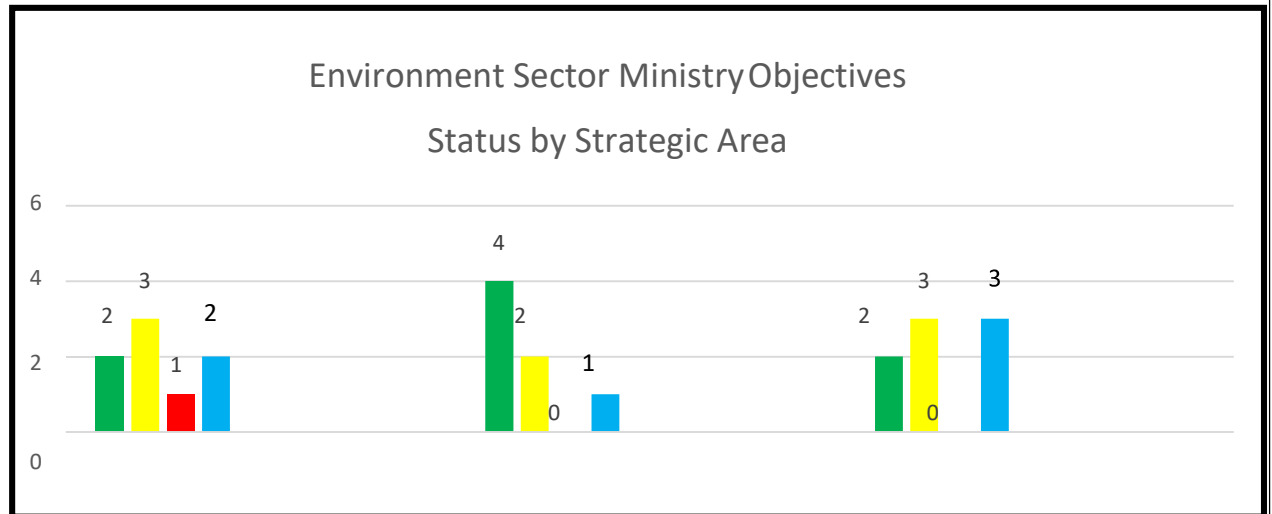
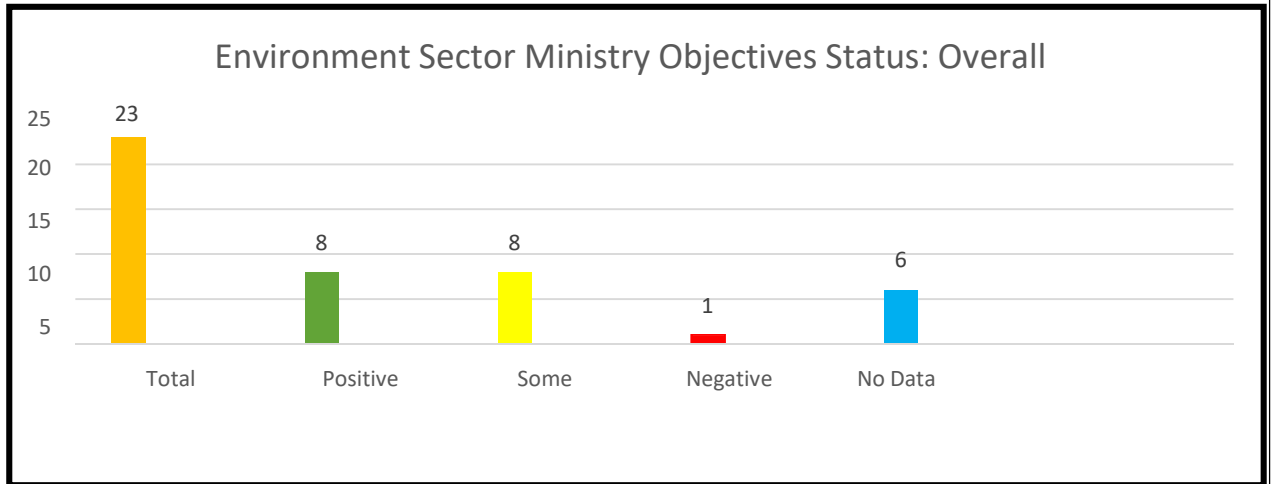
Each of the Over-Arching Objectives (and related ministry objectives) is evaluated based on the overall status of the indicators. The evaluation is completed as follows.

- **Positive Progress (Majority of Indicators evaluated as Positive Progress)**
- **Some Progress (Majority of the indicators evaluated as Some/Ongoing/Planned Progress)**
- **Nominal Progress (Majority of Indicators evaluated as Nominal Progress)**
- **No Data/Unable to Evaluate based on current or lack of information**

For the Environment Sector, three strategic areas were evaluated. These areas were Vulnerability Assessment and Disaster Risk Reduction, Disaster Management and Response, and Conservation Resource Management. Included were the four over-arching goals which were all evaluated with some progress. These goals and results are listed below.

OA 1.1: Continued Implementation and Awareness of the Principles of the Majuro Declaration  
OA 1.2: Mainstream Risk Reduction Measures into Ongoing Conservation and Resource Management  
OA 2.1: Establish a Coordinated System of International Emergency Response and Humanitarian Aid  
OA 3.1: Ensure and Maintain the Quality of Marine Waters as Appropriate for their Planned and Actual Use Including Recreational, Conservation, Fishing, and Industrial Practices

Twenty-three Ministry Objectives (Progress Status)



**Relevant websites, web links and files**

[The National Strategic Plan \(NSP\)](#)

**Obstacles and scientific and technical needs related to the measure taken:**

**ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND RESILIENCY SECTOR: NSP DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES**  
**VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT AND DISASTER RISK REDUCTION**

▪ **Lack of Clear Pathway in Order to Undertake Vulnerability Assessment and Disaster Risk Reduction**

- ✓ *Prioritization of vulnerability assessments in terms of risk over the short and long term. Difficult questions need to be addressed about which areas deserve the limited adaptation funding available, and which areas will be left in their 'natural' state. A national policy with respect to aggregate sources to be used for risk reduction should be addressed.*
- ✓ *Lack of technical capacity to implement reduction measures. Much vulnerability has been identified but few of the projects implemented demonstrate that risk has been effectively reduced for drought, erosion, wave inundation, flood, and wind hazards in particular. Major gaps exist with respect to wave inundation mapping and local evacuation planning in population centers. Even simple ridge-building is not being implemented to any significant degree*
- ✓ *Mainstreaming of risk reduction measures into ongoing conservation and resource management. Agency managers need to identify how their initiatives address and mitigate hazards related to climate change. This needs to be linked to the agreed-upon priority areas for development and coastal infrastructure protection, and funding for low priority areas diverted elsewhere*
- ✓ *Effective implementation of the Reimaanlok approach in risk reduction. Communities perceive Reimaanlok as only being for conservation purposes, and opportunities for broader participation in assessing risks and identifying appropriate local reduction measures are being missed*
- ✓ *Continued focus on vulnerability to drought so that risk reduction measures can be implemented where they will be most effective. Long-term forecasting capacity needs to improve*
- ✓ *Development of effective community college-level training in disaster risk reduction with links to capacity-building at the Govt. Emergency Operations Center*
- ✓ *Climate change awareness at the national level needs to translate into more effective communication with landowners and communities, where an undereducated populace currently exhibits apathy and a 'business as usual' mentality to protecting their lives and property*
- ✓ *Expand collection of biophysical data useful for effective development of early warningsystems.*
- ✓ *Focus on renewable energy as the primary strategy for demonstrating national commitment to reducing global greenhouse gas emissions. International aid for disaster risk reduction will not reach anywhere near desired levels unless this can be demonstrated*

**DISASTER MANAGEMENT AND RESPONSE**

▪ **Lack of Coordinated System of International Emergency Response and Humanitarian Aid**

- ✓ *Effective communication of emergency protocols to the public once wave inundation mapping and local evacuation planning is established*
- ✓ *Establishment of disaster shelters and a center for distributing relief supplies*
- ✓ *Community awareness of ways to prepare households and property for natural disasters*

- ✓ *Effective development and communication of an early warning system that includes outer island communities*
- ✓ *Establish a coordinated system of international emergency response and humanitarian aid.*
- ✓ *Effective implementation of the Reimaanlok approach in the emergency preparedness and recovery part of disaster management. Communities perceive Reimaanlok as only being for conservation purposes, and opportunities for broader participation in preparing for, and recovering after disasters are being missed*
- ✓ *Continuity of the Government Emergency Operations Center and effective protocol training of operations staff*

**CONSERVATION RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

- **The Lack of Coordination Regarding Maintaining the Quality of Marine Waters as Appropriate for their Planned and Actual Use Including Recreational, Conservation, Fishing, and Industrial Practices**
  - ✓ *Understanding that everything that has to do with land, water, and air resources in the RMI is embodied in this strategic focus area. Impacts related to climate change and the urgent need to establish resiliency, however, necessitate additional efforts at disaster risk reduction. With the exception of deeper marine areas of the EEZ, the limited terrestrial land area of atolls means that there is no effective difference between coastal management and resource management in the RMI. The coastal zone is the RMI*
  - ✓ *Effective sustainable coastal planning and management, with an emphasis on Reimaanlok*
  - ✓ *Criteria for conservation linked to prioritization strategies for biodiversity/disaster risk reduction*
  - ✓ *Strengthening of land use and settlement planning processes and systems (including lease arrangements) at national and local levels*
  - ✓ *Assessment of RMI policy with respect to sourcing of aggregate for construction and coastal protection. There needs to be clear direction on issues and options related to lagoon sediment mining via suction dredging versus shoreline excavation, live versus dead coral mining, in-country reef flat mining versus outsourcing of rip-rap aggregate, and how these options conflict or adhere to the current coastal management policy framework*
  - ✓ *Formalizing a preliminary environmental assessment process within the requirements for environmental impact assessment. There is a major lack of capacity to carry out Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for both minor and major projects in the RMI. The scoping mechanism in the EIA and sustainable development regulations can be adapted to allow for PEAs as the first step in this process*

### **Coastal Management Advisory Council (CMAC)**

The Coastal Management Advisory Council is a cross-sectoral working group of people from a range of organizations in the Marshall Islands, all with a common interest in the conservation, development and management of coastal and marine resources. CMAC functions as an advisory and coordinating body and all activities are carried out under the auspices of the member organizations. CMAC is an essential body to ensure the coordination and collaboration of national efforts in conservation.

CMAC was originally called the MEIC working group which consisted of representatives from the Marshall Island Marine Resources Authority (MIMRA), the RMI Environmental Protection Agency (RMIEPA), the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) now the Ministry of Culture and Internal Affairs (CIA) and the College of the Marshall Islands (CMI). It was established on November 11, 2002 pursuant to a Memorandum of Understanding signed by MIMRA, EPA, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and CMI. The purpose of the group was to assist local government councils to formulate fishery management plans and fisheries management ordinances, and to harmonize efforts in facilitating the implementation of community fisheries management programs to all communities of the Marshall Islands



Over the years the group has expanded in membership to include MIMRA, RMIEPA, CIA, CMI (also including Land Grant and Sea Grant, the Ministry of Resources and Development (now the Ministry of Natural Resources and Commerce (NRC), the Office of Environmental Planning and Policy (OEPPC), the RMI Historic Preservation Office (HPO), the Marshall Islands Conservation Society (MICS), Women Untied Together Marshall Islands (WUTMI), the International Office of Migration – RMI office (IOM), and the University of the South Pacific (USP).

It has also expanded its focus to include creation of marine and terrestrial protected areas and other areas of sustainable development and conservation. Up until 2018, this committee was an Ad Hoc committee. In 2018 the legislation passed the Protected Area Network Law which institutionalized CMAC. The purpose of the Coastal Management Advisory Council (CMAC) will be to continue to work with local communities, local governments, NGOs and others who are interested in developing policy for their coastal and terrestrial resources. It needs to be emphasized here that this group is an advisory body only and is not for the purpose of creating policy or legislation.

Any community, government or NGO within the Marshall Islands can present to this group a request to help them develop policies and procedures for creating plans for sustainable development or conservation actions. CMAC will help through their expertise, the goals of MIMRA. CMAC does not dictate or mandate any action but recommends the best course of action.

**For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Supports Aichi Targets 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 14, 15, 18, 19, 20

Supports SDG – 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17

**Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

- Measure taken has been effective
- Measure taken has been partially effective
- Measure taken has been ineffective
- Unknown

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

There has been no formal assessment of the success of the CMAC. It is closely tied into the success of the Reimaanlok since the CMAC is one of the implementors of this process and acts in an advisory capacity only.

**Relevant websites, web links and files**

[Coastal Management Advisory Council](#)

[Reimaanlok](#)

[Reimaanlok Field Guide](#)

**Reimaanlok- Looking to the Future**

In response to the NBSAP, the Reimaanlok was created in May 2008. The Reimaanlok is a community based national conservation plan. It is designed to be a bottom up approach to conservation management. The Reimaanlok is an eight-step process with the ultimate goal to create management plans for the effective sustainable use and conservation of natural resources on all atolls and islands in the Marshall Islands.

Effective conservation of areas in the Marshall Islands is defined as management that: maintains or improves atoll ecosystems—their biodiversity, health, productivity and integrity, sustains artisanal subsistence use of resources and protects and preserves areas of significant natural and cultural heritage. Areas under effective conservation have publicly developed, legitimately recognized and actionable management plans. These plans have clear management objectives, long-term biological and socio-economic monitoring and evaluation against management objectives, and some form of recognized customary or legal rules and compliance system.

In addition, areas under effective conservation are part of a national system of conservation areas that includes representation of all habitat types and special conservation targets.

Existing and proposed conservation areas in the Marshalls can be broadly classified into two different management regimes, providing a useful comparison with internationally recognized categories for protected areas.

Type I - Subsistence Only. This area is managed for subsistence non-commercial use. In international standards this relates to The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Category VI- Managed Resource Protected Area. The management area may include some Type II - Special Reserve no-take or highly restricted areas as part of the management regime.

Type II - Special Reserve. This area is subject to a high level of protection, and occasionally a very low level of subsistence or special occasion activities. In international standards, this relates to IUCN Category Ib. - Wilderness Area.

The eight steps that comprise the Reimaanlok process are:

Step 1 – Initiation. In order for an area or atoll to participate in this process, a request in writing from the local government or the national government is submitted to MIMRA or any other member of CMAC.

Step 2 – Project Scoping and Setup – CMAC as a group or a lead agency from the CMAC membership establishes a project workplan, determines team of facilitators and identifies budget and resources. Budget and resources can be provided by individual members of CMAC through grants or through their own budgets.

Step 3 – Building Commitment - Visits are made by the national team to carry out education and awareness about the benefits of conservation and resource management, and to build trust with the community. Through this process a Local Resource Committee (LRC) is established. This committee consist of different representatives from the community reflecting their diversity. For example, there could be representatives from men, women, youth, fishers, churches, etc.

Step 4 – Collecting and Managing Information - Further visits focus on: collection and documentation of local knowledge and use of resources, socio-economic information and baseline scientific information. These include marine and terrestrial resource surveys and socio-economic surveys. This information is then presented to the community in a form which is understandable in order for the community to make informed decisions.

Step 5 – Developing the Management Plan - Several visits are made to the community to develop, draft and revise a detailed management plan, local ordinances and regulations.

Step 6 – Sign Off – The community’s commitment to the plan is through sign-off of the management plan that they developed.

Step 7 – Monitoring, Evaluation and Adaptive Management – The LRC and members of CMAC monitor achievement of the objectives – both biological and socio-economic. From the results collected the community adapts the management plan accordingly.

Step 8 – Maintaining Commitment - CMAC helps ensure the community has adequate support for ongoing management.

**For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Supports Aichi Targets 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 14, 15, 18, 19, 20

Supports SDG 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17

**Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

- Measure taken has been effective
- Measure taken has been partially effective
- Measure taken has been ineffective
- Unknown

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

The Reimaanlok process has been very successful as is shown in the chart below. However, it is not complete as all of the atolls have not gone through the process to achieve the ultimate goal of having a resource management plan in place with ordinances and regulations. This is an on-going process.

**Status of Reimaanlok Community-based Resource Management Planning by Site - August 21, 2019**

Pending	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6	Step 7	Step 8
Kwajalein	Jaluit		Majuro - Ajeltake	Ailinglaplap - Bouj	Ujae	Majuro - Bikirin	Ailuk	
Rongerik	Kili		Majuro - Buruon	Ailinglaplap	Lae	Majuro - Drenmeo	Namdrik	
Rongelap				Jabat	Wotho	Majuro - Boka Botin		
Ailinginae				Namu	Ebon	Majuro - Ene Kalamur		
Bikini				Mili	Wotje	Majuro - Woja		
Enewetak				Arno	Utrik			
Ujelang				Aur	Mejit			
Erikub				Bikar	Lib			
Jemo				Bokak	Maloelap			
Taka				Likiep				
Nadrikdrik								

**Relevant websites, web links and files**

[Coastal Management Advisory Council](#)

[Reimaanlok](#)

[Reimaanlok Field Guide](#)

**Obstacles and scientific and technical needs related to the measure taken:**

As with most of the implementation measures, the vast area that the Marshall Islands covers creates a major obstacle. The logistics and funding to be able to cover all of the atolls and islands is a tremendous burden. It is the goal of these implementation measures to depend on local capacity to achieve the goals set forth. There needs to be more capacity building of local Marshallese to carry out these efforts.

**Reimaanlok – An Approach to Community Based Management – Facilitator’s Guide to Implementing the Reimaanlok Conservation Planning Process**

To complement the Reimaanlok, the Facilitator’s Guide was created in 2012. This facilitator’s guide is designed to be used in conjunction with Reimaanlok. The purpose of this publication is to provide Reimaanlok facilitators a step-by-step procedure. It includes management tools and examples that will help facilitators establish resource management plans and community-based conservation areas that consider current and future trends (including climate change), locally and globally, that affect the islands’ resources and their sustainability.

This guide was developed over the past ten years and implemented by the partners engaged in the Coastal Management Advisory Council (CMAC). It builds upon many approaches applied both locally and internationally (i.e., Pacific Island Marine Protected Area Community or PIMPAC and Socioeconomic Monitoring or SEM Pasifika). It was developed from lessons learned and mistakes made. Each time the process was used, analysis is conducted, and adjustments made. Although this guide does not claim to be the “be-all, end-all” guide, it has been tested and proven to be very effective in the Marshall Islands. It also integrates a climate change lens into community conservation planning.

**For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Supports Aichi Targets 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 14, 15, 18, 19, 20

Supports SDG 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17

**Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

- Measure taken has been effective
- Measure taken has been partially effective
- Measure taken has been ineffective
- Unknown

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

Although no formal assessment has been done, this tool can be assessed by the end results. The Facilitator's Guide was published in notebook form. This was done so that as new tools are developed and others are replaced, they can be easily inserted or deleted in the Guide. It has been used as the only tool for the Reimaanlok process by CMAC. The end results of the usage of this guide has been effectively managed conservation areas with a management plan, ordinances and monitoring and evaluation. By the use of the Guide, facilitators are able to easily replicate the steps necessary to achieve these results.

**Relevant websites, web links and files**

[Coastal Management Advisory Council](#)

[Reimaanlok](#)

[Reimaanlok Field Guide](#)

**Protected Area Network (PAN) Act 2015**

The PAN Act bolstered the Reimaanlok process by creating a nationwide network of protected areas in the Republic of the Marshall Islands. This network will consist of areas in the country that have been designated by the Ministry of Resources and Development (now the Ministry of Natural Resources and Commerce). Each area included in this network is eligible for assistance and support under this Act. The network is administered by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Commerce (NRC) ministry and managed locally by Local Resources Committees (LRC) (formed under the Reimaanlok process).

The categories of the protected areas, Types I and II, were designed to align with the categories created in the Reimaanlok. The designation of areas that are eligible under this act is through the NRC in consultation with the LRCs and the local governments where the area is located.

To implement this act and determine which areas are eligible for funding, a PAN office and a Technical Advisory Committee were created. The Technical Advisory Committee is formed by the Coastal Advisory Management Council from its members. The function of the committee will be to review applications from the PAN Fund and make recommendations to the PAN Office for grants up to the amount available for disbursement each year.

Eligibility to receive funds under the PAN act requires the responsible authority to submit a plan of management to the PAN Office. Within three months of submitting of the plan, the PAN Office must either provide comments (relating to whether the plan meets the requirements of relevant guidelines) back to the responsible authority or adopt the plan. The PAN office, with recommendation from the responsible party, has the authority to amend or alter a plan of management periodically, cancel a plan of management or, cancel a plan of management and substitute a new plan of management.

The PAN Act provides for the creation of a Protected Areas Network Fund (PANF). The PANF is responsible for administering, managing, investing and disbursing funding from all sources. These sources can include funding from the Micronesian Conservation Trust, to operate the PAN and the PAN office related responsibilities. This entity is independent and free from government influence and perpetual in existence. The PANF uses all funds given for its administration for the sole purpose of the continuing operation of the PAN. The Board of Directors of the PANF is charged with receiving and managing funds generated or received through all sources of financing and disbursing such funds to the PAN sites and PAN office This distribution will be according to rules and regulations established by the Board in consultation with the Technical Advisory Committee.

The PAN Act also provides for enforcement and criminal penalties for any person or entity that violates national laws, local ordinances or any rule, regulation or procedure promulgated pursuant to this Act and they may be prosecuted by the national or applicable local authorities.

### **The Protected Areas Network (Amendment) Act 2018**

In 2018, the PAN was amended. This amendment was passed prior to the implementation of the PAN Act 2015. The amendment redefines the Board to mean the MIMRA Board. It provides that the Advisory arm to the Board is the Coastal Management Advisory Council (CMAC) and designates CMAC as the technical body which is responsible for supporting communities in achieving the requirements for management plans and the eligibility for Protected Areas Network.

The Amendment also provided the specific powers and duties of CMAC that include: providing guidelines outlining criteria and standards that apply to areas eligible to be included in the Protected Areas Network, provide guidelines outlining the requirements for management plans for Protected Areas, provide guidelines and advice to the Board on the allocation of funds to LRCs, provide guidelines to the Board for determining what actions, training, infrastructure and equipment are eligible for funding, provide guidelines to the Board on ranking of applications for funding from the PAN Fund, and provide guidelines on the form and content of budgets and reports by the LRCs. Further, the CMAC can enforce regulations and ordinances relating to Protected Areas, which shall have the full force and effect of law, in cooperation with the Local Resource Committees (LRCs) and local government where relevant. The CMAC is responsible for collecting information, establishing record keeping, monitoring funds, and

reporting requirements as necessary and appropriate to carry out the purposes of this Act. Finally they are to provide or arrange technical assistance to the LRCs for management of their protected areas, including, but not limited to, assistance in surveying, monitoring, developing site management plans, identifying and establishing sustainable use practices, conducting scientific investigations, and educating the public about conservation and protected areas.

The amended legislation redefined the types of protected area and incorporated the concept of “Mo” into these categories. The amendment defines these types as follows:

Type I - Subsistence Only. This area is managed for subsistence non-commercial use. Limited commercial use (including aquaculture) may be made of species that are native to the area and high value if there are no associated environmental impacts on habitat quality in accordance with guidelines produced by the PAN Office. In international standards, this relates to IUCN Category VI-Managed Resource Protected Area. The management area may include some Type II-Special Reserve no-take or highly restricted areas as part of the management regime.

Type II -Special Reserve. This type of area is subject to no take high level of protection, and occasionally a very “low level of subsistence or special occasion activities. In international standards, this relates to IUCN Category Ib-Wilderness Area.

Type III - Restricted and Protected Area. This type of area has total restrictions subject to no activities, either within a large protected area or in an identified protected area, this includes the Marshallese traditional practices of Mo.

The original function and structure of the PAN Fund was changed so that the Micronesia Conservation Trust (MCT) is charged with receiving and managing endowment funds and disbursement of the returns to the PAN Office to support the PAN activities. Further, funds received through other sources of funding are administered by the PAN Office and disbursed to the management of to the PAN sites and to other conservation efforts through the PAN office.

Finally, the amendment identifies a source of funding under the MIMRA mechanism in which minimal percentage of fisheries revenues is diverted to support conservation efforts under the PAN Act.

**For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Supports Aichi Targets 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 14, 15, 17, 18, 20

Supports SDG 1, 2, 6, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15

**Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

- Measure taken has been effective
- Measure taken has been partially effective
- Measure taken has been ineffective
- Unknown

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

The effectiveness of the PAN Act and PAN Act amendment cannot be assessed because the law has not been implemented to date. Steps have been taken to hire personnel to man the PAN Office. Funds are available through the endowment fund administered by the Micronesian Conservation Trust but cannot be accessed until there is a funding scheme in place.

**Relevant websites, web links and files**

[PAN Act](#)

[PAN Act Amendment](#)

**The National Ocean Policy**

The National Ocean Policy came out of the First Annual National Oceans Symposium held on April 3 – 5, 2017. The symposium focused on four main themes: sustainable fisheries, climate change impacts, marine pollution and coral reefs and marine protected areas. The policy serves as a guiding set of principles to direct national decision-making and operations in support of needs and priorities identified by local government leaders.

The guiding principles for sustainable fisheries are as follows:

**Coastal Fisheries**

1. Strengthen links between national and local government institutions, especially related to monitoring activities within waters under local government jurisdictions.
2. Increase capacity of local governments in data collection programs.
3. Commit to Reimaanlok process for management of coastal resources (including addressing fish poisoning events).
4. Increase awareness on climate change impacts to coral reef systems.

**Oceanic Fisheries**

1. Protect fisheries resources through better control and monitoring of fishing activities throughout the RMI EEZ as well as local government jurisdictions.
2. Ensure availability and accessibility of information to support management decisions.
3. Support local governments and communities in increasing their participation in RMI fisheries, including through extension of national-level management and development initiatives at the local government level.
4. Strengthen information sharing mechanisms between national and local governments on fishing activities.

**Legal Framework**

1. Enact strong and effective national laws, regulations and local ordinances.
2. Ensure that national monitoring, control, and surveillance efforts are properly resourced, supported, and coordinated.



The guiding principles for climate change impacts are as follows:

#### Impacts on Coastal Fisheries

1. Ensure that herbivorous fish populations are maintained at sustainable levels.
2. Explore the establishment of new fisheries projects (i.e. aquaculture, mariculture, FADs and post-harvest activities).
3. Build new and strengthen existing partnerships with relevant institutions focused on understanding and mitigating climate change impacts on coastal resources.
4. Strengthen monitoring programs of inshore coastal activities to ensure climate change impacts are accounted for.
5. Enhance local conservation and management efforts, including through enacting of ordinances for open and closed fishing seasons, area closures, size and catch limits.

#### Impacts on Oceanic Fisheries

6. Incorporate known climate impacts and conditions (i.e. El Nino, La Nina) into fisheries management planning.

#### Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction

1. Strengthen policy and technical capacity for Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) to improve environmental management and reduce vulnerability to climate change and natural hazards, including monitoring and enforcement of regulations, i.e. through Reimaanlok process.
2. Ensure that climate change and disaster risk reduction considerations are central to marine resource conservation and management planning through close coordination with the National Disaster Management Office. All new projects and reviews of existing projects should include input from the NDMO.
4. Ensure that necessary resources are available to support climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction activities, as they relate to marine resource conservation and management projects.
5. Protect the coral reef environment to enhance resilience against storm surge, sea level rise and other coastal hazards.
6. Provide training on the implementation of regulations for managing coastal ecosystems, coastal natural and man-made hazards (such as oil spills) relevant for sustainable development.
7. Ensure that national laws and regulations adequately incorporate risk reduction and climate adaptation measures.
8. Build capacity of communities to understand disaster-related risks and contribute to mitigation and adaptation activities.

#### National Policy and the International Agenda

1. Ensure the National Climate Change Policy Framework (NCCPF) adequately covers climate change impacts on oceans.
2. Raise public awareness and knowledge of the relationships between climate and ocean health.
3. Ensure that marine resource management and decision-making incorporates climate change impacts on ocean health.
4. Seek to reduce carbon emissions resulting from Marshall Islands-registered vessels through appropriate national legal frameworks and international conventions (Sustainable Sea Transport).
5. Enhance awareness on availability of national policies, plans, and other relevant documents for dissemination to Local Governments

The guiding principles for marine pollution are as follows:

#### Land Based Sources

1. Develop early education programs on prevention of marine pollution.
2. Engage and empower communities through clean-up and maintenance campaigns.
3. Enact strong legislation and regulations to provide effective deterrents to marine pollution.
4. Continue to raise awareness in the international community of the adverse impacts of nuclear waste, radioactive and other contaminants, shipwrecks and World War II relics with a view to ensuring that resources are made available to assist with cleanup efforts in the Marshall Islands.
5. Establish mechanisms to address stockpiles of used oil (or other forms of hydrocarbons), i.e. removal, disposal, etc.
6. Support outer island communities' efforts to promote and implement responsible removal and disposal of used lead-based batteries.
7. Support Local Government efforts in developing capacity for regular water quality testing.

#### Oil Spills and Ship Groundings

1. Ensure national legislation provides for effective deterrents (i.e. heavy fines, prison) and the ability for all stakeholders (i.e. landowners) to take legal action.
2. Strengthen mandates of all relevant national agencies and departments (MIMRA, Ports Authority, EPA, Local Governments, Ministry of Justice) to coordinate and share resources directed at preventing and addressing incidences of ship-based marine pollution.
3. Promote a “culture of compliance” amongst local communities and visitors such that there is a strong willingness to respect and protect RMI waters.
4. Exercise leadership in regional forums on the development of mechanisms to address vessel-based marine pollution.

#### Waste Management

1. Explore options for establishing cost-effective recycling programs in the outer islands, including provision of necessary training and capacity building.
2. Ensure consultation between major urban centers and outer islands prior to establishment of new or relocated dump sites in the outer islands, to take advantage of “lessons learned” from waste management in the urban centers.
3. Promote and where appropriate, decree a return to use of traditional biodegradable products to replace plastic, paper, and other man-made materials.
4. Strengthen proactive and long-term waste management planning to avoid the need for costly mitigation measures.

#### Marine Invasive Species

1. Strengthen the national legal framework to help deter introduction of marine invasive species.
2. Raise community awareness and empower local communities to prevent, monitor, detect, and report marine invasive species.
3. Assist with data collection efforts in all Local Governments on marine invasive species.

The guiding principles for coral reefs and marine protected areas are:

Reimaanlok, RMI Protected Areas Network, Micronesia Challenge & RMI Shark Sanctuary

1. Continued support to Reimaanlok and ensuring community initiatives related to coastal and ocean management are consistent with Reimaanlok processes and principles.
2. Support institutional and resource capacity building to support resource management.
3. Develop appropriate mechanisms for sustainable financing to support resource management (PAN) across the RMI.
4. Enhance technical assistance to local governments to maximize benefits from conservation programs.
5. Invest in more research to develop sustainable livelihoods projects and explore market opportunities.
6. Encourage local communities to commit to Reimaanlok process and become an RMI PAN site.
7. Harmonize development and conservation of coastal fisheries.
8. Improve the integration of traditional and modern management strategies.
9. Enhance monitoring and enforcement efforts via local ordinances.
10. Establish an RMI Challenge/National Endowment Fund to support Local Government conservation activities, including provision of scholarships to eligible students.

#### Traditional Knowledge

1. Ensure that traditional knowledge continues to inform the development of conservation and management initiatives and ordinances at the local government level.

#### Gender Roles

1. Acknowledge and support the roles that women play in subsistence activities related to harvesting, preparation, conservation, and management.
2. Ensure that women’s participation in community level fisheries initiatives is promoted and supported, including initiatives such as capacity building, decision making, project development, and education.
3. Strengthen relationship between local governments and non-governmental institutions with a view to ensuring support for local community initiatives.

**For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Supports Aichi Targets 1, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, 15, 17, 18

Supports SDG 1, 2, 6, 8, 12, 13, 14

**Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

- Measure taken has been effective
- Measure taken has been partially effective
- Measure taken has been ineffective
- Unknown

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

MIMRA has done an assessment of the implementation of the Ocean Policy in December 2017. The following is the result of the assessment.

**Oceanic Fisheries:** Action included one fisheries surveillance patrol utilizing RMI Sea Patrol's Lomor vessel, several capacity building activities for Oceanic Division staff, and the first joint FSM-RMI PROP regional procurement for fisheries observer communication devices coordinated by the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) project management unit.

**Coastal Fisheries:** Staff actively engaged in completing Reimaanlok (Looking to the Future) activities on the five targeted atolls, completing its last deployment of subsurface fish aggregating device (FAD), working with a donor partner to update coastal policies, and attending the annual meeting for members of the Coral Reef Taskforce as well as convening the monthly Coastal Management Advisory Council (CMAC) meetings.

### **Oceanic Action**

- A first round of fisheries surveillance with Sea Patrol Lomor vessel was completed. The area of surveillance covered the northwestern area of the RMI EEZ, an area not normally covered during joint regional surveillance operations. Although no Illegal, Unreported, Unregulated (IUU) activities were detected, several operational and procedural issues were identified. For future surveillance activities, MIMRA will consider utilizing PROP funds to resolve some of the issues.

### **Coastal Action**

- Reimaanlok management plans were advanced for five outer islands through visits the Coastal team made to Aur, Maloelap, Mejit, Wotje and Utrik. Trips included three components: Underwater assessments, socioeconomic surveys, and initial community consultations. These are key steps leading to the drafting portion of the process, or stage 4 of 8 stages, of the Reimaanlok process.
- As part of the building livelihood program, the last subsurface fish aggregating device (FAD) was deployed September 15, 2017 near the Majuro Bridge. After deployment, the team monitored previously deployed FADs around the Peace Park location to check status of installations and fish schools congregating.
- PROP funded off island training/meeting opportunities for Coastal staff. Two Coastal Fisheries staff members represented the RMI during the Coral Reef Task Force Meeting in Florida August 4-16, 2017. The theme of the meeting was "Healthy Reefs for a Healthy Economy." It allowed Coastal staff to engage in key coral reef management issues and share lessons learned such as coral disease outbreaks, community engagement in coral reef resource management, and ecological and economic values of coral reefs.
- A Reimaanlok (Looking to the Future) workshop was held with Coastal Management Advisory Council (CMAC) members to update the Reimaanlok Facilitator's Guide in preparation for the 2018 workshop with IUCN to update the "Reimaanlok: Conservation Area Plan of the Marshall Islands" document.

## **Key indicators**

### **Component 1 — Sustainable Oceanic Fisheries**

Actions by and audits of MIMRA show that it is meeting important indicators. For example, the Marshall Islands is meeting the established target for intermediate results by participating in the Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA) pooling arrangement for the sale of fishing days. MIMRA is also meeting the target for intermediate results by supporting the implementation of the Longline Vessel Days Scheme (VDS) system. Currently, the Marshall Islands encourages its bilateral partners to list their longline vessels with the PNA Longline Register, an important step in the process of implementing the VDS for longline vessels.

### **Component 2 — Sustainable Coastal Fisheries**

MIMRA's Coastal Division is meeting its target for results by completing resource assessments for 10 out of the target 12 for year three. For results in management of domestic export fisheries, MIMRA is developing two coastal export fisheries management plans and related regulations. One is a Trochus management plan and regulations, and the other is an aquaculture management plan and regulations. RMI will first complete the Trochus management plan and regulations after a coastal policy advisor is hired to assist with drafting the regulations. The policy advisor will also assist with coastal management technical and compliance regulations.

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### **Relevant websites, web links and files**

[Oceanscape](#)

## **The Micronesia Challenge**

The Micronesia Challenge was established in 2006 as a joint commitment to conservation by the governments of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Palau, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Based upon the understanding that the future economic, cultural and political health of the islands of Micronesia depend upon the conservation of their marine and terrestrial resources, the Micronesia Challenge was established to conserve and protect those natural resources unique to the island nations in the Micronesia region of the Pacific. This effort also supports and preserves the traditional cultures across the region that are intrinsically bound to its natural resources, and increases the adaptive capacity of the region towards climate change by securing the natural resources and ecosystems needed to protect and sustain these small island states.

Since its initiation, the Micronesia Challenge has driven the creation of a host of mutually reinforcing projects across the Micronesia region, reflecting the region's diversity of cultures, resource tenure systems and traditional resource management practices. These projects engage stakeholders at all levels, from national and state government entities to NGOs and community groups and organizations, with necessary scientific input provided from international universities and conservation organizations.

At its inception, all parties committed to effectively conserve at least 30% of near-shore marine resources and 20% of terrestrial resources across Micronesia by 2020. In 2019 agreement was reached by all parties to extend these targets with a new commitment to effectively manage at least 50% of near-shore marine resources and 30% of terrestrial resources across Micronesia by 2030. Furthermore, the 2030 commitments include increasing the number of community members within each jurisdiction who are deriving livelihoods, including any type of income or revenue, from sustainably managed natural resources, and reducing invasive species and increasing restoration of habitats. Furthermore, as well as responding to climate change impacts through the protection and restoration of habitats, which supports climate adaptation, the Micronesia Challenge responds directly to climate change through the commitment to reduce the risks from climate impacts for communities within flood zones on low lying islands. These Micronesia Challenge 2030 commitments are aligned with the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In working to achieve the Micronesia Challenge commitments, national and state governments within the RMI, the Micronesia Conservation Trust, government agencies, numerous NGOs and community partners have all collaborated through participatory processes to help identify and establish managed conservation areas. These cover an array of marine, terrestrial, and atoll ecosystems.

The RMI’s Micronesia Challenge Endowment Fund was established in part due to the RMI’s commitment to the Micronesia Challenge. This fund supports protected area management through contributions and investments, and further sustainable funding for protected areas is also being addressed through the RMI PAN Act.

**For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Supports Aichi Targets 1, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 20

Supports SDG 13, 14, 15

**Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

- Measure taken has been effective
- Measure taken has been partially effective
- Measure taken has been ineffective
- Unknown

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

Both the original (2020) Micronesia Challenge goals and the updated 2030 goals have been agreed to by leaders across the region, including the RMI and demonstrate a significant level of success in gaining such strong commitments to protect and conserve substantial amounts of the marine and terrestrial environments. At a national level, 29% of marine resources (source: MIMRA) and 12% of terrestrial resources (source: World Bank) have been effectively conserved.

It is the lack of comprehensive achievement of the 2020 targets alone that has driven this assessment of effectiveness. However, it should be recognized that this evaluation of the effectiveness reflects only one dimension of the Micronesia Challenge, and does not consider the full breadth and depth of its impact. Whilst the Micronesia Challenge has not yet achieved its goals with regard to the percentage of marine and terrestrial resources currently conserved, it has engendered engagement in conservation planning and natural resource management at all levels of society, raising awareness at the community level and developing a network of protected areas of significant conservation value across the RMI.<sup>2</sup>

**Relevant websites, web links and files**

[The Micronesian Challenge](#)

**The RMI Fisheries Act Amendment 2016**

In 2017, the RMI amended the Fisheries Act which created at the time the world’s largest shark sanctuary. The original law provided that no person shall catch, capture or intentionally engage in fishing for sharks or retain or be in possession of any part thereof or intentionally remove the fins or tail of any shark or otherwise mutilate or injure on land or within the fisheries waters of the Republic of the Marshall Islands. There were some exceptions for subsistence fishing or research.

The amendment expanded these exceptions by allowing any purse seiner, long-liner, carrier or other support vessels in possession of sharks or shark fins or any other parts of sharks, caught outside of the fishery waters of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, provided that the sharks or shark fins or any other parts of sharks shall be validated by catch records or relevant transfer documentation, if transhipped reported together with an entry notice prior to the entry into the Republic of the Marshall Islands fisheries waters.

**For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Supports Aichi Targets 1, 4, 6, 10, 12

Supports SDG 14

**Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

Measure taken has been effective

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<sup>2</sup> Note. *The Micronesian Challenge*. Adapted From “*The Federated States of Micronesia Sixth National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity*.” P. 48 – 50. Hall, I. Government of the Federated States of Micronesia. Adapted with Permission.

- Measure taken has been partially effective
- Measure taken has been ineffective
- Unknown

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

The Fisheries Act created the largest Shark Sanctuary at the time. It is still one of the largest. As a result of this Act, the shark population in the Marshall Islands was protected and as a result the shark population in the RMI made a comeback.

**Relevant websites, web links and files**

[RMI Fisheries Act](#)



### III. Assessment of Progress Towards Each National Target

This section reports on the assessment of the progress towards meeting each of the national targets as presented in Section I. The assessment was accomplished through the State of the Environment Report published in 2016. Assessment is ongoing. The 2016 State of Environment uses the DPSIR model (Drivers, Pressures, State, Impact and Response) and aims to:

- Document the key drivers and pressures behind the changing environment.
- Assess the RMI environment since 1992, using the best available information on the state of RMI's environment in seven key themes: Atmosphere and Climate, Land, Marine, Biodiversity, Culture and Heritage, Built Environment and Nuclear Legacy.
- Document the impacts of environmental changes on the society, economy and environment from changes in the state of the environment.
- Document current responses to protect and better manage RMI's natural resources.
- Provide recommendations for RMI to address key challenges and link them to actions in the National Environmental Management Strategy (NEMS) and other key policy documents.

#### Theme A – Goal A- 1

Activate Traditional “Mo” Conservation Sites

#### Category of progress towards the implementation of the selected target:

- On track to exceed target
- On track to achieve target
- Progress towards target but at an insufficient rate
- No significant change
- Moving away from target
- Unknown

#### Date the assessment was done:

May 2020

#### Additional information:

Although progress has been made towards achieving this goal, no assessment has been made and there has been no documentation on how many traditional sites have been activated. Through the Reimaanlok process and the PAN Act, traditional sites will be recognized and incorporated into conservation management plans. When these sites are re-established as designated conservation areas, this goal can be assessed. There is documentation of these sites historically through the RMI Historic Preservation Office but have not necessarily been activated or officially recognized.

#### Indicators used in this assessment

No indicator has been used in this assessment, but the number of traditional sites activated will be the indicator for this assessment.

<p><b>Relevant websites, web links and files</b></p> <p><a href="#">Coastal Management Advisory Council (CMAC)</a>  <a href="#">Reimaanlok</a>  <a href="#">Reimaanlok Field Guide</a>  <a href="#">PAN Act</a>  <a href="#">PAN Act Amendment</a></p>
<p><b>Level of confidence of the above assessment</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Based on comprehensive evidence  <input type="checkbox"/> Based on partial evidence  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Based on limited evidence</p>
<p><b>Please provide an explanation for the level of confidence indicated above.</b></p> <p>As stated above, since no formal assessment has been done, there is limited evidence of the activation of these traditional sites.</p>
<p><b>Adequacy of monitoring information to support assessment</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring related to this target is adequate  <input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring related to this target is partial (e.g. only covering part of the area or issue)  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No monitoring system in place  <input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring is not needed</p>

<p><b>Theme A – Goal A – 2</b></p> <p>Imposition of Fines and Penalties on Those Who Destroy Our Resource</p>
<p><b>Category of progress towards the implementation of the selected target:</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> On track to exceed target  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On track to achieve target  <input type="checkbox"/> Progress towards target but at an insufficient rate  <input type="checkbox"/> No significant change  <input type="checkbox"/> Moving away from target  <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown</p>
<p><b>Date the assessment was done:</b></p> <p>May 2020</p>
<p><b>Additional information</b></p> <p>Key actions include revisions of national legislation and local government ordinances in</p>

order to amalgamate traditional and current practices, review the adequacy of fines and penalties, review resources and build capacity to support the implementation of these actions. A review of the national legislation was undertaken during the development of the Reimaanlok. Included in the Reimaanlok and as part of the management plan are ordinances that impose penalties and fines that can be imposed by the community on those who violate these ordinances. Further, the PAN Act and PAN Act Amendment contain penalties and fines for those that destroy resources in the management areas.

The Fisheries Act that created the Shark Sanctuary also contain a section that imposes fines and penalties for people who catch sharks within the sanctuary.

Any future legislation concerning the protection of natural resources will contain penalties and fines.

**Indicators used in this assessment**

No indicator has been used in this assessment. There has been new legislation adopted such as the Fisheries Act and the PAN Act. However there is no monitoring of the fines that have been assessed under these acts.

**Please describe any other tools or means used for assessing progress**

The tools for assessing the progress on this goal is the legislation passed and number of fines and/or penalties imposed.

**Relevant websites, web links and files**

[Coastal Management Advisory Council](#) (CMAC)

[Reimaanlok](#)

[Reimaanlok Field Guide](#)

[PAN Act](#)

[PAN Act Amendment](#)

[RMI Fisheries Act](#)

**Level of confidence of the above assessment**

- Based on comprehensive evidence
- Based on partial evidence
- Based on limited evidence

**Adequacy of monitoring information to support assessment**

- Monitoring related to this target is adequate
- Monitoring related to this target is partial (e.g. only covering part of the area or issue)
- No monitoring system in place
- Monitoring is not needed

**Theme A – Goal A – 3**

<p>People Taking Initiatives in Planting Trees and Crops</p>
<p><b>Category of progress towards the implementation of the selected target:</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> On track to exceed target</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> On track to achieve target</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Progress towards target but at an insufficient rate</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No significant change</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Moving away from target</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Unknown</p>
<p><b>Date the assessment was done:</b> May 2020</p>
<p><b>Additional information</b></p> <p>Although no formal assessment has been done, in recent years there have been several projects and initiatives for the re-planting coconut trees replacing senile trees. Further through grants and particularly the GEF Small Grants Program, by awarding grants for community and school gardens. Another project was “Learning Gardens” where school garden plots were created and the students learned about planting, harvesting and nutrition.</p>
<p><b>Indicators used in this assessment</b></p> <p>No indicator has been used in this assessment, but the number of gardens established and forests replanted will be an indicator for this target.</p>
<p><b>Relevant websites, web links and files</b></p> <p><a href="#">Marshall Islands GEF Small Grants Program</a></p> <p><a href="#">Learning Gardens</a></p>
<p><b>Level of confidence of the above assessment</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Based on comprehensive evidence</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Based on partial evidence</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Based on limited evidence</p>
<p><b>Adequacy of monitoring information to support assessment</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring related to this target is adequate</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring related to this target is partial (e.g. only covering part of the area or issue)</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No monitoring system in place</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring is not needed</p>
<p><b>Theme B – Goal B – 1</b> Training and Capacity Building Toward Conserving Our Resources</p>
<p><b>Category of progress towards the implementation of the selected target:</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> On track to exceed target</p>

- On track to achieve target
- Progress towards target but at an insufficient rate
- No significant change
- Moving away from target
- Unknown

**Date the assessment was done:**

May 2020

**Additional information**

An assessment of conservation areas is included in the State of the Environment Report (SOE) in 2016. As of the time of the SOE, across the 29 atolls and five islands of the RMI, there are 64 marine managed areas (Table 14). Of these, 57 are specified areas within the atolls, and six are whole atoll marine managed areas: Bikini, Ailinginae, Rongelap, Rongerik, Wotje, and Erikub atolls. In total, 2654.45 km<sup>2</sup> of reef (18.87% of total reef area in RMI) is within a managed area.

Training and capacity building is being accomplished through the Reimaanlok process and CMAC. The Marshall Islands Conservation Society (MICS) is also providing training and capacity building through their involvement in the communities under Reimaanlok and through the hiring of local Marshallese to be involved in this work.

Progress of this goal includes the establishment of an Education and Awareness Division under the Environment Protection Agency (EPA). This Division is working with atoll local governments, donor agencies, government ministries and the University of the South Pacific to include resource management into educational curriculum. The main responsibility of the Division is to increase public awareness and understanding at national and local levels and to relay environmental issues and activities of the EPA to schools and the general public.

**Indicators used in this assessment**

No indicator has been used in this assessment, but the number of people trained in conservation and conservation management can be used as an indicator.

**Please describe any other tools or means used for assessing progress**

Number of conservation areas established.

**Relevant websites, web links and files**

- [Coastal Management Advisory Council](#)
- [Reimaanlok](#)
- [Reimaanlok Field Guide](#)

**Level of confidence of the above assessment**

- Based on comprehensive evidence
- Based on partial evidence
- Based on limited evidence

**Adequacy of monitoring information to support assessment**

- Monitoring related to this target is adequate
- Monitoring related to this target is partial (e.g. only covering part of the area or issue)
- No monitoring system in place
- Monitoring is not needed

**Please describe how the target is monitored and indicate whether there is a monitoring system in place**

MIMRA is collecting data and monitoring the progress of the Reimaanlok.

**Theme B – Goal B – 2**

Sustainable Fishing Practices

**Category of progress towards the implementation of the selected target:**

- On track to exceed target
- On track to achieve target
- Progress towards target but at an insufficient rate
- No significant change
- Moving away from target
- Unknown

**Date the assessment was done:**

May 2020

**Additional information**

Except for oceanic commercial tuna fishing which is assessed yearly by the Parties to the

Nauru Agreement (PNA) this goal is very difficult to assess. Steps have been taken to determine the amount of reef fish caught and sold. This is accomplished through data collection by MIMRA and MICS. However, since this a cross-cutting issue, it is included in other goals.

**Indicators used in this assessment**

There are no indicators for this assessment

**Level of confidence of the above assessment**

- Based on comprehensive evidence
- Based on partial evidence
- Based on limited evidence

**Please provide an explanation for the level of confidence indicated above.**

The information regarding the tuna stocks is based on comprehensive evidence.

**Adequacy of monitoring information to support assessment**

- Monitoring related to this target is adequate
- Monitoring related to this target is partial (e.g. only covering part of the area or issue)
- No monitoring system in place
- Monitoring is not needed

**Please describe how the target is monitored and indicate whether there is a monitoring system in place**

As stated previously, monitoring is done through data collection and reporting from the PNA.

**Relevant websites, web links and files**

[PNA](#)

**Theme C – Goal C – 2**

Apply Traditional Skills and Knowledge

**Category of progress towards the implementation of the selected target:**

- On track to exceed target
- On track to achieve target
- Progress towards target but at an insufficient rate
- No significant change
- Moving away from target
- Unknown

**Date the assessment was done:**

May 2020

**Additional information**

This goal is very difficult to assess. Although traditional knowledge and skills are incorporated in developing community-based managed conservation areas, it cannot be assessed. Traditional skill and knowledge have also been applied to canoe building, traditional medicine, mat weaving and handicrafts.

**Indicators used in this assessment**

No indicator was used in this assessment

**Relevant websites, web links and files**

[Canoes of the Marshall Islands](#)

[Reimaanlok](#)

[Reimaanlok Field Guide](#)

**Level of confidence of the above assessment**

- Based on comprehensive evidence  
 Based on partial evidence  
 Based on limited evidence

**Adequacy of monitoring information to support assessment**

- Monitoring related to this target is adequate  
 Monitoring related to this target is partial (e.g. only covering part of the area or issue)  
 No monitoring system in place  
 Monitoring is not needed

**Theme C – Goal C – 2**

Institute Learning of the Culture Through the Traditional Way of Passing Knowledge from Elders to the Young Through Schools, Community Meetings and Workshops

**Category of progress towards the implementation of the selected target:**

- On track to exceed target  
 On track to achieve target  
 Progress towards target but at an insufficient rate  
 No significant change  
 Moving away from target  
 Unknown

**Date the assessment was done:**

May 2020

**Additional information**

Although schools have added the teaching of traditional knowledge in their curriculum it is not through the elders. Further at this time there is no way to assess if elders have come into



classrooms, community meetings or workshops. Although the traditional way of passing down knowledge continues, by its very nature, has not been institutionalized.

**Indicators used in this assessment**

No indicators have been used in this assessment

**Level of confidence of the above assessment**

- Based on comprehensive evidence
- Based on partial evidence
- Based on limited evidence

**Adequacy of monitoring information to support assessment**

- Monitoring related to this target is adequate
- Monitoring related to this target is partial (e.g. only covering part of the area or issue)
- No monitoring system in place
- Monitoring is not needed

**Theme C – Goal C – 3**

A Move Toward More Use of Local Products

**Category of progress towards the implementation of the selected target:**

- On track to exceed target
- On track to achieve target
- Progress towards target but at an insufficient rate
- No significant change
- Moving away from target
- Unknown

**Date the assessment was done:**

May 2020

**Additional information**

This goal is very difficult to assess.

**Indicators used in this assessment**

No indicators were used in this assessment

**Please describe any other tools or means used for assessing progress**

The Office of Commerce, Trade and Tourism (OCIT) has developed a theme and promotion of “One Island One Product” to promote local products.

**Relevant websites, web links and files**

[Office of Commerce, Investment and Tourism](#)

**Level of confidence of the above assessment**

- Based on comprehensive evidence
- Based on partial evidence
- Based on limited evidence

**Adequacy of monitoring information to support assessment**

- Monitoring related to this target is adequate
- Monitoring related to this target is partial (e.g. only covering part of the area or issue)
- No monitoring system in place
- Monitoring is not needed

**Theme D – Goal D – 1**

Self-reliance Through Traditional Values and Culture

**Category of progress towards the implementation of the selected target:**

- On track to exceed target
- On track to achieve target
- Progress towards target but at an insufficient rate
- No significant change
- Moving away from target
- Unknown

**Date the assessment was done:**

May 2020

**Additional information**

The three activities in this goal are cross-cutting in nature focusing on public awareness, strengthening government policies and research to promote understanding of traditional knowledge. There is a link to other goals and actions focusing on discouraging dependency on imported goods. The need to combine traditional knowledge with modern ideas is also an important consideration of this goal, which ties in with actions and goals (Goals C3, D4 and E1).

**Indicators used in this assessment**

No indicator was used in this assessment

**Relevant websites, web links and files**

[Reimaanlok](#)  
[Reimaanlok Field Guide](#)

**Level of confidence of the above assessment**

- Based on comprehensive evidence
- Based on partial evidence
- Based on limited evidence

**Adequacy of monitoring information to support assessment**

- Monitoring related to this target is adequate
- Monitoring related to this target is partial (e.g. only covering part of the area or issue)
- No monitoring system in place
- Monitoring is not needed

**Theme D – Goal D – 2**

Population Awareness

**Category of progress towards the implementation of the selected target:**

- On track to exceed target
- On track to achieve target
- Progress towards target but at an insufficient rate
- No significant change
- Moving away from target
- Unknown

**Date the assessment was done:**

May 2020

**Additional information**

A formal census was completed in 2011. The next census is scheduled for 2021. The rate of population increase has reduced over the past two decades. For the period of 1988 – 1999 the average annual growth rate was 1.5%. For the period of 1999 – 2011 the average annual growth rate was 0.4%

**Indicators used in this assessment**

Percent annual growth rate

**Relevant websites, web links and files**

[Marshall Island Census - 2011](#)

**Level of confidence of the above assessment**

- Based on comprehensive evidence
- Based on partial evidence
- Based on limited evidence

**Adequacy of monitoring information to support assessment**

- Monitoring related to this target is adequate
- Monitoring related to this target is partial (e.g. only covering part of the area or issue)
- No monitoring system in place
- Monitoring is not needed

**Please describe how the target is monitored and indicate whether there is a monitoring system in place**

This target is monitored by the formal census occurring every ten years.

**Theme D – Goal D – 3**

Working Cooperatively and Justly With One Another

**Category of progress towards the implementation of the selected target:**

- On track to exceed target
- On track to achieve target
- Progress towards target but at an insufficient rate
- No significant change
- Moving away from target
- Unknown

**Date the assessment was done:**

May 2020

**Additional information**

This goal cannot be assessed and there are no activities listed in the NBSAP under this goal

**Relevant websites, web links and files**

[Coastal Management Advisory Council](#)

**Level of confidence of the above assessment**

- Based on comprehensive evidence
- Based on partial evidence
- Based on limited evidence

**Adequacy of monitoring information to support assessment**

- Monitoring related to this target is adequate
- Monitoring related to this target is partial (e.g. only covering part of the area or issue)
- No monitoring system in place
- Monitoring is not needed

<p><b>Theme D – Goal D – 4</b></p> <p>Clean Up the Environment</p>
<p><b>Category of progress towards the implementation of the selected target:</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> On track to exceed target</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> On track to achieve target</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Progress towards target but at an insufficient rate</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No significant change</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Moving away from target</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Unknown</p>
<p><b>Date the assessment was done:</b></p> <p>May 2020</p>
<p><b>Additional information</b></p> <p>This goal is very difficult to formally assess although there is anecdotal information available. This goal although general in nature is targeted at waste management. The Majuro Atoll Waste Company (MAWC) was established to handle waste management. As a result, regular trash pick-up was instituted resulting in a much cleaner environment. Recently the legislature passed a ban on one-time use plastics and Styrofoam which resulted in a cleaner environment. Most recently the legislature passed legislation for a refundable deposit on cans and bottles.</p>
<p><b>Indicators used in this assessment</b></p> <p>No indicator was used in this assessment although one can visually see the difference in the atoll environment.</p>
<p><b>Please describe any other tools or means used for assessing progress</b></p> <p>Tools that can be used to assess the progress are weight of trash entering the landfill and number of cans and bottles returned for recycling.</p>
<p><b>Relevant websites, web links and files</b></p> <p><a href="#">Reimaanlok</a></p> <p><a href="#">Plastic and Styrofoam Ban Legislation</a></p> <p><a href="#">Majuro Atoll Waste Corporation</a></p>
<p><b>Level of confidence of the above assessment</b></p>

- Based on comprehensive evidence
- Based on partial evidence
- Based on limited evidence

**Please provide an explanation for the level of confidence indicated above.**

Evidence provided is anecdotal only.

**Adequacy of monitoring information to support assessment**

- Monitoring related to this target is adequate
- Monitoring related to this target is partial (e.g. only covering part of the area or issue)
- No monitoring system in place
- Monitoring is not needed

**Theme E – Goal E – 1**

Conservation of Genetic Diversity

**Category of progress towards the implementation of the selected target:**

- On track to exceed target
- On track to achieve target
- Progress towards target but at an insufficient rate
- No significant change
- Moving away from target
- Unknown

**Date the assessment was done:**

May 2020

**Additional information**

Genetic diversity is being retained through the Ministry of RNC’s Department of Agriculture. The Department of Agriculture has established a nursery to preserve genetic diversity and has distributed plants, seedlings and seeds to communities and community members to plant in their area. CMI Land Grant through their agriculture researcher is also working to preserve native species and genetic diversity. Finally, by establishing terrestrial conservation areas through the Reimaanlok process genetic diversity is preserved.

**Indicators used in this assessment**

No indicators have been used in this assessment. Assessment can be accomplished by the documentation of plant distributed by the Department of Agriculture and an inventory taken in the terrestrial conservation areas.

**Relevant websites, web links and files**

[CMI Land Grant](#)  
[Reimaanlok](#)

**Level of confidence of the above assessment**

- Based on comprehensive evidence
- Based on partial evidence
- Based on limited evidence

**Adequacy of monitoring information to support assessment**

- Monitoring related to this target is adequate
- Monitoring related to this target is partial (e.g. only covering part of the area or issue)
- No monitoring system in place
- Monitoring is not needed

**Theme E – Goal E – 2**

Protection of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)

**Category of progress towards the implementation of the selected target:**

- On track to exceed target
- On track to achieve target
- Progress towards target but at an insufficient rate
- No significant change
- Moving away from target
- Unknown

**Date the assessment was done:**

May 2020

**Additional information**

The Marshall Islands is not a member of the World Trade Organization, the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), or any other international agreement on intellectual property rights. There is no national or local legislation regarding intellectual property rights.

**Indicators used in this assessment**

There were no indicators used in this assessment

**Level of confidence of the above assessment**

- Based on comprehensive evidence
- Based on partial evidence
- Based on limited evidence

**Adequacy of monitoring information to support assessment**

- Monitoring related to this target is adequate
- Monitoring related to this target is partial (e.g. only covering part of the area or issue)
- No monitoring system in place
- Monitoring is not needed

**Theme F – Goal F – 1**

To Have in Place Legislation and Regulatory Framework for Biosafety

**Category of progress towards the implementation of the selected target:**

- On track to exceed target
- On track to achieve target
- Progress towards target but at an insufficient rate
- No significant change
- Moving away from target
- Unknown

**Date the assessment was done:**

May 2020

**Additional information**

The two activities include reviewing and revising of the existing legislation on biosafety taking into account provisions for the importation of genetically modified organisms (GMOs), controls over field testing, labelling and provisions for environmental and social impact assessments. Part of the review was to strengthen enforcement procedures for infringement. A review of the biosafety framework has been completed and key recommendations have been proposed. This included the need to establish a multi--- agency working group to oversee the development and implementation of a national biosafety framework. No legislation or a regulatory framework has been done.

**Indicators used in this assessment**

There were no indicators used in this assessment

**Relevant websites, web links and files**

[Biosafety Legislation Review](#)

**Level of confidence of the above assessment**

- Based on comprehensive evidence
- Based on partial evidence
- Based on limited evidence

**Adequacy of monitoring information to support assessment**

- Monitoring related to this target is adequate
- Monitoring related to this target is partial (e.g. only covering part of the area or issue)
- No monitoring system in place
- Monitoring is not needed



**Theme F – Goal F – 2**

Establish Systems to Implement New or Revise Legislation and Regulation of Biosafety

**Category of progress towards the implementation of the selected target:**

- On track to exceed target
- On track to achieve target
- Progress towards target but at an insufficient rate
- No significant change
- Moving away from target
- Unknown

**Date the assessment was done:**

May 2020

**Additional information**

There have been no activities or actions done towards meeting this goal.

**Adequacy of monitoring information to support assessment**

- Monitoring related to this target is adequate
- Monitoring related to this target is partial (e.g. only covering part of the area or issue)
- No monitoring system in place
- Monitoring is not needed

## **Section IV: Description of the National Contribution to the Achievement of Each Global Aichi Biodiversity Target**

This section describes the RMI's national contribution in regard to the twenty (20) Aichi Biodiversity Targets. Most of these efforts have come by community-based activities with support from the national government through governmental agencies, local NGOs, and academia. The activities that support the Aichi targets have largely been implemented through the Reimaanlok process with the support of CMAC. Legislation and regulations have also played a part in supporting these targets. The information gathered here is mostly through discussions with the various agencies and CMAC. It is not all inclusive.

### Aichi Target 1

By 2020, at the latest, people are aware of the values of biodiversity and the steps they can take to conserve and use it sustainably.

The main driver for this target is the Reimaanlok. Specifically steps 3 and 8 in the process. Step 3 provides for building commitment which in part states: "Visits to the communities are made by the national team to carry out education and awareness about the benefits of conservation and resource management, and to build trust with the community. Through this process a Local Resource Committee (LRC) is established. This committee consists of different representatives from the community that reflects their diversity. For example, there could be representatives from men, women, youth, fisher, and church groups etc." This is a continuing process and each trip to the community involves informing the community of the value of biodiversity and conservation. Step 8 provides for maintaining, strengthening and furthering this commitment.

The awareness of the values of biodiversity are further advanced through the National Oceans Policy. The policy provides under the National Policy and the International Agenda to raise public awareness and knowledge of the relationships between climate and ocean health.

Inherent in environmental legislation and other policies is public education and awareness. Creating environmental curriculum in the public school system, the College of the Marshall Islands and the University of the South Pacific – Majuro campus contain various courses in environmental science, marine biology and other offerings that educate students on biodiversity, conservation and sustainability.

This target is supported by all Themes and Goals under the RMI NBSAP except goals B – 1, F – 1 and F – 2.

### Aichi Target 2

By 2020, at the latest, biodiversity values have been integrated into national and local development and poverty reduction strategies and planning processes and are being incorporated into national accounting, as appropriate, and reporting systems.

RMI has included biodiversity as a key component of its national development plan. The State of Environment Report supports the Reimaanlok plan – both consider the value of biodiversity as fundamental to the well-being of Marshallese people. Legislation and policies as stated in the previous sections show that biodiversity values have been incorporated both nationally and

locally. This is particular evident in the PAN Act and the PAN Act Amendment, which sets up the creation of the national shark sanctuary under the Fisheries Act and the National Ocean Policy.

The institutionalization of CMAC under the PAN Act is also key for the advancement of the Reimaanlok and the national planning process.

This target is supported by Themes B, D, and F and Goals B -1, D – 1, D – 2, F – 1, and F – 2.

### Aichi Target 3

By 2020, at the latest, incentives, including subsidies harmful to biodiversity are eliminated, phased out or reformed in order to minimize or avoid negative impacts. Positive incentives are offered or disbursed for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. These are developed and applied, consistent and in harmony with the Convention and other relevant international obligations while taking into account national socio---economic conditions.

The RMI does not provide incentives or subsidies to activities that are harmful to biodiversity. Under the PAN Act and PAN Act Amendment, positive incentives are available for conservation and sustainable use of natural resources. These incentives are in the form of grants from the PAN to plan, create and manage community-based conservation management areas. These funds are not available at this time until the directives under this legislation are implemented.

This target is supported by Theme B and D and Goals B – 2 and D – 3.

### Aichi Target 4

By 2020, at the latest, Governments, businesses and stakeholders at all levels have taken steps to achieve or have implemented plans for sustainable production and consumption and have kept the impacts of use of natural resources well within safe ecological limits.

The National Strategic Plan provides the framework for the government, the private sector and stakeholders for sustainable development. The plan has been reviewed and revised in 2019 and is waiting for government approval.

Along with the National Strategic Plan there are several other laws and policies in place that support this target. The Fisheries Act protects the shark population which is key to a sustainable and productive ocean environment. The National Oceans policy addresses both oceanic and coastal fisheries to protect and provide for sustainable use of those natural resources.

The Reimaanlok and PAN Act and Amendment provides for conservation management plans including marine and terrestrial protected areas. These areas are set aside for sustainable food and fish production.

The target is supported by Themes A, B, D, and F and Goals C – 1 and D – 3

### Aichi Target 5

By 2020, the rate of loss of all natural habitats, including forests, is at least halved and where feasible, brought close to zero, and degradation and fragmentation is significantly reduced.

Efforts to conserve and protect natural habitats are already developed especially in the marine and coastal zones. This is evidenced through the Reimaanlok process, the efforts of CMAC, the PAN Act and PAN Amendment, the National Ocean Policy and other legislation and policies. The Reimaanlok was originally developed for fisheries management. It then expanded to coastal conservation through marine protected areas and other conservation measures. In the past five years, the Reimaanlok was further expanded to include terrestrial conservation areas. This expansion promotes Target 5 more inclusively.

The Micronesian Challenge which the RMI is part of calls for effective conservation of at least 30% of near-shore marine resources and 20% of terrestrial resources.

Through these conservation measures and more, natural habitats both marine and terrestrial are being protected and managed to decrease the rate of loss.

This target is supported by Theme A and Goal A – 3.

#### Aichi Target 6

By 2020 all fish and invertebrate stocks and aquatic plants are managed and harvested sustainably, legally and applying ecosystem based approaches, so that overfishing is avoided, recovery plans and measures are in place for all depleted species, fisheries have no significant adverse impacts on threatened species and vulnerable ecosystems and the impacts of fisheries on stocks, species and ecosystems are within safe ecological limits.

The government has already declared one of the largest sanctuaries for sharks in the world through the Fisheries Act and Fisheries Act Amendment. Utilizing the Reimaanlok process with the advice of CMAC, community-based marine protected areas are being managed under local management plans. Some of these marine managed areas include whole atoll ecosystems. These conservation areas have also included Mo – traditional conservation areas. These processes have combined traditional knowledge and modern science using ecosystem-based approaches to help protect against overfishing and harvesting and thus encouraging recovery.

The conservation of oceanic fisheries is addressed in the National Oceans Policy. In part, this policy provides for the protection of fisheries resources through better control and monitoring of fishing activities throughout the RMI Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) as well as local government jurisdictions. The RMI is a member of the Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA) which regulates and manages the fishing of tuna in the region.

This target is supported by Themes A and B and Goals A – 1 and B – 1.

#### Aichi Target 7

By 2020 areas under agriculture, aquaculture and forestry are managed sustainably, ensuring conservation of biodiversity

Much of the original native forest has been converted in order to support human settlement. What forest that remains is in a stable state, but, like whole atoll ecosystems, it is vulnerable to climate change associated events such as drought, typhoon and sea level rise. There is generally good understanding of the land cover type for most of the big land masses where 70% is comprised of forest, agro-forest and coconut plantations. Sand pits and coastal areas, generally referred to as barren land makes up 14%, with the remainder being urban and non-forest vegetation (e.g. rangeland and agriculture). Protection of forests is included as a key conservation target in the national conservation areas plan (Reimaanlok).

More and more sustainable home, school and community gardens are being developed. Many of these have been funded through the GEF Small Grants Program. Any aquaculture projects are developed so that they are managed sustainably. Most of these projects are culturing giant clams and one aquaculture project for Moi – a sustainably harvested fish.

This target is supported by Themes A, C and E and Goals A – 1, A – 3, and C – 1

### Aichi Target 8

By 2020, pollution, including from excess nutrients, has been brought to levels that are not detrimental to ecosystem function and biodiversity

The RMI government takes the issue of pollution seriously. It continues to work closely with partners to implement measures to mitigate and reduce the impacts of pollution. Since 2007, the government has instigated the collection of waste to be taken to a landfill site. There are also national and community led efforts to reduce, reuse and recycle waste, as well as composting. A new landfill has been planned and designed but there has been no further progress on it. There are also measures to avoid establishing conservation areas next to sources of pollution (Reimaanlok).

The Republic of the Marshall Islands banned the importation, manufacture and use of single-use plastic shopping bags, Styrofoam cups and packaging when its legislation came into effect in March 2017. To compliment this law, in 2018 the RMI passed legislation that establishes a deposit fee of six cents for canned and bottled beverages that importers pay to the national government on arrival of drinks in the country. This action helps support environmental efforts.

In furtherance of the target, in December 2018 the government approved their Electricity Roadmap. The goals of this policy are to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to at least thirty two percent (32%) of 2010 levels, by 2030 a reduction of at least forty-five percent (45%) and by 2050 to have net zero emissions.

This target is supported by Theme B and Goal D – 4

### Aichi Target 9

By 2020, invasive alien species and pathways are identified and prioritized, priority species are controlled or eradicated, and measures are in place to manage pathways to prevent their introduction and establishment.

Invasive species undoubtedly are a threat to biodiversity. There are 523 recorded invasive species in RMI, with the majority being invasive plants. The government's response includes establishing a cross-sector and multi-agency national team to coordinate and plan how best to address invasive species.

A national invasive species strategic action plan was adopted in 2016. Capacity building efforts have been implemented jointly with regional partners such as SPREP and SPC. Further, the RMI has joined initiatives such as the Pacific Invasives Partnership and the Pacific Invasives Learning Network. RMI has also committed part of its GEF-6 allocation towards combating the harmful impacts of invasive species.

A quarantine department has been established in Ministry of Natural Resources and Commerce. Their responsibilities include border control at official international ports of entry, risk assessments for proposed new species for importation, early detection and rapid response for terrestrial concerns, weed and agricultural pest management.

This target is supported by Themes E and F and Goal C – 1

#### Aichi Target 10

By 2015, the multiple anthropogenic pressures on coral reefs, and other vulnerable ecosystems impacted by climate change or ocean acidification are minimized, so as to maintain their integrity and functioning

RMI continues to advocate for more global attention and action on climate change. It has developed a national climate change strategic plan focusing on building local capacity and national strengthening institutions. There is a strong link between the climate change policy and environmental management and the formation of a climate change steering committee provides a mechanism for overseeing this linkage.

Local community efforts to maintain the integrity of their environment through conservation and protected areas is the most practical action that is being carried out to lessen climate change impact. This is being accomplished through the Reimaanlok process and the GEF Small Grants Program and supported by the National Ocean Policy and the PAN Act.

This target is supported by Themes A, B, C, and D and Goals A – 1, and B – 2

#### Aichi Target 11

By 2020, at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water areas, and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes.

Currently RMI has achieved 29% for the conservation of its coastal and marine areas and 12% for terrestrial areas. RMI continues to make progress towards achieving ambitious targets of 50% near shore marine and 30% terrestrial as a commitment to the new Micronesia Challenge. In solidarity with neighboring countries, RMI declared its exclusive economic zone a shark sanctuary, making it one of the largest areas for the protection of sharks. The passing of the

PAN Act and PAN Act Amendment is a further testament of RMI's commitment to managing its connected and vulnerable ecosystems.

An integral part of achieving this goal is the Reimaanlok process and the National Ocean Policy. The Reimaanlok through the assistance of CMAC provides communities with the tools and knowledge to establish effectively managed systems of protected areas. This is further bolstered with the assistance of the PAN funds for the communities to keep and maintain these protected areas.

This target is supported Themes A, B, and C and Goals A – 1 and B – 1

#### Aichi Target 12

By 2020 the extinction of known threatened species has been prevented and their conservation status, particularly of those most in decline, has been improved and sustained.

While RMI may not have a rich endemic terrestrial fauna and flora, the few species that are unique to the country require as much support as possible due to the limited geographic distribution. Threats from invasive species and climate change are seriously jeopardizing their survival. Efforts for their protection are supported through legislation as well as through national policies. RMI is fortunate to have a good example demonstrating positive outcomes with regards to conservation measures on the endemic Mule (Micronesian Pigeon).

RMI is also implementing a concentrated effort halting the decline in population of migratory species such as turtles, whales and sharks. RMI is party to many of the international multi-lateral environmental agreements, as well as regional instruments and organizations.

This target is supported by Themes A, B, and E

#### Aichi Target 13

By 2020, the genetic diversity of cultivated plants and farmed and domesticated animals and of wild relatives, including other socio-economically as well as culturally valuable species, is maintained, and strategies have been developed and implemented for minimizing genetic erosion and safeguarding their genetic diversity.

RMI has undertaken efforts to document traditional knowledge on species through working with elders. This includes identifying genetic resources unique to the area for possible ex situ conservation. This involves working closely with SPC and Biodiversity International.

Unfortunately planting of indigenous plants particularly food crops has been in decline due to the reliance on imported foods. However, the situation has been improving with several projects encouraging community and school gardens. Funding for these projects has come from several sources including the GEF Small Grants Program. The Agriculture Department of the NRC ministry has created a nursery for indigenous plants and offers the seeds and seedlings free of charge. CMI Land Grant through their agriculture researcher is developing means to preserve the genetic diversity of plants.

This target is supported by Themes A, C, E, and F and Goals A – 1, A – 3, C -1, E – 1, E – 2, F – 1 and F – 2

### Aichi Target 14

By 2020, ecosystems that provide essential services, including services related to water, and contribute to health, livelihoods and well-being, are restored and safeguarded, taking into account the needs of women, indigenous and local communities, and the poor and vulnerable.

A number of initiatives for the protection of ecosystem services are being employed including the designation of two atolls as Ramsar Sites. The Reimaanlok process provides community-based management of resources both marine and terrestrial. The needs of woman, indigenous, poor and vulnerable people are taken into account during this process. When there is a community meeting to develop the management plan, the community is divided into different work groups. These groups are divided into women, men, fishers, etc. so that the needs of each of these individuals are heard and considered. Further the Local Resource Council consists of representatives from each of these groups.

This target is supported by Themes A, C, and D and Goals A – 1, A – 2, B – 1, B – 2, D – 1 and D – 2

### Aichi Target 15

By 2020, ecosystem resilience and the contribution of biodiversity to carbon stocks has been enhanced, through conservation and restoration, including restoration of at least 15 per cent of degraded ecosystems, thereby contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation and to combating desertification.

The government and communities continue to conserve many of its terrestrial and marine environment as part of its commitment to the Micronesia Challenge, national aspirations and the Reimaanlok. Activities to enhance and restore degraded sites are being undertaken through public awareness and the education system. Due to the limited land area, RMI considers the conservation of the marine and coastal environment as its contributions towards carbon sequestration.

The RMI also contributes to the enhancement of carbon stocks through its Electricity Roadmap. The goals of this policy are to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to at least thirty two percent (32%) of 2010 levels, by 2030 a reduction of at least forty-five percent (45%) and by 2050 to have net zero emissions. By reducing the use of fossil fuel, carbon stocks are increased.

By implementing the Reimaanlok and increasing the amount of community and school gardens adds to combating desertification. Further, the government has initiated several coconut tree replanting programs. These projects cut down senile, unproductive coconut trees and replace them with coconut seedlings thus restoring a degraded ecosystem. The result of these programs is ecosystem resilience and an increase in carbon stocks.

This target is supported by Themes C and E and Goal A – 1

### Aichi Target 16

By 2015, the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization is in force and operational, consistent with national legislation.



RMI has acceded to the Nagoya Protocol as of January 2015. This follows its ratification of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources. RMI is well placed to oversee the sustainable use of its genetic resources for the benefit of its people.

This target is supported by Themes E and F and Goals A – 1, A – 2, C – 1, F – 1, and F – 2

#### Aichi Target 17

By 2015 each Party has developed, adopted as a policy instrument, and has commenced implementing an effective, participatory and updated national biodiversity strategy and action plan.

The RMI has developed and adopted through a participatory process legislation and policies that constitute its national biodiversity strategy. Some examples of these strategies and actions are:

- Reimaanlok – a community-based conservation management plan. This action plan is totally participatory between communities and CMAC.
- NBSAP – this strategic plan sets out the themes, goals and actions for biodiversity conservation. It was developed through many stakeholder meetings.
- National Ocean Policy – this policy was developed from the National Ocean Symposium. This was a three-day event with participation from stakeholders throughout the country

This target is supported by Themes A, B, E and F and Goals – A – 1, A – 3, C – 1, F – 1 and F – 2.

#### Aichi Target 18

By 2020, the traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and their customary use of biological resources, are respected, subject to national legislation and relevant international obligations, and fully integrated and reflected in the implementation of the Convention with the full and effective participation of indigenous and local communities, at all relevant levels.

RMI has instituted the inclusion of Mo – a traditional system to designate parts of land, a whole island, or a reef area, as a restricted site. Special permission from the Iroj (Chief) is required to visit a mo. This concept is recognized in the Reimaanlok process wherein a Mo can be designated under the Remaanlok as a managed protected area, either marine or terrestrial.

The PAN Act and Pan Act Amendment recognizes the Mo on a national level. A Mo can qualify for protection and funding for maintenance.

Throughout RMI legislation and policy it is recognized the importance of integrating traditional knowledge, innovations and practices. This is reflected in the language of these documents.

This target is supported by Themes A, B, C, and F and Goals A – 1, B – 1, B – 2, C – 1, C – 2, C – 3, D – 1, D – 3 and E – 2

### Aichi Target 19

By 2020, knowledge, the science base and technologies relating to biodiversity, its values, functioning, status and trends, and the consequences of its loss, are improved, widely shared and transferred, and applied space.

The overall purpose of this target is to increase the amount and quality of information and tools at the disposal of policy makers and general public. Collaborations with international, regional and national institutions are opening up a wealth of knowledge on the biodiversity of the RMI. Working closely with the PNA, WCPTC, SPC and FFA monitoring the state and health of the fisheries stock provides the scientific information necessary to make informed decisions such as the number of fishing days. Collaboration also with civil society and non-governmental organizations encourages wider community participation and ownership of management decisions.

Working with grantors that provide technical assistance such as NOAA, MCT, IUCN, PIMPAC, and TNC and other organizations in support of the Micronesia Challenge is also reaping benefits by focusing on addressing the knowledge gap and capacity building with regards to biodiversity and the state of the environment.

This target is supported by Themes B, E, and F and Goals B – 1, B – 2, C – 1, C – 2, D – 1, D – 3, E – 1 and E – 2

### Aichi Target 20

By 2020, at the latest, the mobilization of financial resources for effectively implementing the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 from all sources, and in accordance with the consolidated and agreed process in the Strategy for Resource Mobilization, should increase substantially from the current levels. This target will be subject to changes contingent to resource needs assessments to be developed and reported by Parties

RMI has a number of initiatives in place to assist with addressing the financial challenge that has hindered the implementation of biodiversity goals and targets. There have been several stakeholder workshops to establish a sustainable finance plan.

Under the National Environmental Protection Act an environmental protection authority fund was established to collect monies appropriated through penalties, fees, damages, prosecution or other proceedings. The establishment of the Shark Sanctuary also provides fines for violations.

RMI has contributed to the Micronesia Conservation Trust Fund, which in terms provide grants to assist with the implementation of the NBSAP. This fund will be used to implement the PAN Act and PAN Act amendment through grants from the PAN Fund. RMI is also targeting GEF allocations towards the implementation of the Aichi Targets. This is being accomplished through the GEF Small Grants Program.

This target is supported by Theme B and Goals A – 2 and C - 1

## **Section V: Updated Biodiversity Profile**

The Republic of the Marshall Islands consists of twenty-nine low-lying coral atolls and five solitary low coral islands which rise over 6,000 meters (20,000 feet) from the abyssal plain to no more than a couple of meters above the surface of the equatorial Pacific and comprise the islands known to the Marshallese as Aelōn Kein.

The Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of the Marshall Islands is over 2 million km<sup>2</sup> (770,000 sq. miles) and a mere fraction of that – less than 0.01% (183 km<sup>2</sup> or 70 sq. miles) – is land. A total of 1,225 individual islands and islets make up the Ratak (Sunrise) chain in the east, and the Ralik (Sunset) chain in the west. The atolls consist of biotic limestone on a deep basalt core, built over millions of years by living coral organisms that grew as the basalt core slowly subsided, creating a marine environment extremely rich in productivity, diversity and complexity. The entirety of the Marshall Islands lies in the central- western part of the Conservation International Polynesia/ Micronesia Hotspot, and the northern Marshall Islands form the Key Biodiversity Area, Kabin Meto.

### **Land**

#### **FOREST:**

RMI has about 70 percent total forest cover, which includes native forest, agro-forest, and coconut plantations. These forest ecosystems are in fair condition and stable, without any noticeable changes in the last few decades. There have been efforts to replace senile coconut trees on various atolls.

#### **Land Under Cultivation:**

Agricultural activities have reduced by more than half, as shown in the RMI census report 2011. This is primarily due to changes in lifestyle and increased dependence on imported food. RMI has never conducted an agricultural census, leading to a major data gap for agricultural policy development or sector enchantment. There is a continuing effort to cultivate community and school gardens on various atolls.

#### **Wetlands:**

RMI has two declared Ramsar sites in Namdrik and Jaluit which have been managed by the local government with support from the RMI EPA (Environmental Protection Authority). However, there is little data available to determine their current status.

### **Marine**

#### **Offshore Marine Environment:**

The RMI tuna fisheries have experienced dramatic increases in total tuna catch, thereby putting more pressure on these natural resources. There is some evidence that the tuna species have exceeded their maximum sustainable yields, particularly with regards to bigeye tuna.

Recognizing the global decrease in all shark species, RMI was the first country to introduce a shark fishing ban in its EEZ in 2011.

### Inshore Marine Environment:

The inshore reef system and fishery is relatively healthy and stable' although widespread coral bleaching and the ensuing proliferation of macroalgae in recent years combined with localized overfishing is creating uncertainty over the future of these resources in their ability to support fisheries habitat and coastal protection. There have also been sporadic outbreaks of Crown of Thorns Starfish that have caused reef degradation.

### Marine Managed Areas:

There are 63 declared marine managed areas covering about 70 percent of reef area in the RMI. However, most of the managed areas do not yet have official management plans developed or implemented.

### Marine Water Quality:

Lagoon water quality has deteriorated over the last decade mainly in the urban centers of Majuro and Ebeye. The three most contaminated sites in 2014 were in eastern Majuro. Bacteria counts in the three sites were over 24,000MPN/100ml: the safe standard for lagoon recreation is 104MPN/100ml.

### Marine Mammals and Turtles:

RMI has two turtle nesting populations, both of which are globally endangered. While there is limited data available to indicate the true state of turtles in RMI, the global population is in decline, thus conservation efforts in RMI are critical. Marine mammals and turtles represent a data gap in biodiversity managed in RMI.

## **Biodiversity**

### Threatened and Endemic Species:

The RMI threatened species list, which includes the vulnerable, endangered and critically endangered, is dominated by marine species. The IUCN Red List, the global list of endangered species, has only assessed 1130 or 19 percent of the 5821 species found in RMI. The IUCN has identified 101 species that are vulnerable to extinction. RMI has identified an additional 61 species that are a high priority for conservation. Only 18 species overlap with the IUCN Red List, this means that RMI must expand its assessment of the 5821 species list and prioritize its conservation efforts.

### Environmental Invasive Species:

Invasive species are one of the biggest threats to biodiversity in RMI. Impacts include those on economic revenue, e.g. lower crop productivity, reduced export potential, and habitat change. Social impacts include increased human labor costs, reduced aesthetic value, loss of culturally important species including traditional medicines, and increased erosion affecting water cycles and supply.

### Key Species of Concern:

Many of RMI's endangered species are endemic which occur nowhere else on earth. General consensus is that RMI's biodiversity is deteriorating, with the decline of the coastal and near shore areas forming the largest threat. Some recovery plans exist but are generally poorly supported, and there is a knowledge gap in the state of the RMI's threatened species.

There are 61 species and subspecies considered for conservation by The RMI government and its partners (IUCN, CITES and US Fish and Wildlife). As based on the nationally compiled list of animals and plants:

- 13 nationally endangered or critically endangered species (five marine mammals, three birds, and five marine reptiles: one being critically endangered).
- 5 are vulnerable species – one bird, one shark, three arthropods, (Tridacna gigas and T. derasa giant clam species, and the Triton's shell Charonia tritonis) – and one extinct species, the Wake Rail (Gallirallus wakensis). The 18 threatened species represent 31% of total species considered for conservation. The other 43 species are listed as Near Threatened, Low Risk or (with conservation measures), Data Deficient or Least Concern.

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