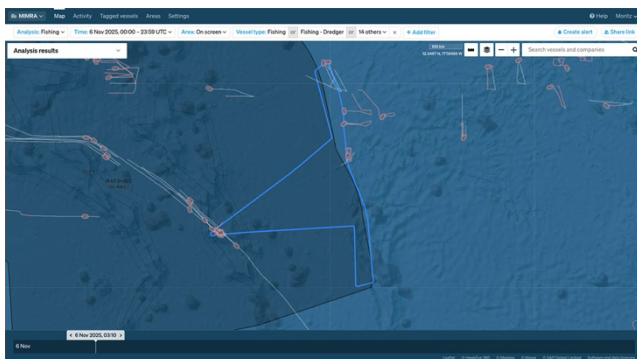




Marshall Islands Marine Resources Authority

# RMI NATIONAL PLAN OF ACTION TO PREVENT, DETER AND ELIMINATE ILLEGAL, UNREGULATED AND UNREPORTED (IUU) FISHING

**2026-2031**



*Images of Operation Nightwatch 2025*

*Prepared by MIMRA  
Acknowledging assistance from NZMFAT*

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### Acronyms and abbreviations

|                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1982 UN Convention            | United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982                                                                                                                                                |
| 1993 FAO Compliance           | Agreement to Promote Compliance and International Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels on the High Seas                                                                                         |
| 1995 UN Fish Stocks Agreement | Agreement for the Implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks |
| ALC                           | Automatic Location Communicators                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| CA                            | Competent Authority                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| CC                            | Catch Certificate                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| CCM                           | Contracting Member, Cooperating Non-Member                                                                                                                                                                         |
| CCRF                          | Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries                                                                                                                                                                          |
| CDS                           | Catch Documentation Scheme                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| CITES                         | Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species                                                                                                                                                            |
| CNM                           | Cooperating Non-Members                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| CMM                           | Conservation and Management Measure                                                                                                                                                                                |
| COFI                          | FAO Committee on Fisheries                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| EEZ                           | Exclusive Economic Zone                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| EU                            | European Union                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| FAD                           | Fish Aggregation Device                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| FAO                           | Food and Agriculture Organisation                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| FFA                           | Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency                                                                                                                                                                             |
| FSM                           | Federated States of Micronesia                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| FSMA                          | FSM Arrangement                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| FOC                           | Flag of Convenience                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| GDP                           | Gross Domestic Product                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| IMS                           | Information Management Systems                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| IPOA-IUU                      | International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing                                                                                                           |
| IRI                           | International Registry Inc                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| LL VDS                        | Longline Vessel Days Scheme                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| MCS                           | Monitoring, Control and Surveillance                                                                                                                                                                               |
| MIMRA                         | Marshall Islands Marine Resources Authority                                                                                                                                                                        |
| MIRC                          | Marshall Islands Revised Code                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| MISP                          | Marshall Islands Sea Patrol                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| MTCs                          | Minimum Terms and Conditions for Fishing Access                                                                                                                                                                    |
| MTU                           | Mobile Transceiver Units                                                                                                                                                                                           |

|             |                                                                                                     |
|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Niue Treaty | 1991 Regional Treaty on Cooperation in Fisheries Surveillance and Law Enforcement                   |
| NPOA-IUU    | National Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing |
| PNA         | Parties to the Nauru Agreement                                                                      |
| PNG         | Independent State of Papua New Guinea                                                               |
| PSMA        | Port State Measures Agreement                                                                       |
| RIMF        | Regional Information Management Facility                                                            |
| RFMOs       | Regional Fisheries Management Organizations                                                         |
| RMI         | Republic of the Marshall Islands                                                                    |
| RMIPA       | Republic of the Marshall Islands Ports Authority                                                    |
| ROP         | Regional Observer Programme                                                                         |
| RFV         | Record of Fishing Vessels                                                                           |
| SIDS        | Small Island Developing State                                                                       |
| SPC         | Pacific Community                                                                                   |
| TUBS        | TUFMAN Observer Module                                                                              |
| TUFMAN 2    | SPC Tuna Fisheries Database Management System                                                       |
| TCC         | Technical and Compliance Committee                                                                  |
| UN          | United Nations                                                                                      |
| USP         | University of the South Pacific                                                                     |
| UST         | US Tuna Treaty                                                                                      |
| VMS         | Vessel Monitoring System                                                                            |
| VOGS        | Vessels of Good Standing                                                                            |
| VOI         | Vessel of Interest                                                                                  |
| WCPFC       | Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission                                                    |
| WCPO        | Western and Central Pacific Ocean                                                                   |

## **Executive summary**

RMI's National Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (NPOA-IUU) has been developed in line with the International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate IUU Fishing (IPOA-IUU), adopted in 2001 by the Committee on Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO).

The IPOA-IUU is a voluntary instrument and one of four IPOAs within the framework of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, adopted by COFI in 1995. It sets out broadly accepted principles and measures to prevent and counter IUU fishing at the level of states, regional economic integration organisations and regional fisheries management organisations (RFMOs).

The present NPOA-IUU is in four parts:

- Part 1 provides background information and definitions.
- Part 2 gives a brief overview of the fisheries sector.
- Part 3 compares fisheries conservation and management legislation, policy and practice;
- Part 4 describes how RMI adheres to the provisions of the IPOA-IUU and identifies further actions needed to ensure full implementation.

The information in Part 4 is presented in the IPOA-IUU format for easy reference. The actions specified in the NPOA-IUU are supported in the implementation table in Attachment A.

During the period covered by the previous edition, RMI consolidated its position as one of the busiest tuna transshipment port states in the Pacific and, in July 2024, acceded to the FAO PSMA. As a Party, RMI now applies port state measures not merely consistent with the PSMA's objectives but in accordance with its obligations. This edition reflects that transition and sets the direction for 2026–2031.

The NPOA-IUU aligns with the principles of transparency, cooperation, integration, and the sharing of information and assets within the RMI Government. It also recognises and relies on a high level of cooperation with regional and global partners, including the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), the Pacific Community (SPC), FAO, the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), market states, and industry.

RMI will continue to work with regional and international partners to ensure the conservation and long-term sustainable use of highly migratory and straddling stocks, as well as the protection of the environment.

## **1 Revision notes for the 2026–2031 edition**

This edition updates and supersedes the RMI NPOA-IUU 2020–2025. It retains the structure, principles and numbering of the previous edition, allowing the two documents to be read side by side. The substantive changes introduced in this revision are summarised below; the body of the plan should be read as the operative text.

**Accession to the FAO PSMA.** The single most significant development since the previous edition is that the Republic of the Marshall Islands became a Party to the FAO Agreement on Port State Measures (PSMA) in July 2024. The 2020–2025 edition recorded that ratification of the PSMA, or the implementation of alternative arrangements, remained at the sole discretion of the RMI, and that the plan sought only to be consistent with the PSMA's objectives. That position has now been overtaken by accession. Section 5.5 (Port State Measures) has accordingly been rewritten to reflect RMI's status as a PSMA Party and to incorporate the operational system now published by MIMRA.

**Action points.** Action points have been carried forward and renumbered where necessary. The Port State action point has been revised. The Implementation Table in Attachment A has been updated to the 2026–2031 timeframe.

## **2 Purpose and scope**

### **2.1 Purpose**

The purpose of this NPOA-IUU is to continue guiding RMI in preventing, deterring and eliminating illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU) in its waters, by its fleet, and through regional organisations such as PNA, FFA and WCPFC.

It was developed in line with the International Plan of Action to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing (IPOA-IUU), adopted in 2001 as a voluntary instrument by FAO's Committee on Fisheries.

### **2.2 Scope**

The Plan primarily concerns highly migratory and straddling stocks that are subject to management cooperation under the WCPFC.

The RMI NPOA-IUU follows the IPOA-IUU's structure and outlines measures that specifically address RMI's roles as a flag state, a coastal state, a port state and a processing state. It also refers to market-related procedures, measures to support the special requirements of developing countries, and actions to be taken by RMI through the WCPFC.

Some of the NPOA-IUU provisions reflect obligations that many states have accepted as binding, either through global instruments, RFMOs, or national legislative instruments.

This NPOA-IUU does not cover domestic fisheries for inshore and coastal species, which are managed under other fishery-specific plans and regulations.

### **2.3 Definition of IUU fishing**

This NPOA-IUU defines illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing as follows:

**Illegal** fishing refers to activities:

- conducted by national or foreign vessels in waters under the jurisdiction of a state, without the permission of that state, or in contravention of its laws and regulations;
- conducted by vessels flying the flag of states that are parties to a relevant RFMO but operate in contravention of the conservation and management measures adopted by that organisation and by which the states are bound, or relevant provisions of the applicable international law; or
- in violation of national laws or international obligations, including those undertaken by cooperating states to a relevant RFMO.

**Unregulated** fishing refers to fishing activities:

- in the area of application of a relevant RFMO, conducted by vessels without nationality, by vessels flying the flag of a state not party to that organisation, or by a fishing entity, in a manner that is not consistent with or contravenes the conservation and management measures of that organisation; or
- in areas or for fish stocks to which there are no applicable conservation or management measures and where such fishing activities are conducted in a manner inconsistent with state responsibilities for the conservation of living marine resources under international law.

**Unreported** fishing refers to fishing activities:

- which have not been reported, or have been misreported, to the relevant national authority, in contravention of national laws and regulations; or
- undertaken in the area of competence of a relevant RFMO that have not been reported or have been misreported, in contravention of that organisation's reporting procedures.

These definitions are consistent with those used by the FAO IPOA-IUU.

## **2.4 NPOA Principles and Strategies**

The NPOA-IUU incorporates the following principles and strategies consistent with those articulated by the FAO IPOA-IUU:

- Participation and coordination: To be fully effective, the NPOA-IUU will be implemented by RMI either directly, in cooperation with other states, indirectly through WCPFC, or via FFA or other appropriate international organisations. Full participation by stakeholders, including industry, fishing communities, and non-governmental organisations, has been encouraged.
- Phased implementation: Measures to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing will involve the earliest possible implementation of the NPOA-IUU, alongside regional and global actions. Since not all actions can be completed immediately, a phased approach will be followed.
- Comprehensive and integrated approach: RMI will adopt measures that build on its responsibilities as a flag state and will use a range of mechanisms compliant with international law, including port state measures, coastal state measures, market-related measures, and measures to ensure that RMI nationals do not support or engage in IUU fishing. This will require the participation of various government agencies and other stakeholders.
- Conservation: RMI's measures to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing are designed to be consistent with the conservation and long-term sustainable use of fish stocks and with the protection of the environment;
- Transparency: The NPOA-IUU will be implemented in accordance with Article 6.13 of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF).
- Non-discrimination: The NPOA-IUU will be applied without discrimination, in form or in fact, to any state or its fishing vessels.

### 3 RMI's Oceanic Fisheries

The Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) comprises 29 coral atolls and five single islands in the equatorial and tropical Pacific Ocean, between 2° and 17°N latitude and 157° and 175°E longitude. It has an exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of about 2,131,000 km<sup>2</sup> and a land area of about 181 km<sup>2</sup>, making it the fourth largest EEZ among the other Pacific Island Countries (excluding the Territories) and the 19th largest EEZ in the world. Nearly half of its EEZ borders international waters to the north, and the other half borders three other Pacific Island nations (the Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru and the Republic of Kiribati) to the south. RMI maritime limits are presented in Figure 1.

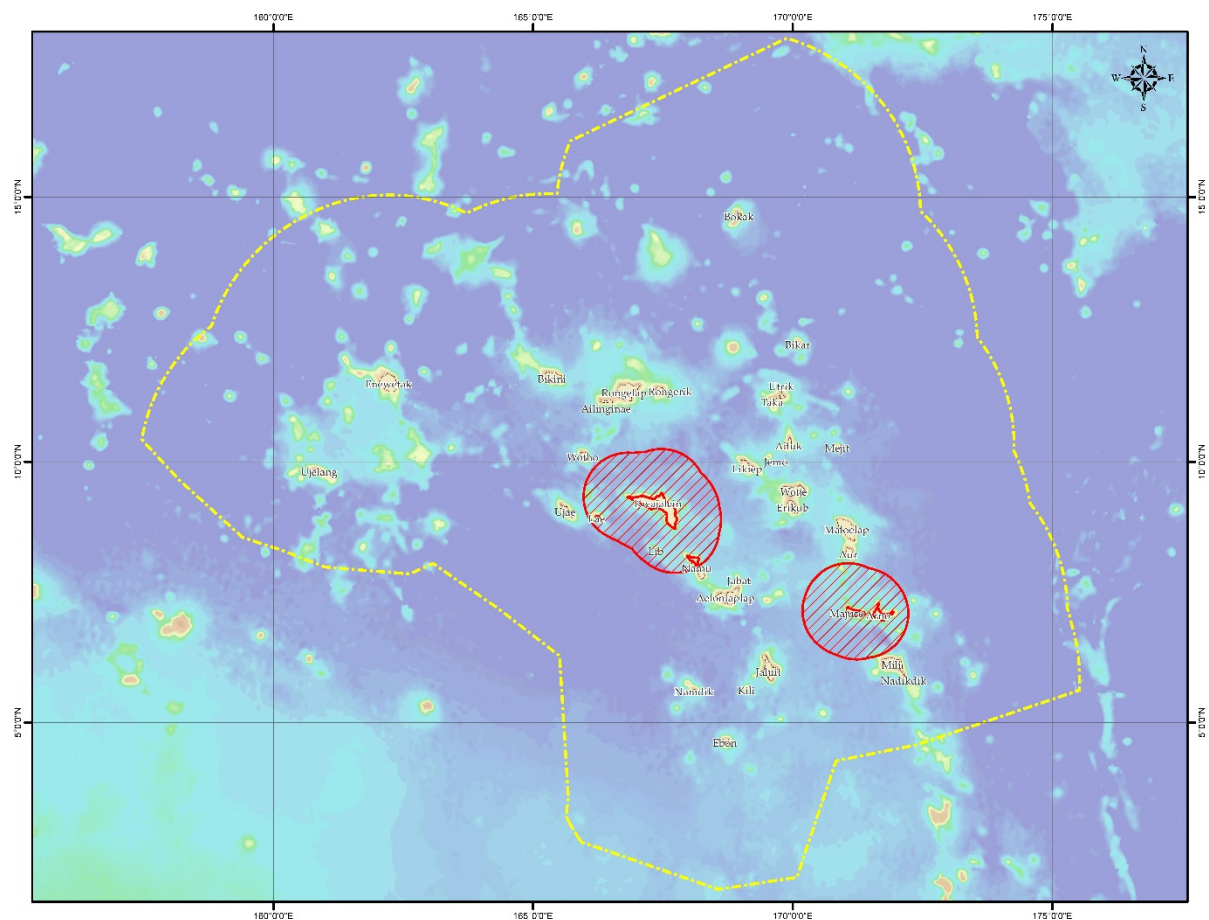


Figure 1: Maritime limits of RMI

The national development and management of the marine resources within the RMI fall under the jurisdiction of MIMRA.

MIMRA operates under the Fisheries Act 1997 (amended 2011 and 2016), which establishes a comprehensive framework for fisheries management. MIMRA's rights and authority regarding fish and fishery resources in the Fisheries Act 1997 relevant to the oceanic fisheries are set out in Part I, Sections 203 – 209, 211-13, and Part II, Section 236, and Part IV, Sections 229 - 231.

MIMRA is also guided by the Marine Resources Act 1997 (revised 2002), the Tuna Management Plan 2000-2025, the *Fisheries Enforcement Act 1997* (amended 2011), the *Marshall Islands Maritime Zones Declaration Act 2016*, the *Fishing Access and Licensing Act 1997* (amended 2011), the National Plan of Action to Prevent IUU Fishing (being amended hereby), and the *Endangered Species Act* (1975).

The functions, roles and responsibilities of MIMRA and its staff are set out in Part II of the *Marshall Islands Marine Resources Act 1997* (2002). Under the Act, the powers and functions of MIMRA are

vested in and exercised by a Board of Directors, which consists of seven members: the Minister of Natural Resources and Commerce, who serves as Chairman, and six other members appointed by the President and the Cabinet. Four of the six members must have knowledge and experience in the fisheries sector, and the Director of MIMRA serves as the "Secretary of the Board".

The Executive Director supervises six MIMRA divisions:

- Oceanic and Industrial Affairs;
- Coastal and Community Affairs
- Corporate Services and Finance;
- Legal Affairs Division;
- Information and Communication Technologies;
- Seafood Safety Competent Authority

MIMRA activities are funded by fishing access fee revenues. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Commerce oversees MIMRA, with the Minister serving as Chairman of the MIMRA Board.

The MIMRA Board comprises representatives from relevant government departments and the private sector. Fisheries policy is primarily driven by MIMRA, subject to Board approval and, where legislative change is required, to the National Parliament (Nitijela).

Marine resources are central to RMI's economy, and managing its fisheries has always been a core responsibility. Since the 2010 introduction of the Vessel Day Scheme, offshore tuna revenues have become a major source of national income.

The main species by volume in RMI's oceanic fisheries are skipjack tuna, yellowfin tuna, and bigeye tuna, though other species are also caught. The primary industrial fishing method is purse seining, followed by longline and pole-and-line fishing.

RMI has **11** nationally flagged purse-seine vessels fishing in the WCPO that, in **2025**, caught a total of **68,768** metric tons of tuna. Skipjack remains the dominant species caught in the purse-seine fishery within the EEZ, accounting for approximately **82%** of the catch, followed by yellowfin at around **13%** and bigeye tuna at approximately **4.88%**.

RMI also had **40** chartered longline vessels fishing in its EEZ through the Marshall Islands Fishing Venture (MIFV). The MIFV chartered vessels caught a retained total of approximately **5,102** metric tons — up from the previous year.

In 2025, provisional catches from the pole-and-line fleet increased significantly to 541 metric tons, up from 69 mt in the previous year. Skipjack is the main species making up the catch composition for this fleet and nearly accounts for the entire catch total each year

There were approximately **191** foreign vessels licensed to fish in RMI in **2025**, though not all fish in any given year. The breakdown by gear was **143** purse-seine, **40** longline, and **8** pole-and-line vessels.

Besides MIFV, RMI has developed significant shore-based facilities, including the Pan Pacific Foods (PPF) loining plant processing skipjack from the purse seine fishery.

The RMI government also maintains a joint venture partnership with Koo's Fishing Company, Ltd. (KFC). This venture continues to provide an additional revenue stream as well as acting as a catalyst for further on-shore developments.

Furthermore, since 2023, the RMI Government has maintained a joint venture with The Nature Conservancy (TNC), creating Pacific Island Tuna Provisions LLC ("PITP") to support the RMI's entry into the commercial tuna supply chain — an area historically dominated by global multinational corporations.

PIT sources free-school tuna from purse seine vessels operating under the Parties to the Nauru Agreement's (PNA) Vessel Day Scheme (VDS). During 2024, PIT held agreements with 11 Marshall Islands-flagged and 8 FSM-flagged purse seiners. A key strategic goal of PIT is to shift tuna unloading from lagoon-based transshipment to dockside containerization, which creates additional jobs and economic value domestically.

Other local companies, such as Pacific International Inc., also contribute to local value-adding through fish handling and export shipments.

Majuro Port is the only designated transshipment port in the RMI and a major regional hub for purse-seine transshipment and landings.

In 2025, there were **214 transshipment events** in Majuro, a significant increase from the 168 recorded in 2024 and well below the 2019 peak. Moreover, a further **24** were combined transshipment and landings, and **8** were landings only.

By flag, these operations involved vessels from **Taiwan (48), the Marshall Islands (48), Nauru (44), FSM (44), Panama (42), Tuvalu (10), and China (6)**.

## 4 Fisheries Governance and Management

### 4.1 Statutory enforcement and management organisations

MIMRA receives its mandate to operate as an independent authority managing the fisheries resources for the Republic of the Marshall Islands from the *Marshall Islands Marine Resources Act of 1997*.

Specifically, its mandate comes from section §119. *Powers and Functions of the Authority*

1. *Unless otherwise provided in this Title, the Authority shall have the exclusive powers and functions to:*
  - a. ***conserve, manage and sustainably develop all resources in the Fishery Waters and seabed and subsoil thereunder, in accordance with the principles and provisions in this Title and in sub-regional, regional and international instruments to which the Republic of the Marshall Islands is party;***
  - b. *establish management plans and programs to manage the resources in the Fishery Waters;*
  - c. *issue licenses in accordance with this Title;*
  - d. *issue licenses for the exploration and exploitation of the seabed and subsoil of the Fishery Waters;*
  - e. *negotiate and conclude access agreements and fisheries management agreements on behalf of the Government in accordance with Article V, Section 1(d) of the Constitution and Part I of Chapter 4 of this Title;*
  - f. *implement by regulation or otherwise as appropriate access agreements or fisheries management agreements to which the Republic of the Marshall Islands is party;*
  - g. *act as the Competent Authority for the purpose of implementing the international fisheries and related obligations of the Marshall Islands;*
  - h. *coordinate and manage fisheries monitoring, control and surveillance and, in consultation with the Attorney-General, enforcement of this Title;*
  - i. *appoint authorised officers and observers in accordance with this Title;*
  - j. *cooperate in the conservation and management of highly migratory fish stocks as appropriate with other coastal States in the region and States fishing in the region and high seas area and participate in appropriate sub-regional, regional and international organisations or arrangements relating to fisheries;*
  - k. *participate in the planning and execution of projects, programs or other activities related to fisheries or fishing, or the exploration or exploitation of the non-living resources of the Fishery Waters, seabed or subsoil thereunder, in which the Government or any agency or instrumentality that has a proprietary interest, direct or indirect, by way of stock ownership, partnership, joint venture or otherwise;*
  - l. *regulate the processing, marketing and export of fish and fish products;*
  - m. *seek technical assistance for the determination of the Fishery Waters zones and boundaries;*
  - n. *submit the budget and a report regarding the expenditure of its funds to the Nitijela on an annual basis, (o) perform such other duties and functions as may be necessary to carry out the purposes and provisions of this Title.*

MIMRA formulates and implements management measures in accordance with the Marine Resources Act of the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

Specific subtasks undertaken by the Oceanic and Industrial Affairs Division include licensing, national fisheries database (data collection and statistics), research and monitoring (port sampling and observer programmes), international liaison, and collaboration in national MCS.

Both MIMRA and the Marshall Islands Sea Patrol undertake fisheries enforcement duties, mostly at sea boardings. RMI Sea Patrol falls under the Department of Public Safety and reports to the Ministry of Justice.

In January 2026, RMI took delivery of the new Guardian-class Patrol Boat **RMIS Jelmae**. The vessel replaces the Pacific Patrol Boat RMIS Lomor 03, which was the longest-serving Pacific Patrol Boat, operating since 1991 for almost 35 years.

Periodic patrols of the EEZ, averaging 100 days annually, are conducted using fishing vessel activity information provided by MIMRA and data generated from VMS coverage. These patrols are coordinated with aerial patrols conducted by the US Coast Guard and FFA aircraft when operational in the RMI.

Additional asset support is provided by the US Coast Guard (US Ship Rider Programme) and through joint FFA-coordinated exercises. These exercises include four operational Joint Deployment Programmes (JPDs). Each action is supported by hard assets and technical know-how from Australia, New Zealand, France and the USA, as well as from the cooperating Pacific island countries.

MIMRA Port Operations are aligned with PSMA, and in line with title §506 Port State Measures of the Act, which guide the requirements by which a foreign fishing vessel must comply with or is subjected to as a condition for the use of ports within RMI.

This key role is enhanced by the 2017 WCPFC PSM CMM and FFA's PSM framework. In port, MIMRA duties include inspecting fishing vessels on landing and transshipment. Vessel inspection and transshipment monitoring involve 100% of all Purse Seine vessels and 25% of Longliners entering Majuro. PSM activities are further described in section 5.5

The VMS system used is the FFA Trackwell supplemented by the Regional Surveillance Picture in Google Earth. There are two separate stations, one at MIMRA and the other at Sea Patrol, which allow tracking, through a Google interface, via a traffic light system associated with the FFA compliance index, with red for Vessels of Interest (VoI).

MIMRA operates a pool of boarding officers, with the provision for a MIMRA licensing officer to be co-opted as an additional resource.

MIMRA also has a full-time legal counsel, with delegated powers to act on behalf of the Attorney General.

Performance against the implementation of the WCPFC measures is assessed annually by the WCPFC Technical and Compliance Committee (TCC) in accordance with the Compliance Monitoring Scheme (CMM 2023-04). It is noteworthy that RMI was assessed as compliant with all applicable CMMs in 2025

As a condition of licence to fish in the RMI and in line with PNA measures, all purse-seine vessels have 100% observer coverage while in RMI and PNA waters. Observer coverage for longliners is consistent with the WCPFC's 5% benchmark and may increase further if required. RMI's national observer programme is an authorised observer provider under the WCPFC's Regional Observer Programme (ROP).

Observers from the WCPFC Regional Observer Programme (ROP) are required on vessels operating in more than one coastal State jurisdiction, as well as on the high seas.

The observer group comprises a pool of around 60 trained observers, including senior observers and debriefers. The scheme is supported by an ongoing training programme to address observer attrition.

All Pacific Island observers are required to complete comprehensive training modules developed by SPC and FFA and are subject to training, debriefing and performance review procedures. Observers debrief on disembarkation and then enter the data into the SPC TUFMAN2 Observer Module (TUBS) manually for longliners, while for purse seine trips, data is either entered manually into TUBS or via the PNA FIMS Observer App, depending on the arrangements.

## 4.2 Management Measures

The governance and fisheries management organisations for tuna and related species in the Western Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO), and the tuna purse-seine fisheries, include the national governments, the Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA) and the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC).

The key regional organisations supporting Pacific Island countries are: the Parties to the Nauru Agreement Office (PNAO), which monitors members' VDS uptake and advises the parties on sub-regional management measures; the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), based in the Solomon Islands, which provides MCS technical support and coordination as well as advice on tuna fisheries management and development; and Pacific Community (SPC), based in New Caledonia, which provides data and stock assessment support for tuna and other oceanic species.

RMI implements both WCPFC management measures and PNA Implementation Arrangements. These measures are applied through minimum terms and conditions for each licence and apply to all vessels fishing within the EEZ, as well as to RMI vessels when fishing in PNA waters and the WCPF Convention Area.

### 4.2.1 *National*

The *Fisheries Act* establishes government control over living and non-living resources in the EEZ and provides for the conservation, management and development of these resources. The Act also requires MIMRA to cooperate with other States on shared and straddling fish stocks. Amendments to legislation are drafted by the Attorney General, supported by MIMRA, and reviewed by Cabinet. The draft legislation is then submitted to Parliament for approval.

The following management measures apply in Title 51 of the Marshall Islands Revised Code:

- All fishing vessels must apply for a fishing licence as a condition of access. Additional licensing terms and conditions are set out in the Access Agreements. Access Agreements are subject to various arrangements, ranging from Bilateral (Distant Water Fishing Nations [DWFN] fleets) to Multilateral (US Treaty, FSM Arrangement).
- MIMRA issues fishing licences for all fishing vessels authorised to operate in the RMI EEZ. Types of fishing licences include Foreign, Locally Based Foreign, and Domestic for the three main gear types, namely Purse Seine, Longline, and Pole and Line. Fishing vessels also include support vessels such as Bunkers and Carriers.
- Fees and costs associated with licensing are subject to negotiation with bilateral/foreign fishing associations and companies, as well as domestic fishing companies, in accordance with the Fishing Access and Licensing Act. License fees and associated costs are separate from those charged for fishing days under the VDS.
- Negotiations of Access Agreements are undertaken by MIMRA management in consultation with the Chairman and the Board of Directors and usually take place at the end of the calendar year.
- Fishing is prohibited within the territorial seas and within 50nm of both Majuro Atoll and Kwajalein Atoll.
- The use of large-scale drift nets and trace wire is prohibited.

### 4.2.2 *WCPFC*

The core purse-seine management measures implemented include all those covered by WCPFC, including the endorsement of the purse-seine VDS, 100% observer coverage, seasonal prohibitions on the use of Fish Aggregation Devices (FADs), prohibition of access to the high-seas pockets (HSPs), and retention of all tuna catch, including tuna bycatch species..

A summary of the main WCPFC measures is provided in Table 3 below:

| <b>CMM</b>         | <b>Title</b>                                                                                        | <b>Effective Date</b> | <b>Specifics</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>CMM 2004-03</b> | <i>Specifications for the Marking and Identification of Fishing Vessels</i>                         | 08 Feb 2005           | <i>Specifications for the marking and identification of fishing vessels operating in the WCPFC Convention Area.</i>                                                                                                              |
| <b>CMM 2004-04</b> | <i>Resolution on Conservation and Management Measures</i>                                           | 08 Feb 2005           | <i>Resolution setting out the framework for Conservation and Management Measures adopted by the Commission.</i>                                                                                                                  |
| <b>CMM 2006-04</b> | <i>Conservation and Management Measure for Striped Marlin in the Southwest Pacific</i>              | 13 Feb 2007           | <i>Conservation and management provisions for striped marlin in the Southwest Pacific Ocean.</i>                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>CMM 2006-07</b> | <i>Establishment of Regional Observer Programme</i>                                                 | 13 Feb 2007           | <i>Establishes the WCPFC Regional Observer Programme (ROP) framework and governance structure.</i>                                                                                                                               |
| <b>CMM 2008-04</b> | <i>Prohibition of Large Scale Driftnets on the High Seas</i>                                        | 10 Feb 2009           | <i>Prohibits the use of large scale driftnets on the high seas of the WCPFC Convention Area.</i>                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>CMM 2009-03</b> | <i>Conservation and Management for Swordfish</i>                                                    | 09 Feb 2010           | <i>Conservation and management measures for swordfish in the WCPFC Convention Area. Supersedes CMM 2008-05.</i>                                                                                                                  |
| <b>CMM 2009-05</b> | <i>Prohibiting Fishing on Data Buoys</i>                                                            | 09 Feb 2010           | <i>Prohibits fishing on data buoys within the WCPFC Convention Area to protect oceanographic and meteorological monitoring equipment.</i>                                                                                        |
| <b>CMM 2009-06</b> | <i>Regulation of Transshipment</i>                                                                  | 09 Feb 2010           | <i>Notification of designated ports and ports of transshipment; reporting on high seas transshipments; carriage of observers and definition of monitoring duties; transshipping authorisations for longliners if applicable.</i> |
| <b>CMM 2009-09</b> | <i>Conservation and Management Measure for Vessels Without Nationality</i>                          | 09 Feb 2010           | <i>Sets out measures applying to stateless vessels (vessels without nationality) operating in the WCPFC Convention Area.</i>                                                                                                     |
| <b>CMM 2009-10</b> | <i>Monitoring Landings of Purse Seine Vessels at Ports to Ensure Reliable Catch Data by Species</i> | 09 Feb 2010           | <i>Requires monitoring of purse seine vessel landings at ports to ensure reliable species-specific catch data, including provisions for cannery data submission.</i>                                                             |
| <b>CMM 2012-03</b> | <i>Implementing the ROP by Vessels Fishing North of 20°N</i>                                        | 04 Feb 2013           | <i>Conservation and management measure for implementing the Regional Observer Programme (ROP) specifically by vessels fishing north of 20 degrees North.</i>                                                                     |
| <b>CMM 2013-04</b> | <i>WCPFC Implementation of a Unique Vessel Identifier (UVI)</i>                                     | 04 Feb 2014           | <i>Establishes the use of a Unique Vessel Identifier (UVI) for fishing vessels operating in the WCPFC Convention Area to improve vessel tracking and compliance.</i>                                                             |
| <b>CMM 2013-06</b> | <i>Criteria for the Consideration of Conservation and Management Proposals</i>                      | 04 Feb 2014           | <i>Sets out the criteria and process for considering new or amended conservation and management measure proposals submitted to the Commission.</i>                                                                               |
| <b>CMM 2013-07</b> | <i>Special Requirements of Small Island Developing States and Territories</i>                       | 04 Feb 2014           | <i>Recognises and provides for the special requirements of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and territories in WCPFC fisheries management and decision-making.</i>                                                          |

|                    |                                                                                          |             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>CMM 2014-02</b> | <i>Conservation and Management Measure for the Commission VMS</i>                        | 03 Feb 2015 | <i>Application of the Commission Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) across the Convention Area; applicable to all vessels over 24m; sets VMS Standards, Specifications and Procedures (SSPs). Supersedes CMM 2011-02.</i>                                                               |
| <b>CMM 2015-02</b> | <i>Conservation and Management Measure for South Pacific Albacore</i>                    | 06 Feb 2016 | <i>Conservation and management provisions for South Pacific albacore tuna, including catch limits and effort controls for the longline fishery. Supersedes CMM 2010-05.</i>                                                                                                         |
| <b>CMM 2016-02</b> | <i>Conservation Management Measure for the Eastern High Seas Special Management Area</i> | 07 Feb 2017 | <i>Establishes management arrangements for the Eastern High Seas Special Management Area (EHSSMA) to protect tuna stocks. Supersedes CMM 2010-02.</i>                                                                                                                               |
| <b>CMM 2017-02</b> | <i>Minimum Standards for Port State Measures</i>                                         | 05 Feb 2018 | <i>Establishes minimum standards for Port State Measures (PSM) to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing, including port entry procedures, inspections and denial of port services.</i>                                                                                           |
| <b>CMM 2017-03</b> | <i>Protection of WCPFC Regional Observer Programme Observers</i>                         | 05 Feb 2018 | <i>Measures for the safety and protection of observers deployed under the WCPFC Regional Observer Programme. Supersedes CMM 2016-03.</i>                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>CMM 2017-04</b> | <i>Conservation and Management Measure on Marine Pollution</i>                           | 01 Jan 2019 | <i>Addresses marine pollution in the WCPFC Convention Area, including requirements for vessels to properly manage and dispose of waste and pollutants.</i>                                                                                                                          |
| <b>CMM 2018-05</b> | <i>Conservation and Management Measure for the Regional Observer Programme</i>           | 12 Feb 2019 | <i>Functions of Regional observers; obligations of CCMs; role of the coastal state; guiding principles for the operation of the ROP. Supersedes CMM 2007-01.</i>                                                                                                                    |
| <b>CMM 2018-06</b> | <i>Record of Fishing Vessels and Authorization to Fish</i>                               | 12 Feb 2019 | <i>Authorisation to fish in the Convention Area; requirements for Members' records of fishing vessels; the WCPFC Record of Fishing Vessels. Supersedes CMM 2017-05.</i>                                                                                                             |
| <b>CMM 2018-04</b> | <i>Conservation and Management of Sea Turtles</i>                                        | 01 Jan 2020 | <i>Implements FAO sea turtle guidelines; requires resuscitation of comatose turtles; proper handling and release techniques; purse seine operators to follow specific procedures to avoid and release turtles; mandatory reporting of all interactions. Supersedes CMM 2008-03.</i> |
| <b>CMM 2019-01</b> | <i>Conservation and Management Measure on Cooperating Non-Members</i>                    | 09 Feb 2020 | <i>Sets out the conditions and criteria for Cooperating Non-Member (CNM) status in the WCPFC. Supersedes CMM 2009-11.</i>                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>CMM 2019-03</b> | <i>Conservation and Management Measure for North Pacific Albacore</i>                    | 09 Feb 2020 | <i>Conservation and management provisions for North Pacific albacore tuna, including catch limits and effort controls. Supersedes CMM 2005-03.</i>                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>CMM 2019-07</b> | <i>Conservation Management Measure for the Establishment of a List of IUU Vessels</i>    | 09 Feb 2020 | <i>Establishes and maintains the WCPFC IUU Vessel List, including criteria for listing and de-listing of vessels engaged in illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. Supersedes CMM 2010-06.</i>                                                                                |
| <b>CMM 2019-05</b> | <i>Conservation and Management Measure on Mobulid Rays</i>                               | 01 Jan 2021 | <i>Conservation and management provisions for mobulid rays (manta rays and devil rays) caught in association with fisheries in the WCPFC Convention Area, including handling and release requirements.</i>                                                                          |

|                    |                                                                                                             |                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>CMM 2022-03</b> | <i>Establishing a Harvest Strategy for Key Fisheries and Stocks in the WCPO</i>                             | <i>01 Feb 2023</i> | <i>Conservation and management measure establishing a harvest strategy framework for key fisheries and stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean. Supersedes CMM 2014-06.</i>                                                                           |
| <b>CMM 2022-05</b> | <i>Standards, Specifications and Procedures for the WCPFC Record of Fishing Vessels</i>                     | <i>04 Jun 2023</i> | <i>Sets out the standards, specifications and procedures for the WCPFC Record of Fishing Vessels (RFV), including registration requirements and data fields. Supersedes CMM 2014-03.</i>                                                                      |
| <b>CMM 2022-06</b> | <i>Daily Catch and Effort Reporting</i>                                                                     | <i>01 Jan 2024</i> | <i>Conservation and management measure on daily catch and effort reporting requirements for fishing vessels in the Convention Area. Supersedes CMM 2013-05.</i>                                                                                               |
| <b>CMM 2023-03</b> | <i>Conservation and Management Measure for North Pacific Swordfish</i>                                      | <i>06 Feb 2024</i> | <i>Conservation and management provisions for North Pacific swordfish, including catch limits and reporting requirements. Supersedes CMM 2022-02.</i>                                                                                                         |
| <b>CMM 2023-04</b> | <i>Conservation and Management Measure for the Compliance Monitoring Scheme</i>                             | <i>06 Feb 2024</i> | <i>Establishes the WCPFC Compliance Monitoring Scheme (CMS), including monitoring and reporting systems for catch and effort limits, spatial and temporal closures, observer and VMS requirements, and scientific data provision. Supersedes CMM 2021-03.</i> |
| <b>CMM 2024-01</b> | <i>Conservation and Management Measure for Pacific Bluefin Tuna</i>                                         | <i>01 Feb 2025</i> | <i>Conservation and management provisions for Pacific Bluefin tuna, including catch limits and effort controls. Supersedes CMM 2023-02.</i>                                                                                                                   |
| <b>CMM 2024-02</b> | <i>Monitoring, Controlling and Surveillance of Pacific Bluefin Tuna</i>                                     | <i>01 Feb 2025</i> | <i>Specific monitoring, control and surveillance requirements for the Pacific Bluefin tuna fishery, complementing CMM 2024-01.</i>                                                                                                                            |
| <b>CMM 2024-03</b> | <i>Conservation and Management Measure for the Charter Notification Scheme</i>                              | <i>01 Feb 2025</i> | <i>Sets out the requirements for the WCPFC Charter Notification Scheme (CNS), including notification procedures for vessels operating under charter arrangements. Supersedes CMM 2021-04.</i>                                                                 |
| <b>CMM 2024-06</b> | <i>Conservation and Management Measure for the North Pacific Striped Marlin</i>                             | <i>01 Feb 2025</i> | <i>Conservation and management provisions for North Pacific Striped Marlin, including catch limits and reporting requirements. Supersedes CMM 2010-01.</i>                                                                                                    |
| <b>CMM 2024-07</b> | <i>Protection of Cetaceans from Purse Seine and Longline Fishing Operations</i>                             | <i>01 Jul 2025</i> | <i>Conservation and management measure for the protection of cetaceans (whales and dolphins) from interactions with purse seine and longline fishing operations in the Convention Area. Supersedes CMM 2011-03.</i>                                           |
| <b>CMM 2025-03</b> | <i>Conservation and Management Measure on a Management Procedure for WCPO Skipjack Tuna</i>                 | <i>03 Feb 2026</i> | <i>Establishes a management procedure for WCPO skipjack tuna based on harvest strategy principles, setting out decision rules and reference points. Supersedes CMM 2022-01.</i>                                                                               |
| <b>CMM 2025-04</b> | <i>Conservation and Management Measure on the Application of High Seas FAD Closures and Catch Retention</i> | <i>03 Feb 2026</i> | <i>Governs the application of high seas FAD closure periods and catch retention requirements for purse seine vessels; 100% catch retention/no discards for tuna species; 100% observer coverage. Supersedes CMM 2009-02.</i>                                  |
| <b>CMM 2025-05</b> | <i>Conservation and Management Measure to</i>                                                               | <i>03 Feb 2026</i> | <i>Requires the use of seabird mitigation measures by longline fishing vessels in designated areas of the Convention Area,</i>                                                                                                                                |

|                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                 |             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                              | <i>Mitigate the Impact of Fishing on Seabirds</i>                                               |             | <i>including line-weighting, tori lines and night-setting. Supersedes CMM 2018-03.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>CMM 2025-06</b>                                                                                                           | <i>Conservation and Management Measure for Sharks</i>                                           | 03 Feb 2026 | <i>Single comprehensive shark CMM covering all sharks including species-specific requirements; requires full utilisation and retention of carcass; fins and carcasses to be offloaded together; prohibits retention, transshipment or trading of fins caught in contravention; encourages live release of non-target sharks. Supersedes CMM 2024-05.</i> |
| <b>CMM 2025-07</b>                                                                                                           | <i>WCPFC Boarding and Inspection Procedures (HSBI)</i>                                          | 03 Feb 2026 | <i>Sets out the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission High Seas Boarding and Inspection (HSBI) procedures, including strengthened port State measures and tools for high seas boarding and inspection. Supersedes CMM 2006-08.</i>                                                                                                            |
| <b>CMM 2025-01</b>                                                                                                           | <i>Conservation and Management Measure on a Management Procedure for South Pacific Albacore</i> | 16 Feb 2026 | <i>Establishes a management procedure for South Pacific albacore tuna, setting out harvest strategy-based decision rules and reference points for the longline fishery.</i>                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>CMM 2025-02</b>                                                                                                           | <i>Conservation and Management Measure for Bigeye, Yellowfin and Skipjack Tuna in the WCPO</i>  | 16 Feb 2026 | <i>Primary conservation and management measure for tropical tunas (bigeye, yellowfin and skipjack) in the WCPO; limits high seas purse seine effort; operating provisions for the Vessel Day Scheme (VDS); closure of high seas pockets; effort and catch controls. Supersedes CMM 2023-01.</i>                                                          |
| <b>Note:</b> CMM 2024-04 (Crew Labour Standards) is not included above as it is not yet in force (effective 1 January 2028). |                                                                                                 |             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

Table 1: WCPFC measures relevant to the RMI

Performance in implementing the WCPFC measures is assessed annually by the WCPFC Technical and Compliance Committee (TCC). It is noteworthy that RMI was judged to be compliant with all CMMs in 2025.

In response to specific perceived weaknesses in WCPFC measures, the PNA adopted additional purse seine management measures, including an extension of closures to all high seas areas adjacent to PNA EEZs (high seas areas between 10°N and 20°S and 170°E and 150°W ); an increase in the minimum mesh size for purse seine nets to 90 mm (3.5 inches), measured from knot to knot in the bunt, and 240 mm (9 inches) in at least 70% of the body of each purse seine net; and a ban on setting on whale sharks (PNA, 2010).

### 4.3 Institutional Arrangements

MIMRA is responsible for enforcing RMI's national fisheries legislation, which incorporates regional and sub-regional regulations and measures. It also aligns with other member countries through multilateral and bilateral MCS treaties and agreements, including the NTSA, FFA regional operations, and smaller bilateral surveillance operations.

National MCS capabilities have improved with emerging technology, alongside an increasingly open information-sharing network in the region. In 2019, MIMRA established an operations centre equipped to fulfil its national and international MCS obligations.

As Majuro is one of the world's busiest tuna transshipment ports, day-to-day MCS operations include analysing intelligence on vessel arrivals to ensure that fishers comply with legal fishing practices before and during port use. MIMRA is currently implementing PSMA for arriving vessels in port (further discussed in section 5.5). Transshipping and landing vessels are monitored to verify and certify their catch.

National EEZ surveillance is also a vital MCS practice. RMI is not only a coastal state, but its EEZ is a key route for vessels travelling to and from Asian countries. MIMRA incorporates and utilises tools provided by FFA, the PNA Fisheries Information Management System (FIMS), and technology providers like Starboard Maritime Intelligence to monitor these activities.

#### **4.3.1 Vessel Registry**

The International Registry Inc (IRI) is the authorised body responsible for registering vessels flying the Marshall Islands flag. The MIMRA is responsible for authorising vessels on the MIMRA Record of Fishing Vessels (RFV) and subsequently submitting their details to the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission positive list.

IRI maintains a register of operators or beneficial owners of vessels flying the Marshall Islands flag, including their nationality. Details of Fishing Vessels, through the application, are jointly made available to IRI and MIMRA, and registration decisions require pre-verification and a formal exchange of information between the two parties.

#### **4.3.2 Ministry of Justice, Immigration and Labor**

The Ministry of Justice, Immigration and Labor is designated as the responsible line ministry for the enforcement of laws, regulations and conservation and management measures. The Ministry is responsible for drafting legal statutes and for the application of the law. Through the MIMRA legal officer, it proactively supports compliance functions and implements both criminal and civil actions.

#### **4.3.3 The Marshall Islands Ports Authority (RMIPA)**

RMIPA is responsible for pilotage, anchorage and berthing within Majuro Atoll. It has no enforcement role but is informed, if required, of any detentions and requires notification from the necessary authorities, including MIMRA and the Sea Patrol Division, that vessels have been released.

#### **4.3.4 Others**

Other relevant Marshall Islands institutions involved in fisheries include the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Asia Pacific Desk, which is active in the international aspects of fisheries policy, including work on the WCPFC Convention and other regional and international fisheries matters.

The Republic of the Marshall Islands Environmental Protection Agency (RMI EPA) is responsible for sanitation on board fishing vessels, particularly for water quality and discharge.

## 5 Implementation of the IPOA-IUU

### 5.1 Scope

The following sections describe how RMI complies with the provisions of the FAO International Plan of Action to Combat, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported Fishing, and, where necessary, any further specific actions RMI may need to take to improve its implementation. Information is presented in accordance with the format and structure of the IPOA-IUU.

### 5.2 All state and coastal state responsibilities

#### 5.2.1 International instruments

***IPOA-IUU Articles 10 to 15 encourage states to give full effect to appropriate norms of international law. This includes the ratification of UNCLOS, the FAO Compliance Agreement, and the conservation and management measures of competent RFMOs.***

RMI is a party to the following international legal instruments relating to fisheries conservation, management and development:

| Instrument                                                               | Status                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| WCPF Convention                                                          | Ratified in 2000                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 1982 UN Convention of the Law of the Sea                                 | Ratified in 1991                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 1995 UN Fish Stocks Agreement                                            | Ratified in 2003                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Driftnet Convention                                                      | Ratified in 1989                                                                                                                                                                            |
| CITES                                                                    | RMI is not Party to CITES. The Fisheries Act may, by proclamation, declare any fish as protected which are designated as endangered by international agreement on advice from the Director. |
| Port State Measures                                                      | Ratified in 2024.                                                                                                                                                                           |
| FAO Code of Conduct                                                      | Accepted and implemented through the Marine Resources Act and the Tuna Management Plan                                                                                                      |
| IPOA-IUU                                                                 | Endorsed in 2005                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Niue Treaty on Cooperation in Fisheries Surveillance and Law Enforcement | Ratified in 1991                                                                                                                                                                            |

Table 2: Summary of ratification of primary international fisheries instruments by RMI

The endorsed agreements are formally adopted in the Marshall Islands Revised Code (MIRC), 2011. Any changes to Pacific Island treaties, the Palau Arrangement (on VDS)<sup>1</sup>, the Nauru Agreement<sup>2</sup> and the Niue Treaty are subject to ratification by Cabinet. PNA Implementation Arrangements and WCPFC management measures are introduced automatically and applied through the MTCs. These changes are deliberated through MIMRA and submitted to Cabinet for endorsement.

<sup>1</sup> The Palau Arrangement for the Management of the Western Pacific Purse Seine Fishery (As Amended), as revised by the Ninth Annual Meeting of the Parties to the Palau Arrangement, 18-19 May 2004. Available from <http://www.ffa.int/system/files/%252Fhome/ffaadmin/%252Ffiles/ffa/Palau%20Arrangement.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> PNA 3rd Arrangement Implementing the Nauru Agreement Setting Forth Minimum Terms and Conditions of Access to The Fisheries Zones of The Parties. [http://www.spc.int/coastfish/countries/nauru/nfmra/laws/PNA\\_Third\\_Implementing\\_Arrangement.pdf](http://www.spc.int/coastfish/countries/nauru/nfmra/laws/PNA_Third_Implementing_Arrangement.pdf)

**NPOA Action Point 1:** MIMRA to maintain implementation, through supporting compliance actions, WCPFC CMMs and PNA IAs as and when these are amended

### 5.2.2 *National legislation*

*IPOA-IUU Articles 16 and 17 encourage states to develop legislation which covers, in an effective manner, all aspects linked to IUU fishing, notably the application of licensing conditions. Articles 16 and 17 encourage countries to develop legislation which covers effectively all aspects linked to IUU fishing, notably the application of licensing conditions.*

The main legislation governing fisheries management in the RMI is Title 51 of the Marshall Islands Revised Code (MIRC), particularly Chapter 2 (Fisheries Act) and Chapter 5 (Fisheries Enforcement Act).

The Fisheries Management chapter includes references to the following statutory requirements:

- Conservation and management measures;
- protection of certain species;
- protection and promotion of artisanal fisheries;
- fisheries Exclusion Zone;
- cooperation on high seas fishing for highly migratory fish stocks;
- consultation on international fisheries management;
- fishing with poisons or explosives;
- limitations on taking turtles;
- control of sponges;
- control of *pinctada margaritifera* (black-lip mother of pearl oyster shell);
- prohibition of harvesting trochus except during open season;
- introduction of fish into Fishery Waters;
- prohibition of removal of fish from nets, traps;
- protection of fish aggregating devices, artificial Reefs mooring buoys, floats, trays etc.;
- protection of fishing vessel or gear;
- use of possession of prohibited fishing gear;
- prohibition of driftnet fishing;
- prohibition of trade in fish, fish products, or other marine resources;
- commercial sale of endangered species;
- export of live fish, fish products or other marine resources;
- certification of fish and fish products;
- prohibition of Commercial Shark fishing;
- prohibition of taking of sharks, possession, sale and trade;
- Penalties;
- provisions on fishing permits (date of validity, revocation and issuance);
- the Fisheries Management chapter includes references to the following statutory requirements.

A summary of national monitoring tools that apply to the vessels include:

- Enforcement Responsibility;
- Marshall Islands Record of Fishing Vessels;
- authorisation to fish in areas beyond the Fishery Waters;
- Use of Vessels of other flags by the Marshall Islands beyond the Fishery Waters;
- Port State measures;
- Mobile Transceiver Unit requirements;
- Vessel Monitoring System – Information;

- Mobile Transceiver unit – Evidence;
- Catch Certification;
- appointment, powers and duties of authorised officers and observers as well as provisions relating to jurisdiction, legal proceedings and evidence;
- forfeiture and disposition of seized or confiscated property.

**NPOA action point 2:** MIMRA to maintain the effective application of the Marshall Island Revised Code.

#### 5.2.2.1 Control over nationals

***IPOA-IUU Articles 18 and 19 encourage states to exercise control over their nationals to ensure that nationals subject to their jurisdiction do not support or engage in IUU fishing. They also encourage states to cooperate with other states to identify such nationals involved in IUU fishing and to discourage nationals from registering vessels under the jurisdiction of states not meeting their flag state responsibilities.***

An RMI fishing vessel means any fishing vessel which is registered in the RMI or whose operations are based in the RMI, and which is wholly or partly owned by an RMI beneficiary, including a private individual, a State or Government shareholding, or which contributes to domestic value-adding through fish processing.

RMI maintains a register of operators or beneficial owners of vessels flying its flag, including their nationality. Before registration, IRI formally consults previous registries on the vessel's history, and MIMRA checks against the RFMO IUU blacklists. Vessels (fishing vessels, carriers and tankers) are registered with the IRI, and fishing vessels are then registered in a separate MIMRA Record of Fishing Vessels and submitted to the positive list.

The long-standing cooperation between MIMRA and IRI ensures functional consistency, as demonstrated by the limited number of FVs flagged to RMI.

It is an offence under the Act for an RMI-flagged vessel to operate in areas under the jurisdiction of another country or countries, in contravention of relevant fisheries management regulations. Such an offence can attract a fine of up to US\$1 million<sup>3</sup>.

RMI is also bound by WCPFC CMM 2018-06 to ensure that flag vessels are authorised to fish in the WCPFC Convention Area, including areas beyond fishery waters, and that such vessels are on the Commission's Record of Fishing Vessels. Section 505 of the Fisheries Enforcement Act establishes the court's jurisdiction over any RMI vessel, citizen or resident that contravenes the Act outside RMI. When fishing in the PNA countries' national waters, these vessels comply with the FSMA.

Domestic and locally based foreign longliners are prohibited from fishing beyond national waters unless specifically authorised on a case-by-case basis.

Purse seine fishing in the high seas pockets is prohibited (PNA 3IA). Monitoring is undertaken using VMS and a series of reporting requirements, including weekly reports and catch logsheets.

When reissuing licences or distant-water authorisations, MIMRA considers each vessel's compliance with its activities in the previous period. A track record of systematic non-compliance will result in the vessel being removed from FFA vessels of 'Good Standing'.

As an FFA member, RMI may refer vessels that contravene the FFA Regional Vessel Register requirements for suspension or withdrawal of their good standing status. The consequence is that the 17 FFA members would deny licences to those fishing vessels in their coastal waters. The IUU deterrence value of this action is regularly relied upon to ensure compliance, particularly with VMS provisions.

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<sup>3</sup> Marine Resources Act, 2002, S. 909

**NPOA action point 3:** MIMRA to maintain the existing arrangements with the Maritime Administrator.

**NPOA action point 4:** MIMRA to maintain the standardised monitoring of all RMI flagged vessels when fishing within the 200-mile zone and outside territorial waters, and in the waters of other PNA parties with the assistance of FFA

#### 5.2.2.2 *Vessels without nationality*

***IPOA- IUU Article 20*** invites states to take measures to eliminate the IUU fishing activities of fishing vessels without nationality on the high seas.

Vessels without a nationality are not currently perceived as a major cause for concern or a source of IUU fishing activity. To date, RMI has not encountered fishing vessels suspected of being without nationality in the RMI EEZ or on the high seas. Should RMI detect any fishing activities by a vessel without nationality on the high seas, this would be presumed to undermine the conservation and management measures of the respective RFMO; a serious violation, for which RMI would instigate or support IUU listing and sanctioning procedures consistent with WCPFC CMM.

In maintaining its vessel registry, RMI supports and has in place mechanisms to prevent vessels from becoming stateless during a transfer to a new flag.

The creation of the Record of Fishing Vessels (RFV) held by WCPFC and the FFA Vessels of Good Standing (VOGS) has substantially helped fisheries surveillance agencies across the region identify industrial fishing vessels that are not authorised to operate within the WCPFC region. Before registration, vessel owners are required to submit details to FFA, including ownership and vessel characteristics (fishing method, flag, vessel name, length, GRT), as well as supporting details (IRCS and details of any modifications). During this process, FFA reviews the vessel's history.

Under its PSM practices, RMI also introduced a system for pre-notification and detention of any unauthorised fishing vessel calling at port. All vessels seeking to enter port are required to give at least 48 hours' pre-notification to MIMRA via an agent.

Any information received regarding vessels without nationality operating in the region will be shared with neighbouring countries and with WCPFC, as appropriate.

#### 5.2.3 **Penalties**

***IPOA-IUU Article 21*** encourages states to ensure that sanctions for IUU fishing be of sufficient severity to effectively eliminate IUU fishing and deprive offenders of the benefits derived from such activities.

In summary, Title 51 of the Marshall Islands Revised Code contains five legislative references that give MIMRA the legal authority to oversee fisheries management for both Oceanic and Coastal Fisheries. For this NPOA, four pieces of national legislation, along with two key regulations, contain penalty provisions for various offences arising from acts or omissions committed by natural persons (e.g. Master, Operator, Crew, etc.) and corporations (e.g. foreign or domestic fishing industries, etc.) [see *Fisheries Act, Fishing Access and Licensing Act, Fisheries Enforcement Act, Fishing License (Third Implementing Arrangement) Regulation of 2009* and *MIMRA Regulations 1998*].

Part II of Chapter 5 of the MIMRA Act provides clear guidance on the powers available to Authorised Officers. A penalty for each offence is provided under the relevant section of the Act. Table 5 provides a schedule of fisheries offences and penalties.

#### Offence

#### Penalty

|                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Possess or obtain parts removed from a vessel impounded and disabled by authorities                                                            | US\$ 20,000 and 6 months imprisonment                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Offence (obstructing) against an authorized officer                                                                                            | US\$ 50,000 and/or 6 months imprisonment                                                                                                                                                                      |
| ALC tampering                                                                                                                                  | US\$ 100,000 and/or 6 months imprisonment                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Providing incorrect information to an authorized officer                                                                                       | US\$ 10,000 and/or 6 months imprisonment                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Gear not stowed                                                                                                                                | US\$ 100,000 and/or 6 months imprisonment                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Contamination of fishery waters                                                                                                                | US\$ 500,000 plus clean-up costs                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Repeated offending                                                                                                                             | Maximum penalty applied plus suspension of license for 6 months                                                                                                                                               |
| Multiple offences                                                                                                                              | In addition to any relevant fine, a ban from fishing for up to three years                                                                                                                                    |
| Fishing without a license                                                                                                                      | US\$ 1m, forfeiture of vessel, gear and catch                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Any fine not paid within 30 days                                                                                                               | Revocation, suspension or conditions applied to license                                                                                                                                                       |
| Non-reporting of catch and effort                                                                                                              | US\$ 10,000 and/or 6 months imprisonment                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Marine Scientific Research: no license, failure to submit information, carry an observer, train a national or submit all samples not required. | US\$ 250,000                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Prohibition of taking of sharks, possession, sale and trade                                                                                    | US\$ 25,000 to US\$ 250,000                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Contravention of license conditions                                                                                                            | Citizens: US\$ 500 to US\$ 10,000 or 3 months imprisonment.<br>Non-citizens: US\$ 5,000-US\$ 750,000 and shall not engage in fishing or license suspension for 3 months.<br>Each day is a separate violation. |
| Obstruction in fish processing inspections                                                                                                     | US\$ 100,000                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Long Driftnet fishing                                                                                                                          | US\$ 1m for owner, master, charterer.                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Land. sell, deal, receive, display for sale fish caught by use of explosives or poison                                                         | Citizens: US\$ 20,000 and/ or 6 months imprisonment.<br>Non-citizens: US\$ 500,000 and/ or 6 months imprisonment.                                                                                             |
| Discharge of pollutants                                                                                                                        | US\$ 25,000 each day.<br>US\$ 50,000 repeated offence.                                                                                                                                                        |

Table 3: Schedules of RMI fisheries offences and penalties

If penalties are not covered by the existing legislation, Section 47 of the MIMRA Regulations 1998 provides for the inclusion of those offences, with benchmark fines applicable to both natural persons and corporations.

MIMRA engages with representatives of key national agencies involved in IUU mitigation, particularly the Ministry of Justice, Immigration and Labor, the Attorney General's Office, the Maritime Police and the Port Authority, via its legal officers. It will coordinate and host an annual effectiveness review and forward planning. .

**NPOA Action 5:** RMI to maintain the use of the provisions for administrative penalties in order to ensure IUU activities are effectively sanctioned.

**NPOA Action 6:** MIMRA to coordinate regular effectiveness review and forward planning with representatives of key national agencies involved in IUU mitigation.

#### 5.2.4 Non-cooperating states

**IPOA-IUU Article 22** encourages States to 'prevent, deter and eliminate the activities of non-cooperating States to a relevant regional fisheries management organisation which engage in IUU fishing'.

The relevant RFMO in the RMI context is the WCPFC. RMI is a member of the WCPFC and strives to translate WCPFC resolutions into tangible action at the national level on an equal footing.

WCPFC membership presently excludes important countries, such as Thailand and Vietnam. However, these countries participate as Cooperating Non-Members (CNMs) in WCPFC meetings and, as such, are required to comply with the WCPFC management measures.

The WCPFC positive list of fishing vessels mechanism provides that vessels from any other country are barred from being granted licences to fish in WCPFC member State waters. However, all issues regarding harmonised Port State Control measures throughout the WCPFC area, and the landing of potentially illegal or unreported catches in the ports of lenient and non-cooperating countries bordering the WCPFC area of competence, could be a cause for concern.

#### 5.2.5 *Economic Incentives*

***IPOA-IUU Article 23:*** States should, to the extent possible in their national law, avoid conferring economic support, including subsidies, to companies, vessels or persons that are involved in IUU fishing.

Article 23 of the IPOA-IUU requires countries to ensure that no economic support, including subsidies, is granted to entities (persons, companies or vessels) involved in IUU fishing.

Direct economic incentives and subsidy schemes are not available to RMI flagged vessels.

#### 5.2.6 *Monitoring, Control and Surveillance*

***IUU-IPOA Article 24*** States should undertake comprehensive and effective fisheries monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) arrangements, notably by giving due thought to the following: a) regulated access to waters and resources; b) records of vessels and owners; c) vessel monitoring systems (VMS); d) observer programmes; e) training for MCS personnel; f) planning and funding MCS activities in an effective manner; g) promoting industry awareness of the need for MCS; h) promoting understanding of MCS issues within the national judicial system; i) systems for the acquisition, storage and dissemination of MCS data; and j) effective implementation of national and internationally agreed boarding and inspection regimes.

MCS and IUU issues have recently been addressed by two assessments of MCS capacity and performance in Pacific Ocean Fisheries: the FFA Regional Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Strategy (RMCSS) 2024-2029<sup>4</sup> and the 2016 FFA report on the quantification of IUU, along with its 2021 update<sup>5</sup>. The recommendations from both documents have been used to improve resourcing, operational strategies, and the more effective and efficient use of the MCS tools at hand, and to strengthen the amendments to the current legal framework.

The RMCSS identifies weaknesses including limited resources for monitoring vast EEZs, persistent IUU fishing risks, especially misreporting in the high seas longline sector, gaps in independent verification of catch, insufficient high seas MCS compatibility, capacity and skills gaps among members, challenges in regional cooperation and information sharing, and the need for sustainable funding and better integration of emerging technologies. At the same time, the IUU quantification report found that the risks relate largely to underreporting and misreporting and are clearly differentiated by the type of vessel gear.

The MCS team at MIMRA is responsible for collecting and analysing inspection and observer data, and for providing inspection data and reports when required by the Director of MIMRA. This data is entered into the Fisheries Information Management System (FIMS) and MCS TUFMAN II (SPC Tuna Fisheries Database Management System).

FIMS contains details of licensed activity (catch, VMS, vessel days and observer reports) and MCS TUFMAN II contains details of inspections at sea, at transshipment and on offloading.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ffa.int/download/ffa-regional-monitoring-control-and-surveillance-strategy-rmcss-2024-2029/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.ffa.int/download/the-quantification-of-illegal-unreported-and-unregulated-iuu-fishing-in-the-pacific-islands-region>

FIMS provides for access and interrogation of data over time and stores the history of fishing vessel activity in the RMI EEZ and FSMA. This system can be used to monitor compliance levels across all fleets covering VMS, fishing days, catch, observer reporting, transshipment and reporting obligations, and when required, analyse fishery compliance levels in real-time.

This information is added to the FFA Regional Fisheries Surveillance Centre's (RFSC) electronic tracking system.

MCS operational aspects are described in the Vessels Inspection Plan, which aims to strengthen fisheries compliance and enforcement processes, particularly regarding PSM. This MCS support document sets out guidelines for handling requests for port entry, inward clearance, inspection results, monitoring, and outward clearance of vessels, as well as the basic requirements for the catch documentation scheme and applicable certifications.

A biannual self-evaluation MCS needs assessment is conducted to inform decision-making on the topic, external evaluations and the Inspection manual.

With support from the World Bank and led by the MIMRA, in partnership with Starboard Maritime Intelligence, the FFA and Vantor, Operation Nightwatch<sup>6</sup> took place in March 2026 as an intelligence-led maritime surveillance campaign across the Marshall Islands' EEZ. Using a tip-and-cue workflow, it fused satellite data (SAR/EO), AIS, and radio-frequency detections into a unified operating picture, then tasked FFA aircraft to verify high-priority targets. Of 43 vessels detected, six were prioritised for airborne verification, compressing the detection-to-verification cycle from days to roughly four hours. The operation demonstrates a repeatable model for large-ocean states to direct limited patrol assets towards the highest-risk vessels and is intended to be repeated annually, subject to funding.

**NPOA Action 7:** MIMRA to maintain the practice of biannual self-evaluation and MCS needs assessment to inform revision and updating of operational documents if required.

#### 5.2.7 *National Plans of Action*

*IUU-IPOA, Articles 25 to 27 encourage states to develop their NPOA-IUU in close consultation with interested stakeholders, including RFMOs, industry and NGOs, to assess its implementation on a regular basis, and to ensure internal and national coherence and coordination of efforts.*

This NPOA has been developed through appropriate consultation processes and fully implements the IPOA-IUU in RMI.

The NPOA-IUU will be reviewed and amended periodically, at intervals of no more than six years, to ensure that any regulatory and management changes are fully reflected.

**NPOA Action 8:** MIMRA to revise the present NPOA-IUU periodically, and no less than every six years.

#### 5.2.8 *Cooperation Between States*

*IUU-IPOA, Articles 28 to 31, encourages states to cooperate under the following headings: a) exchange of information on records of vessels authorised to fish; b) acquisition, management and verification of data and information from fishing; c) allow respective MCS personnel to cooperate in the investigation of IUU fishing; d) cooperate at the levels of technology transfer, harmonising policies and MCS, notably through signing international agreements. States are also encouraged to inform FAO and RFMOs about vessels deleted from their records of vessels authorised to fish, to designate and publish initial formal contact points for IUU fishing matters, as well as to cooperate directly (through agreements or arrangements) with other states for the enforcement of flag state measures applicable to management and conservation measures on a national, regional or global scale.*

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.starboardintelligence.com/articles/operation-nightwatch-case-study>

RMI has reciprocal information-sharing agreements with most of the FFA membership, including VMS, vessel compliance details on the FFA Register, and inspection details. Through FFA, RMI shares certain data to target the aerial and maritime surveillance activities of the Quadrilateral Surveillance Providers (Australia, France, New Zealand and the USA) to FFA.

RMI is a signatory to the Niue Treaty on Cooperation in Fisheries Surveillance and Law Enforcement (NTSA), which allows for cooperation in enforcement activities, including hot pursuit of offending vessels through the EEZ of participating countries.

The Treaty is an agreement on cooperation among FFA members for the monitoring, control and surveillance of fishing. It includes provisions for the exchange of information and for cooperation in monitoring, prosecuting and penalising illegal fishing vessels. It is designed to complement other management frameworks in the region and to define its relationship to harmonised minimum terms and conditions of access.

RMI has entered into an agreement with the Micronesian nations of Palau and FSM. A specific focus will be on developing stronger links with other countries where RMI vessels are active, particularly Nauru and PNG, which have significant interdependent activity with RMI. Special attention will be paid to observer reporting, joint operations, intelligence sharing and the integration of IT systems.

RMI is an active participant in international treaties and agreements, including the WCPFC. These arrangements provide for the public disclosure of information on RMI fishing vessels, international cooperation in the conservation and management of fisheries, and efforts to combat IUU fishing. The PSMA provides for reciprocal arrangements for dockside inspections of fishing vessels.

RMI will pursue bilateral agreements with those states where there may be additional needs for cooperative data sharing, surveillance and enforcement, as well as other forms of cooperation, such as aligning national fishery management approaches.

RMI maintains MoUs with Thailand's and the Philippines' fisheries authorities, which enable collaboration between the port state and the tuna-processing state to improve traceability. MIMRA is looking to expand this type of MoU with other tuna processing countries.

National EEZ surveillance is also a vital MCS practice. RMI is not only a coastal state, but its EEZ is a key route for vessels travelling to and from Asian countries.

**NPOA Action 9:** MIMRA to maintain and expand its regional and bilateral agreements with other states.

#### 5.2.9 **Publicity of IUU events detected, and fines implemented**

*IPOA-IUU Article 32 encourages states to publicise widely full details of IUU fishing and actions taken to eliminate it.*

To ensure that rules are clear and that the consequences of illegal fishing are known, MIMRA is active in publishing details of successful infringements detected and fines imposed.

MIMRA has been active in publishing successful prosecutions and out-of-court settlements for fisheries cases in both domestic and international media.

**NPOA Action 10:** MIMRA to maintain and expand publicity of IUU cases and prevention activities.

#### 5.2.10 **Capacity and technical resources**

*IPOA-IUU Article 33 encourages states to make available the necessary technical capacity and resources needed to implement the NPOA-IUU, noting that this might include the establishment of appropriate financial mechanisms at national, regional or international levels.*

Most of RMI's fishery officers involved in MCS activities have undertaken relevant training, typically through MCS workshops and short courses delivered by regional organisations and overseas

universities. MIMRA staff are trained in core maritime deployment functions through the Pacific Patrol Boat Program, and specific enforcement and surveillance training is organised for naval and fisheries officers. RMI's observers and debriefers are required to meet the regional Pacific Islands Regional Fishery Observer (PIRFO) competency standards developed by SPC and FFA.

RMI has supported the development of a regional MCS Competency-Based Foundation Course, now operational. In partnership with NZ MPI and AFMA, FFA delivers the Certificate level IV Fisheries Enforcement and Compliance course, which USP accredited in 2016. The course is delivered online over eight months, followed by a short face-to-face competency-based assessment. Competency standards are achieved through a combination of short, targeted courses; mentoring and practice-focused training in the workplace; and two-way attachments, including internships at other MCS agencies and capacity-building by experienced MCS advisers.

There are also evolving needs in MIMRA MCS, and these will be further exacerbated by the development of effective PSM and CDS. These developments will further increase the current need for industry knowledge, forensic accounting, data analysis and intelligence analysis skills. Mentoring in these highly industry-specific areas has been the focus of much of the work of the NZ MFAT-supported Offshore Fisheries Advisor attached to MIMRA since 2017.

Regarding financial resources, the MIMRA annual budget provides the basic funding required to implement the NPOA-IUU. This is supplemented from time to time by small grants from a variety of sources, including regional organisations, RFMOs, bilateral development partners, and industry cost-recovery.

**NPOA Action Point 11:** MIMRA to maintain support for its officers through the FFA Certificate level IV Fisheries Enforcement and Compliance.

### **5.3 Flag state responsibilities**

#### **5.3.1 Vessel registration/ Record of Fishing Vessels**

***IPOA-IUU Articles 34 to 41** encourage flag states to exert necessary control over vessels flying their flag to minimise possible IUU fishing activities. This encourages states to avoid flagging vessels with an established IUU fishing record (unless proven changes of ownership and operators have occurred) and to prevent flag hopping for purposes of non-compliance. Flag states are encouraged to firmly link vessel registration and the issuing of fisheries licences.*

***Articles 42 and 43** encourage flag states to keep a register of vessels authorised to fly its flag, for vessels fishing within its waters, as well as for vessels fishing in waters beyond national jurisdiction.*

There is a mechanism in place that links vessel registration with the issuing of fisheries licences, with IRI responsible for conferring the flag and MIMRA responsible for authorising the issue of licences. The practical agreement is that IRI submits flag applications for fishing vessels to MIMRA for approval (on the condition that a fishing licence will be issued to the vessel), and MIMRA undertakes the required IUU checks. As stated earlier, this agreement incorporates a provision for a check on IUU records.

It is the responsibility of IRI to undertake checks on the following:

- Details of the vessel's history with the previous registry, including:
- Previous names,
- Details of former ownership
- Detail of current ownership, including ALL beneficial owners, including a check on the criminal record of any owner
- Vessel safety checks
- Details of vessel characteristics – length, moulded depth, beam, Gross Registered tonnage, power of main engines
- Details of Radio call sign and Lloyds number

- Vessel communication types and numbers (Inmarsat A, B and C numbers and satellite telephone number)

It is the responsibility of **MIMRA** to undertake the following checks:

- Whether on any IUU RFMO list <https://cravt.imcsnet.org>
- Whether on any IUU RFMO list <http://iuu-vessels.org/iuu/iuu/search>
- IUU catch history, from the previous flag fisheries competent authority and FFA
- IUU catch history of the ship's master from flag fisheries authority and FFA
- Carrying capacity, including freezer type, capacity and number, and fish hold capacity
- Areas intending to fish
- Fishing Method(s) intended
- Details of licenses issued by other coastal States (if applicable).

A vessel flagging application will only be approved where management has confirmed in writing that policy requirements, catch entitlements, and sustainability-related issues have been satisfied. Otherwise, the request is rejected in writing to the applicant, with a summary of the reasons.

If any vessel that becomes registered subsequently demonstrates a pattern of systematic non-compliance resulting from its removal from the MIMRA RFV, a request from the Marshall Islands Registry will be granted, and formal notification will be sent to the vessel owners. MIMRA and IRI will also retain records of any non-compliant vessel to inform the competent authorities of other countries.

Action points under this NPOA requirement are addressed under **NPOA Action Point 3**

### 5.3.2 *Authorisation to fish*

***NPOA-IUU Articles 44 to 50 encourage flag States to ensure that each fishing vessel entitled to fly its flag, and fishing in waters beyond national jurisdiction, is duly authorised by the flag State.***

MIMRA is the authority responsible for authorising fishing activities in RMI waters and in areas beyond its national jurisdiction. To date, there have been no reported cases of RMI-flagged vessels fishing beyond its national jurisdiction without authorisation.

As a condition of their authorisation to fish, RMI fishing vessels are required to record, maintain and provide catch statistics and other required data to MIMRA, and to meet the reporting requirements of WCPFC, PNA and the national governments of any countries whose waters they may fish in.

RMI FV must also report via VMS to the FFA/RMI national monitoring centre and comply with any applicable WCPFC or third-country VMS reporting requirements. RMI FV operating in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ) need to comply with FFA's Harmonised Minimum Terms and Conditions (HMTCS) for Access by Fishing Vessels<sup>7</sup>. This document is one of the most important tools FFA members use to regulate access to their waters.

RMI requires 100% observer coverage of its PS fleet. RMI progressively requires that LL carry observers or electronic monitoring systems (EMS) as a prerequisite for fishing.

## 5.4 Coastal State Measures

***IPOA-IUU Article 51 encourages coastal states to implement measures to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing in the exclusive economic zone, through effective MCS, licensing and authorisation, data collection and information exchange with other states.***

The *Fisheries Act* and subsidiary legislation set out the legal framework for the management of RMI's domestic and national fisheries.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.ffa.int/download/minimum-terms-and-conditions/?wpdmdl=3993&ind=1732244625026&refresh=61e90dbb&filename=HMTCS-as-revised-in-FFC133-May-2024-clean-copy.pdf>

Vessels operating under RMI's coastal State jurisdiction must be licensed and comply with the responsibilities of licence holders or operators under RMI's national laws and WCPFC CMMs.

The FFA regional register recognises that most fishing vessel operators wish to operate in waters under the jurisdiction of more than one FFA member. FFA members undertake to ensure that any access agreements they negotiate include all the requirements set out in the HMTCs, including:

- no foreign vessel will fish in a member state's EEZ unless a standard licence is issued;
- purse seine transshipments at sea are prohibited; they are permitted only in designated ports; longline vessel transshipments can occur at sea, subject to application and approval by the licensing state;
- foreign fishing vessels must release logbooks and catch records to officers from the licensing state;
- vessel operators must maintain and submit catch logs for operations in an EEZ and adjacent high-seas areas; these must be released to the licensing state within 45 days of any fishing trip;
- vessel operators must provide regular catch records for the licensing state while operating in any EEZ;
- vessel operators must carry observers to verify reports; they must have access to appropriate parts of the vessel and must record their observations;
- vessel operators must maintain a local agent;
- fishing gear must be stowed while transiting an EEZ;
- vessel operators must comply with the orders of licensing states;
- operators must mark their vessels following the FAO Standard Specification for the Marking and Identification of Fishing Vessels, and
- vessel operators must register automatic location communicators on the VMS Register of Foreign Fishing Vessels.
- vessel operators must comply with minimum crew labour requirements as set in the HMTCs

Information exchange arrangements are in place between RMI and other FFA members through the NTSA, which, as discussed earlier, provides for cooperation across a range of MCS activities.

## 5.5 Port state measures

*IPOA-IUU Articles 52 to 64 encourage port states to put necessary controls in place at the level of port installations (ports or offshore terminals). Measures to implement, and conditions, include: a) advance notice and permission to enter port; b) refuse landing or transshipping authorisation to vessels in port, for which IUU fishing activities have been established; c) publicise ports to which foreign vessels may be permitted access, and ensure on-site capacity to conduct inspections; d) communicate data flowing from inspections (vessel identification, quantities of catch onboard, etc.) to interested parties (incl. RFMOs and flag state); e) immediately report detected infractions to the flag state of the inspected vessel; f) publicise the national strategy and procedures on port state controls concerning fishing vessels and train officers accordingly; g) cooperate bilaterally or regionally, as appropriate, to develop compatible port state control measures; h) assume that vessels calling to port, or flying the flag of a non-member or non-cooperating state of a relevant RFMO, have engaged in IUU fishing, and order the master to establish that catch onboard was taken in a manner consistent with regional management and conservation measures; i) enhance information flows amongst relevant RFMOs on port state controls.*

RMI is allegedly the busiest transshipment port state in the Pacific; hence, RMI Port State Measures (PSM) are the requirements established or interventions undertaken that a foreign fishing vessel must comply with or be subject to as a condition for the use of ports within RMI. Concerning point h) in the previous paragraph, WCPFC has already established a positive list, along with a blacklist.

**RMI as a PSMA Party.** The Marshall Islands progressively implemented PSM from 2017 as a non-Party to the FAO Agreement on Port State Measures. Since July 2024, RMI has implemented PSM as a **Party** to the FAO PSMA.

Accession does not displace the RMI-specific approach already developed; rather, the approaches and systems developed in RMI under title §506, Port State Measures, of the RMI Fisheries Enforcement Act were subsequently embedded in the FFA Regional PSM Framework and now implement RMI's PSMA obligations.

The inspection benchmark is 100% of all PS and carriers and, since 2019, 25% of all LL vessels calling at the port to land or tranship fish.

The publicity of port state controls and the principles governing them will need to be displayed on dedicated pages on MIMRA's website.

**NPOA Action Point 12:** MIMRA to maintain the PSM inspection benchmarks (100% PS, 25% LL) and make the PSM controls and principles available in its website

## 5.6 Market-related measures

*The IPOA-IUU Articles 65-76 encourage states to take steps, consistent with international law, to apply trade- and market-related measures as a tool to deter and eliminate IUU fishing. Specific proposals include: preventing fish caught by IUU vessels being traded or imported into their territories; adopting multilaterally-agreed trade-related measures consistent with the principles of the World Trade Organisation, and the establishment of catch documentation schemes to enhance traceability.*

MIMRA operate a traceability system for fishery products for vessel landings, and it verifies the records of the traceability systems in place as part of the processors' seafood safety requirements.

It is also noteworthy that a Sanitary Competent Authority (CA) was established within MIMRA, and its systems are being developed to obtain authorisation for the EU market.

Regulation (EU) 2017/625 of the European Parliament and of the Council on official controls (the "Official Controls Regulation") provides, under Article 126(2)(a), that products of animal origin — including fishery products — may be imported into the EU only from a third country or a region thereof that appears on an authorised list. When drawing up such lists, account is taken of EU Commission controls in third countries and of the guarantees provided by the Competent Authority of third countries regarding compliance with, or equivalence to, the relevant EU food safety and health regulations.

The current lists of third countries authorised for the entry into the Union of fishery products are laid out in Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/405 of 24 March 2021, adopted pursuant to Article 126(2)(a) of Regulation (EU) 2017/625. Fishery products specifically are covered under Annex IX to that Regulation. The lists of third countries with an approved control plan and authorised for the entry into the Union of certain fishery products were most recently amended by Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2025/354 of 21 February 2025 (with the consolidated version of Regulation (EU) 2021/405 dated 16 March 2025).

EU IUU Catch Certification under Council Regulation (EC) No 1005/2008, as amended by Regulation (EU) 2023/2842 of the European Parliament and the Council of 22 November 2023, depends on first obtaining sanitary authorisation. Yet, RMI has been active in signing Section 7 (Transshipment in port) of catch certificates for foreign vessels transshipping in Majuro.

Since 2020, MIMRA has authorised the import of frozen tuna in containers for processing at approved premises for subsequent export. To support this arrangement, an SOP has been developed to verify the legality of the fish in the containers before import.

Furthermore, MIMRA is an active participant in the FFA's regional Catch Documentation Scheme (CDS), which is under development.

**NPOA Action Point 13:** MIMRA to pursue EU Market Access and, through this, further develop its traceability framework

**NPOA Action Point 14:** MIMRA to maintain its SOP associated with the verification of legality in the importation of fish for processing

## 5.7 Research

*IPOA-IUU Article 77 encourages states to engage in scientific research to derive methods permitting the identification of fish species from samples of processed products, notably through work on genetic markers and protein profiling.*

MIMRA supports the research functions of the Pacific Community (SPC) by providing port sampling information, observer observations, and ER and EM initiatives

MIMRA also initiates and actively participates in the development and testing of new technologies, such as dynamometers with wireless remote weight displays attached to the hooks of carriers' cranes during transshipments, to record accurate transshipment weight data and eliminate challenges and issues related to estimates.

## 5.8 Regional Fisheries Management Organisations

*IPOA-IUU Articles 78 to 84 encourage states to respect and enforce anti-IUU policies and measures of RFMOs, to adopt suggested management measures even if they are not members of these organisations, and to support the establishment of RFMO where they do not currently exist. The IPOA-IUU invites states to strengthen RFMO capacity in combating IUU fishing across the board, to encourage the participation of non-members, to create relevant linkages with other relevant RFMOs, and to take measures against states failing to adopt agreed RFMO or other measures to control their nationals and vessels.*

RMI is an active member of the WCPFC and implements its resolutions and management measures. The application of the WCPFC CMMs is monitored annually. Failure to implement measures triggers a compliance review.

The 2025 Technical Compliance Committee found RMI compliant with applicable CMMs. RMI will continue to implement and enforce all relevant WCPFC CMMs applicable to its fisheries and fishing fleet.

As a member of the FFA, RMI has been instrumental in developing many WCPFC CMM proposals. The majority of WCPFC binding CMMs have originated from the FFA chamber of the WCPFC, with RMI's active participation.

While the principle of broadening state participation in the WCPFC is supported, RMI is not in favour of expanding the WCPFC's membership. RMI's policy, aligned with that of all other Pacific Islands Forum members, is that management of the WCPO tuna fishery is the responsibility and right of the coastal states in the region, not of flag states from elsewhere.

Fishing by RMI-flagged vessels and/or nationals in waters and for species subject to the jurisdiction of RFMOs to which RMI is neither a party nor a cooperating non-member has not occurred to any extent. RMI prohibits such fishing without explicit authorisation.

## 5.9 Special Requirements of Developing Countries

*IPOA-IUU Articles 85 and 86 call for support to developing countries, notably in developing and implementing their NPOA-IUUs and giving effect to international obligations, duties and responsibilities as coastal, flag and port states.*

As a small island developing state (SIDS), RMI regularly seeks, and sometimes receives, financial and technical assistance from bilateral development partners, regional organisations, and others to support its anti-IUU efforts. RMI will continue to seek such support as required.

This NPOA-IUU for RMI was developed with technical assistance from the Offshore Fisheries Advisor (OFA), supported by financial assistance from the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (NZ MFAT).

RMI will widely disseminate its NPOA-IUU to signal its willingness to collaborate with partner nations and organisations at regional and international levels, and to communicate the measures foreseen to deter IUU fishing, both within and beyond waters under national jurisdiction.

The NPOA-IUU should most definitely serve as a basis for discussing and agreeing partnerships for assisted implementation.

#### **5.10 Reporting**

*IPOA-IUU Article 87 recommends that states and regional fisheries management organisations should report to FAO on progress with the elaboration and implementation of their plans to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing as part of their biennial reporting to FAO on the Code of Conduct. These reports should be published by FAO in a timely manner.*

Regarding NPOA-IUU, the FAO website states: The FAO Regular Programme funds only a "watching brief" on implementation, monitoring of implementation, and reporting to COFI, as well as limited economic and social analysis of fishery and aquaculture policy and management advisory activities.

In view of the above, RMI will endeavour to provide the required information to FAO when feasible, or if specifically requested, noting that (a) it appears that FAO does not intend to make active use of any reports that may be provided and (b) RMI is not always able to participate in COFI.

#### **5.11 Implementing the NPOA-IUU**

RMI's NPOA-IUU will be reviewed periodically and, if necessary, revised at intervals of no more than 6 years, in line with **Action Point 8**.

The Implementation Table in Attachment A sets out how RMI will implement the actions specified in this NPOA-IUU.

Primary responsibility lies with the MIMRA, but some actions may require a multi-agency approach and the acceptance of RMIS technical documentation by other countries.

**NPOA Action Point 15:** MIMRA to pursue to the best of its capabilities the action points identified in this NPOA.

### Attachment A: Implementation Table

| Action | Description                                                                                                                                                                            | Responsibility                   | Timeframe   |
|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------|
| 1      | MIMRA to maintain implementation, through supporting compliance actions, WCPFC CMMs and PNA IAs as and when these are amended                                                          | MIMRA                            | Ongoing     |
| 2      | MIMRA to maintain the effective application of the Marshall Islands Revised Code.                                                                                                      | MIMRA                            | Ongoing     |
| 3      | MIMRA to maintain the existing arrangements with the Maritime Administrator.                                                                                                           | MIMRA<br>IRI                     | Ongoing     |
| 4      | MIMRA to maintain the standardised monitoring of all RMI flagged vessels when fishing within the 200-mile zone, outside territorial waters, and PNA parties with the assistance of FFA | MIMRA                            | Ongoing     |
| 5      | RMI to maintain the use of the provisions for administrative penalties in order to ensure IUU activities are sanctioned                                                                | MIMRA                            | Ongoing     |
| 6      | MIMRA to coordinate regular effectiveness review and forward planning with representatives of key national agencies involved in IUU mitigation                                         | MIMRA                            | Annually    |
| 7      | MIMRA to maintain the practice of biannual self-evaluation MCS needs, as to inform revision and updating of operational documents if required.                                         | MIMRA                            | Annually    |
| 8      | MIMRA to revise the present NPOA-IUU periodically, and no less than every six years.                                                                                                   | MIMRA                            | As required |
| 9      | MIMRA to maintain and expand its regional and bilateral agreements with other states                                                                                                   | MIMRA                            | As required |
| 10     | MIMRA to maintain and expand publicity of IUU cases and prevention activities                                                                                                          | MIMRA                            | As required |
| 11     | MIMRA to maintain supporting its officers through the FFA Certificate level IV Fisheries Enforcement and Compliance.                                                                   | MIMRA and<br>partner<br>agencies | Ongoing     |
| 12     | MIMRA to maintain the PSMA inspection benchmarks (100% PS and Carriers, 25% LL) and make the PSMA controls and principles available on its website                                     | MIMRA                            | Ongoing     |
| 13     | MIMRA to pursue EU Market Access and, through this, further develop its traceability framework                                                                                         | MIMRA                            | Ongoing     |
| 14     | MIMRA to maintain its SOP associated with the verification of legality in the importation of fish for processing                                                                       | MIMRA                            | Ongoing     |
| 15     | MIMRA to continue to the best of its capabilities the action points identified in this NPOA.                                                                                           | MIMRA                            | Ongoing     |