



# MINISTRY OF FISHERIES & OCEAN RESOURCES(MFOR)

## ANNUAL REPORT 2025

Where less is more,  
more is impact



Ministry of Fisheries  
& Ocean Resources



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# Acronyms

<b>AIB</b>	Annual Income Budget
<b>CBFM</b>	Community Based Fisheries Management
<b>CSD</b>	Corporate Services Division
<b>CPPL</b>	Central Pacific Producers Limited
<b>DB</b>	Development Budget
<b>DFAT</b>	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
<b>EEZ</b>	Exclusive Economic Zone
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FAD</b>	Fish Aggregating Device
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization
<b>FDAPIN</b>	Fisheries Development Assistance for Pacific Island Nations
<b>FFA</b>	Forum Fisheries Agency
<b>FPA</b>	Fisheries Partnership Agreement
<b>GoK</b>	Government of Kiribati
<b>GSD</b>	Geo Science Division
<b>HR</b>	Human Resource
<b>ICT</b>	Information Communication and Technology
<b>JV</b>	Joint Ventures
<b>KDP</b>	Kiribati Development Plan
<b>KFL</b>	Kiribati Fish Limited
<b>KIFL</b>	Kiribati Island Fish Limited
<b>KBPL</b>	Kiribati Blue Pacific Limited
<b>KMSPCC</b>	Kiribati Marine Spatial Planning Coordinating Committee
<b>KOFA</b>	Korea Overseas Fisheries Association
<b>KOIL</b>	Kiribati Oil Company Limited
<b>KSA</b>	Key Strategic Action

<b>KSCL</b>	Kiribati Seafood Company Limited
<b>KSVD</b>	Kiribati Seafood Verification Division
<b>KPI</b>	Key Performance Indicator
<b>KTFL</b>	Kiribati Tuba Fish Limited
<b>KV20</b>	Kiribati Version for 20 Years
<b>LLVDS</b>	Long Line Vessel Day Scheme
<b>MCS</b>	Monitoring Control and Surveillance
<b>MOE</b>	Ministry of Education
<b>MELAD</b>	Ministry of Environment, Lands and Agricultural Development
<b>MFAT</b>	Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade
<b>MISE</b>	Ministry of Infrastructure and Sustainable Energy
<b>MOU</b>	Memorandum of Understand
<b>MPA</b>	Marine Protected Areas
<b>MPs</b>	Members of Parliament
<b>MSP</b>	Ministry Strategic Plan
<b>MSP</b>	Marine Spatial Planning
<b>MSR</b>	Marine Specific Research
<b>MTCIC</b>	Ministry of Tourism, Commerce, Industry and Cooperatives
<b>NCS</b>	National Condition of Service
<b>NEPO</b>	National Economic Planning Office
<b>NOCE</b>	National Ocean Centre of Excellence
<b>ODA</b>	Official Development Assistance
<b>OBM</b>	Out Board Motor
<b>OFCF</b>	Overseas Fishery Cooperation Foundation
<b>OFD</b>	Oceanic Fisheries Division
<b>PACER</b>	Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations
<b>PDD</b>	Planning and Development Division
<b>PICs</b>	Pacific Islands Countries

<b>PIPA</b>	Phoenix Islands Protected Area
<b>PNA</b>	Parties to the Nauru Agreement
<b>PNAO</b>	Pacific to the Nauru Agreement Office
<b>PSM</b>	Port State Measures
<b>PROP</b>	Pacific Regional Oceanscape Program
<b>PSO</b>	Public Service Commission
<b>SSOP</b>	Standard Sanitation Operation Procedures
<b>SOE</b>	State Owned Enterprise
<b>SPC</b>	Secretariat for the Pacific Community
<b>TACL</b>	Te Atinimarawa Company Limited
<b>TOR</b>	Term of Reference
<b>TTPSA</b>	Taiwan Tuna Purse Seine Fishing Association
<b>TUC</b>	Tarawa Urban Council
<b>TW-2</b>	Tobwaan Waara Phase 2
<b>UN ISA</b>	United Nations International Seabed Authority
<b>USP</b>	University of the South Pacific
<b>VDS</b>	Vessel Day Scheme
<b>WB</b>	World Bank
<b>WCPFC</b>	Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission

# Foreword



It is my utmost privilege to present the 2025 Annual Report for the Ministry of Fisheries and Ocean Resources (MFOR).

This past year has demonstrated another powerful truth: *Where less is more, more is impact.*

Guided by this theme, we have moved beyond busyness to meaningful delivery, focusing our efforts on fewer, high-leverage actions that produce transformative outcomes from our vast nation's ocean resources for our people.

The numbers speak for themselves. In 2025, revenue from tuna fisheries reached an exceptional AU\$202 million, a third consecutive time despite unfavorable fishing conditions. This is testament to our improved management and access arrangements. Even more historic, we recorded our inaugural revenue from our coastal fisheries of AU\$1 million. For the first time, our near-shore resources are contributing significantly to our national coffers.

Policy and legal frameworks have taken major strides. We completed the Ara Marawa Policy, embedding our ancestral ocean wisdom into a modern governance blueprint. On the global stage, Kiribati ratified the UN Treaty on High Seas, demonstrating our leadership in protecting biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction while safeguarding our interests as a large ocean State.

Partnerships have deepened strategically. We forged a new collaboration with the largest fishing company in China – China National Fisheries Network, ensuring

market access and responsible fishing alignment. Closer to home, the Bina Tuna Processing Project with a Solomon Islands company marks a milestone in regional cooperation and downstream processing - moving us closer to maximizing more economic value from our tuna. These new partnerships are adding to the folds of our traditional partnerships supporting the fisheries sector from Australia, New Zealand, the European Union and the United States of America.

Our aquaculture ambitions are becoming a reality. Large-scale projects for sea cucumber are ongoing, with promising trials showing we can restore wild stocks while creating economic benefits and diversified livelihoods for outer-island communities. On monitoring, control, and surveillance (MCS), we introduced new electronic monitoring system for local artisanal fishing boats and acquired brand new state-of-the-art speedboats for patrolling in Tarawa and Kiritimati Island, dramatically improving our reach and deterrence. Small infrastructure projects such as mini-hatcheries and micro-canning facilities, across the islands may seem modest but they are advancing the goal of transforming our natural ocean wealth into economic benefits and wealth.

All this feeds into our grand vision of transforming Kiribati into a true fishing nation - not merely a supplier of raw fish, but a nation that manages, processes, and benefits from its ocean resources from reef to horizon.

The progress of 2025 shows that vision is within reach. I commend every officer of MFOR, our State-Owned Enterprises, Joint Venture Companies, Development partners, our private sectors and the communities who are the true custodians of our waters.

Please enjoy reading our small 2025 contribution to the overall development of Kiribati.

Te mauri, Te raqi ao Te tabomoa.

**Honourable Ribanataake Tiwau**

*Minister for Fisheries and Ocean Resources*



# Executive Summary

The Ministry of Fisheries and Ocean Resources (MFOR) Annual Report 2025 demonstrates a year of transformative progress, guided by the theme: *"Where less is more, and more is impact."* By focusing on high-leverage actions, the Ministry has been tirelessly working on converting its vast ocean resources into tangible economic, social, and governance outcomes for the people of Kiribati.

For the third consecutive year, MFOR achieved exceptional revenue generation. Despite challenging La Niña conditions, the Oceanic Fisheries Division (OFD) generated AU\$202.5 million from tuna fisheries. In a historic first, the Coastal Fisheries Division (CFD) recorded over AU\$1 million in revenue, driven by innovative licensing and quota management for sea cucumber, ornamental fish, and recreational fishing.

Major strides were made in ocean governance. MFOR finalized the Ara Marawa Policy, embedding ancestral ocean wisdom into a modern blueprint. On the global stage, Kiribati ratified the UN Treaty on High Seas (BBNJ), demonstrating leadership in protecting biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction.

Significant investments were realized to modernize the sector:

- i. Korea ODA Project (US\$12.2M) initiated upgrades to Bairiki Wharf and the Fishermen Training Complex in Tanaea.
- ii. Seafood Verification Division (SVD) achieved full registration for Chinese market access, while the Seafood Toxicology Laboratory (STLD) progressed towards operational status with four scientists trained in New Zealand.
- iii. The Ananau Causeway Marina feasibility study commenced, aiming to create better facilities and decent business center for artisanal fishers.
- iv. The World Bank PROP initiated work on the establishment of micro-canning facilities, mini-hatcheries in the outer islands for better income generation opportunities of our communities.

The Community-Based Fisheries Management (CBFM) project successfully established four registered community enterprises producing value-added products (tuna jerky, samosas, seaweed goods). Eleven (11) Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs) were deployed across outer islands, improving food security and livelihoods.

Enforcement capacity was dramatically improved with the introduction of a new electronic monitoring system for artisanal boats and the acquisition of state-of-the-art speedboats for Tarawa and Kiritimati Island. A total of 62 new fisheries observers were recruited and trained.

MFOR forged critical new alliances, including a collaboration with China National Fisheries Network and the Bina Tuna Processing Project with a Solomon Islands company, enhancing market access and regional downstream processing. A feasibility study is underway to move towards establishing a nationally owned Kiribati Purse Seine Fishing Company.

While 2025 was highly successful, challenges persist in human resources, finance administration, and outdated legal frameworks (notably the Fisheries Act). In 2026, MFOR will prioritize the completion of the Marine Spatial Plan (MSP) for the Phoenix Islands, operationalizing the new Seafood Toxicology Laboratory, and advancing the Kiribati-owned purse seine company feasibility study.

Through disciplined execution and strategic focus, MFOR has reaffirmed its commitment to transforming Kiribati from a raw fish supplier into a true fishing nation, managing, processing, and benefiting from its ocean resources from reef to horizon.





## Introduction

The Ministry of Fisheries and Ocean Resources (MFOR) Annual Report 2025 provides a comprehensive account of the Ministry's performance, achievements, and strategic direction over the reporting period. It reflects MFOR's continued commitment to the government policies put in place for the sustainable management and development of fisheries and ocean resources, which remain central to national economic growth, food security, and environmental stewardship of Kiribati.

The report presents a consolidated overview of key accomplishments across all divisions, projects state-owned enterprises and joint venture companies, including coverage on partners that have provided support to the Ministry over the course of 2025.

Beyond achievements, the report outlines the challenges and gaps encountered, particularly in relation to legal, regulatory, and policy frameworks.

These insights and lessons from 2025, informs the Ministry's forward-looking strategies, including priority initiatives for 2026 and beyond, aimed at infrastructure development, revenue maximization, sustainable fisheries management, community livelihood improvement and research & innovation. The goal is to improve service delivery for our people and sustainable development of Kiribati.

The report further demonstrates MFOR's alignment with national development agendas and policy frameworks such as KV20, Motinnano, KDP; ensuring that its work contributes meaningfully to broader government objectives. It also highlights mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation, corporate responsibility, and integrated reporting to enhance transparency and accountability.

For fiscal year 2025, MFOR recurrent budget allocation is AU\$5.58 million, which represents a minimal change from the 2024 allocated budget of AU\$5.69 million. The development budget for 2025 is AU\$9.05 million, reflecting a slight increase due to new budget programming from existing projects, including the World Bank PROP, MFAT TWP, and the MFAT MSP Project.

The MFOR Annual Report 2025 builds on the 2024 Report, with the aim of providing information and promote more transparency on the roles of the Ministry to any audience or stakeholder that may wish to consume.

Overall, the MFOR Annual Report 2025 serves as both a record of progress and a strategic guide, reinforcing the Ministry's commitment to sustainable fisheries management, effective partnerships, and long-term national development.

# 1. Synthesis of 2025 Achievements

Section one presents a consolidated synthesis of MFOR's key achievements for 2025 across its core departments, projects, state-owned enterprises and joint ventures companies.

## 1.1 MFOR Divisional Achievements

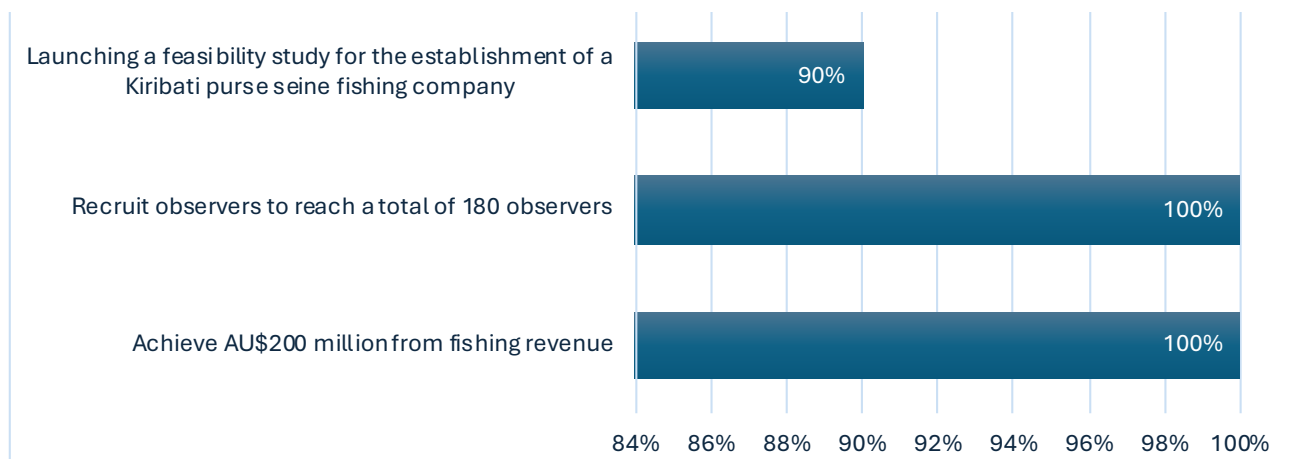




### 1.1.1 Oceanic Fisheries Division (OFD)

The Oceanic Fisheries Division (OFD) is one of six divisions operating under the Ministry of Fisheries and Ocean Resources (MFOR). Its core mandate is to generate revenue from oceanic fisheries and to ensure the long-term sustainability of marine resources, specifically from the tuna fishery.

Figure 1: OFD Key Achievement 2025



In 2025, the OFD was tasked with completing three (3) priorities as shown in Figure 1. These priorities were aligned with the Ministry's strategic goals and the broader Government objective of maximizing sustainable economic returns from Kiribati's vast Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

On the priority related to achieving AU \$200 million from fishing licenses, the OFD successfully generated AU\$202.5 despite reduced fishing activity caused by the prolonged La Niña conditions persisting since 2023. This achievement not only exceeded the AU\$200 million target but also marked the third consecutive year that the Division has surpassed the AU\$200 million threshold from fishing license fees.

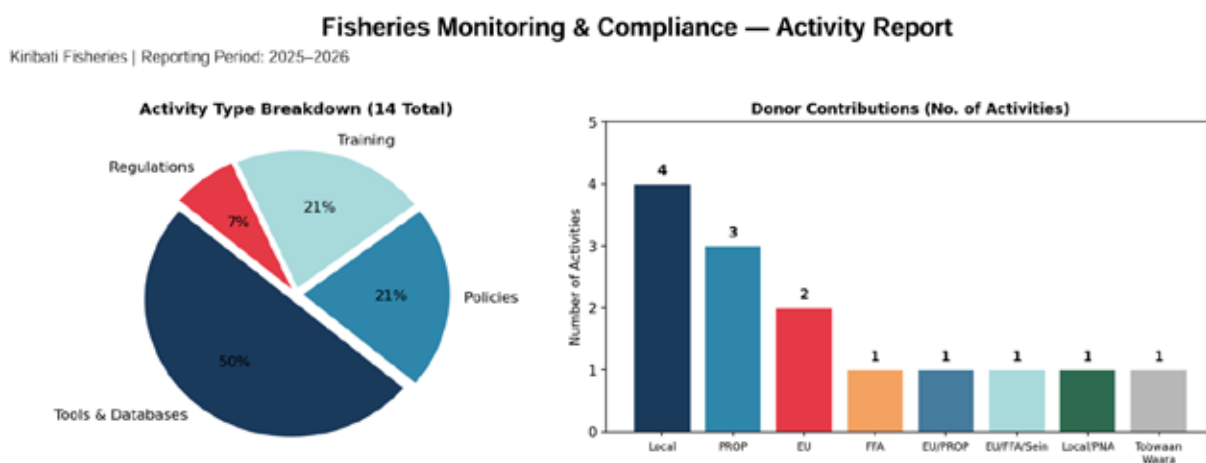
The second key priority - the recruitment of fisheries observers, was also successfully delivered. A total of 62 new observers were recruited, trained, and graduated by the end of the year, bringing the total number of active observers to 183.

The third key priority involved launching a feasibility study for the establishment of a Kiribati-owned purse seine company. This activity, supported through the EU fisheries sector support program, was rated at 90% completion by year's end, with most of the 2025 efforts focused on recruiting a suitable consultant. Although the recruitment process was lengthy, a consultant was successfully secured before the close of the year.

## Any other Achievements

In addition to OFD key priorities, the division also committed to a range of complementary activities to be completed by its respective departments in 2025. These included the development of new systems and products, procurement of assets and tools, formulation of policies and regulations, and capacity building for staff to enhance Kiribati national monitoring and compliance in its oceanic space. Most of these undertakings were financed through fisheries project funds.

Figure 2: OFD Monitoring & Compliance Initiatives 2025





### 1.1.2 Coastal Fisheries Division (CFD)

The Coastal Fisheries Division is responsible for the management, development, and protection of nearshore marine resources within a country's coastal waters. Its core role is to ensure that coastal fisheries, such as reef fish, invertebrates (e.g., sea cucumbers), and small-scale artisanal fishing -are used sustainably while supporting local livelihoods and food security.

Typically, the division:

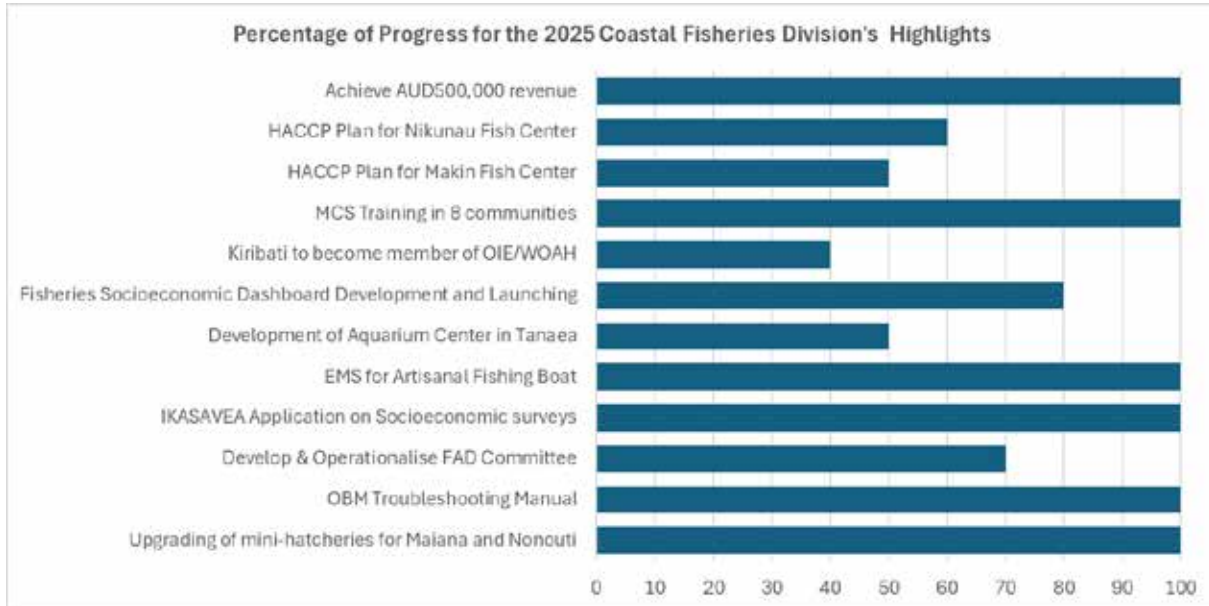
- Develops and implements policies, regulations, and management plans for coastal fisheries,
- Monitors fishing activities and enforces compliance with laws,
- Supports community-based fisheries management and conservation initiatives,
- Oversees licensing, quotas, and resource assessments,
- Promotes sustainable practices and alternative livelihoods,

In essence, it acts as the bridge between government policy and local fishing communities, balancing economic use with long-term ecosystem health.

## 2025 Highlight Achievements

The Coastal Fisheries Division was allocated 12 highlights for 2025. The graph below reflects the overall progress of these highlights.

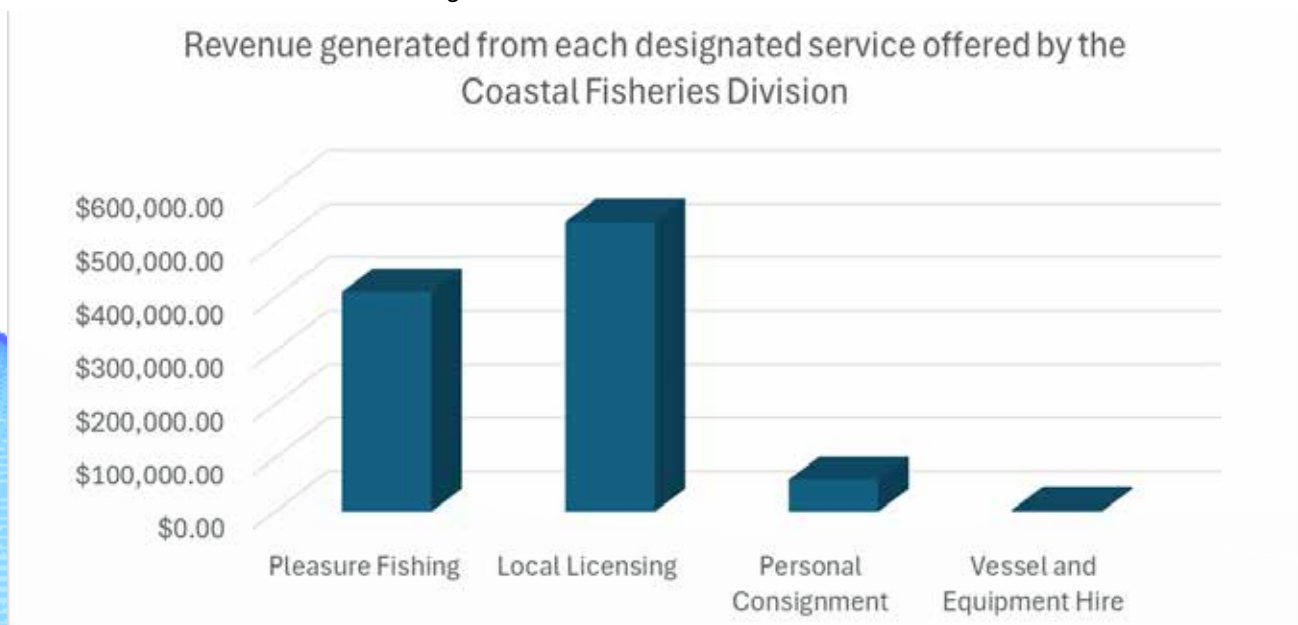
Figure 3: CFD Key Achievements 2025



This year marks a successful year for the Coastal Fisheries Division in surpassing AU\$1 million in its revenue from licensing. The effective and innovative management approaches in harvesting coastal marine resources have contributed to maximizing revenue from coastal fisheries. The Coastal Fisheries Division has managed two fisheries using either catch-based limits or an annual quota management scheme.

These fisheries include sea cucumber fishery and pet fish or ornamental fish. In addition, the major contributing factor for achieving this target was the implementation of a new license scheme for the purpose of recreational fishing in Kiritimati. The graph below shows the breakdown summary of revenue obtained for 2025.

Figure 4: CFD Revenue Breakdown 2025



## Any other Achievements

Across the listed communities, small-scale food enterprises show a clear pattern of development and expansion. In Kiritimati, Tabiteuea North, Onotoa, and Tamana, enterprises are already established and producing similar value-added products, namely tuna jerky, fish samosas, and seaweed-based goods. These communities have formalized their operations by registering as cooperatives, obtaining business licenses, and receiving training and support from relevant government units, including the Training & Information Unit and the Ministry of Tourism, Commerce, Industry, and Cooperatives.

In contrast, Abaiang and the remaining two communities are still in the planning phase. Their enterprises have not yet been established, and product development is anticipated rather than active. However, these communities are expected to receive similar support and follow the same model as the established sites, indicating a structured effort to scale and replicate successful community-based enterprises across additional locations.

*Table 1: Community Based Fisheries Management Value Added Products in Islands*

Community	Enterprise Established	Products	Registration/Support
Kiritimati	Yes	Tuna jerky, Fish samosas, Seaweed-based products	Registered as cooperative; business license; training by Training & Info Unit + Ministry of Tourism, Commerce, Industry, and Cooperatives
Tabiteuea North	Yes	Tuna jerky, Fish samosas, Seaweed-based products	Registered as cooperative; business license; training support as above
Onotoa	Yes	Tuna jerky, Fish samosas, Seaweed-based products	Registered as cooperative; business license; training support as above
Tamana	Yes	Tuna jerky, Fish samosas, Seaweed-based products	Registered as cooperative; business license; training support as above
Abaiang	No	Planned products	Planned enterprise; support anticipated
Remaining 2 Communities	No	Planned products	Planned enterprise; support anticipated

The Community-Based Value-Added Marine Enterprises Initiative aims to enhance livelihoods while promoting sustainable coastal fisheries. Supported and approved by PROP, the program focuses on building community capacity to produce and market value-added marine products such as tuna jerky, fish samosas, and seaweed-based products, thereby strengthening local entrepreneurship and food security.

The initiative targets seven communities across Kiritimati, Tabiteuea North, Onotoa, Tamana, and Abaiang. To date, four community enterprises have been successfully established—one each in Kiritimati, Tabiteuea North, Onotoa, and Tamana. All are formally registered as cooperative societies with support from the Ministry of Commerce and Industrial Cooperatives, enabling them to operate as structured business entities.

These communities have obtained business licenses and received comprehensive training from the Training and Information Unit, in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism, Commerce, Industry, and Cooperatives. Strong participation and commitment from the communities highlight the initiative's positive progress and potential for expansion.

*Figure 5: Women Community Training on Fish Value-Addition*



Table 2: Fish Aggregating Device Deployment Program

Category	Details
FAD Overview	Anchored, artisanal FADs provide safe fishing for food and livelihood in Kiribati; initially introduced in the 1980s for commercial fishing, later adapted for domestic use with Coastal Fisheries Division support.
Deployment Details (2025)	11 FADs deployed covering Kiritimati, Tabiteuea North, Onotoa, Tamana, and Beru Island; anchored in nearshore areas at depths of 300–1,000 meters.
Key Challenges	Transporting materials and equipment to outer islands (esp. southern Gilbert group); delays in procurement from international suppliers.
Achievements	Development of Fisheries Socioeconomic Dashboard; upgrades to HACCP facilities; initial steps toward OIE/WOAH membership.
Outstanding Activities	Finalizing FAD Committee for Arorae Island; operationalisation of Tanaea Aquarium; advancing Fisheries Dashboard with staff training and official launch.
Ongoing Processes	OIE/WOAH membership application and approval; HACCP certification, production rollout, and monitoring.
Support & Collaboration	Coastal Fisheries Division working with island councils; improved planning and coordination needed to minimize operational disruptions.
Future Recommendations	Complete outstanding tasks; ensure full implementation of all programs; update images to reflect FAD activities in outer islands.

Anchored, artisanal FADs are an important tool for small scale fisheries in providing safe fishing for food and livelihood to the communities in Kiribati. The introduction of FAD during the 1980s is primarily for commercial fishing. FADs were later adapted for domestic use with the support of the Coastal Fisheries Division and working in collaboration with island councils. The FADs deployed in the nearshore areas in Kiribati are anchored in depths ranging from 300 to 1,000 meters.

In 2025, there were 11 FADs deployed covering Kiritimati Island, Tabiteuea North, Onotoa, Tamana, and Beru Island. The figure below shows this FAD location in each of the Islands.

Figure 6: FAD Deployment & Locations



### Any other Information

The Coastal Fisheries Division made notable progress in implementing its 2025 programs, despite encountering operational challenges. Key constraints included difficulties in transporting materials and equipment to outer islands, particularly in the southern Gilbert group - as well as delays in procurement processes involving international suppliers. These issues highlighted the need for improved planning and coordination to minimize disruptions.

Notwithstanding these challenges, CFD achieved strong foundational progress across several priority areas, including the development of the Fisheries Socioeconomic Dashboard, upgrades to HACCP facilities, and initial steps toward OIE/WOAH membership. However, several critical activities remain outstanding. These include finalizing the FAD Committee for Arorae Island, completing the operationalisation of the Tanaea Aquarium, and advancing the Fisheries Dashboard through staff training and official launch.

In addition, ongoing processes such as OIE/WOAH membership and HACCP implementation require further work, including application completion, certification, production rollout, and continued monitoring. Overall, while progress to date has been substantial, focused efforts are needed to complete remaining tasks and ensure full implementation of all programs.



### 1.1.3 Geoscience Division (GSD)

The Geoscience Division in Kiribati plays a critical role in providing scientific knowledge and technical support for the sustainable management of the country's land, coastal, and marine environments.

The Division is responsible for studying and monitoring coastal processes, ocean conditions, seabed resources, and the impacts of climate change—particularly sea-level rise, erosion, and coastal vulnerability, which are key challenges for low-lying atoll nations like Kiribati. It conducts mapping, surveys, and data collection to inform national planning, infrastructure development, and environmental protection.

In addition, the Geoscience Division supports government decision-making by:

- Assessing natural hazards and climate risks
- Providing technical advice on coastal protection and land use
- Supporting marine spatial planning and resource management
- Contributing to research on ocean and seabed resources

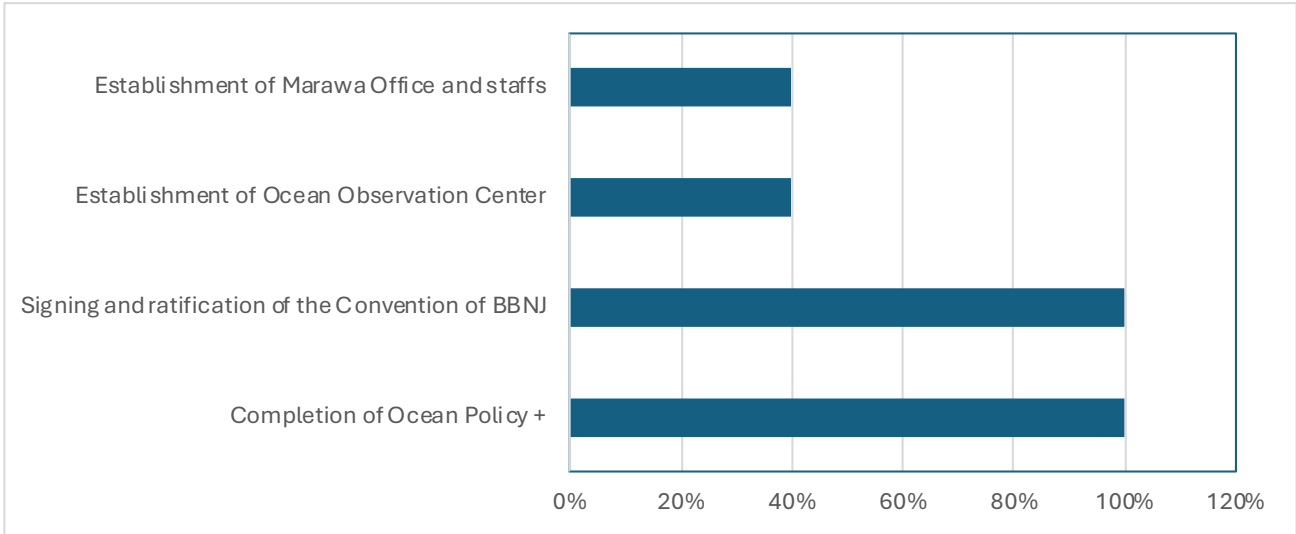
Overall, the Division serves as the scientific backbone for building resilience and ensuring that development in Kiribati is informed, sustainable, and adapted to its unique environmental conditions.

### 2025 Highlight Achievements

The GSD has four key highlights for the year 2025 as depicted in the graph titled “GSD Highlights Achievements 2025” below. The graph provides an overview of progress across these four priority initiatives, highlighting a distinction between completed policy milestones and ongoing institutional development.

Two initiatives - the signing and ratification of the Convention of BBNJ and the completion of Ocean Policy; have reached 100% completion. These achievements reflect strong progress in strengthening legal frameworks and advancing strategic policy objectives, demonstrating the Ministry's commitment to international obligations and integrated ocean governance.

Figure 7: GSD Key Achievement 2025



In contrast, institutional development remains at an earlier stage. The establishment of the Marawa Office and staffing, as well as the Ocean Observation Centre, are each at 40% completion, indicating ongoing but partial progress. This slower pace is influenced by funding and partnership constraints, which affect the Ministry's ability to mobilize resources, develop infrastructure, sustain operations, and effectively establish the centre.

Progress on the Marawa Office is also shaped by the need for continued analysis to determine an appropriate institutional model. Ensuring a structure that is effective, sustainable, and well-aligned with governance and operational requirements requires careful planning.

Overall, while policy achievements have been realized, the transition to fully operational institutions remains in progress, shaped by resource and design considerations.

Solar salt production on the island of Beru



## Any other Achievement

In addition to its core accomplishments, the Geo-Science Division (GSD) made further progress in strengthening Kiribati's legal, scientific, and technical frameworks. Preparatory work was undertaken to support the potential domestication of key Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Declarations, particularly those relating to the preservation of maritime zones and the continuity of statehood in the face of climate change. These efforts mark an important step toward aligning national legislation with regional commitments.

GSD also facilitated marine scientific research within Kiribati's waters, generating approximately AUD 27,000 in administrative access fees while ensuring research activities are conducted in a regulated and sustainable manner.

Despite these achievements, GSD continues to face capacity and resource constraints, including limited staffing, funding, technical equipment, and legal support. Addressing these gaps—through strengthened partnerships, investment in modern technologies, and institutional capacity building—will be critical to positioning GSD as the nation's central authority for geoscience data, ocean governance, and sustainable resource management.

*GSD team meeting with stakeholders*



## Any other Information

Despite notable progress in advancing national ocean governance, the Geo-Science Division (GSD) continues to face several key challenges that may affect the pace of implementation. While the Ara Marawa Policy has been endorsed, its official launch and implementation plan are still pending, potentially delaying full operationalisation. Similarly, the domestication of the BBNJ Agreement and relevant PIF Declarations remains ongoing and requires further legal and technical work.

The establishment of the National Ocean Observation Centre is also subject to funding approval, which may impact its timely development. In addition, GSD faces capacity constraints, including limited human resources, insufficient technical equipment, and a reliance on short-term, project-based funding. These factors limit the Division's ability to operate as a proactive and sustainable technical authority.

Addressing these issues will require strengthened partnerships, targeted investment in capacity building, and enhanced legal and technical support to ensure the effective delivery of GSD's expanding mandate.

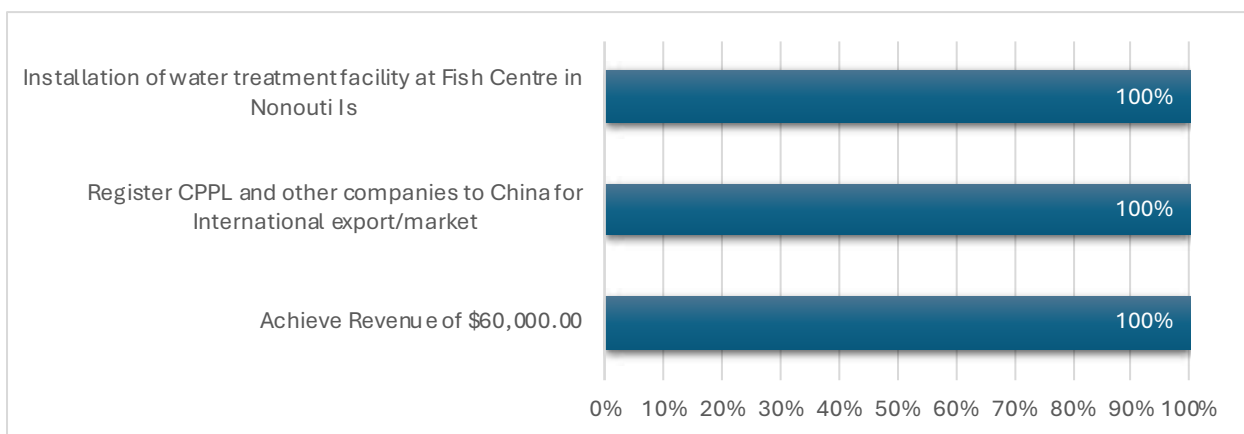


### 1.1.4 Seafood Verification Division (SVD)

The Seafood Verification Division ensures that seafood products meet national regulations and international export standards. The Division conducts verification and certification processes to maintain product integrity, protect market access, and support the growth of the fisheries sector.

### 2025 Highlight Achievements

*Figure 8: KSPA Achievement 2025*



Every strategic target was all achieved, marking a year of remarkable achievements that strengthened Kiribati’s fisheries, infrastructure, and international trade presence.

At the heart of this success was the completion of a state-of-the-art water treatment facility at the Fish Centre on Nonouti Island. This vital investment ensures clean, safe water for one of the nation’s key fishing hubs, supporting sustainable fisheries operations and enhancing community wellbeing.

Beyond infrastructure, KSVA opened new doors to the global market. Full registration of CPPL and other local companies for access to China's export market positions Kiribati producers competitively on the world stage, reflecting the nation's growing capacity to meet international trade and compliance standards.

Financially, KSVA achieved its \$60,000 revenue target, demonstrating strong fiscal management and providing a stable foundation for future growth.

Across all fronts—community infrastructure, market access, and financial performance, KSVA's disciplined planning and execution ensured a complete and unqualified success. The Authority's achievements in 2025 not only deliver tangible benefits today but also set a high benchmark for continued progress in 2026, reinforcing Kiribati's vision for a sustainable and prosperous fisheries sector.

## Any other Achievement

In 2025, the SVD also advanced international market access for Kiribati-based companies through the ongoing registration of select establishments on the EU TRACES system, enabling these companies to export to European Union markets. In parallel, the GACC system was employed to register companies seeking entry into Chinese markets. These initiatives create a sustainable and supportive trading environment for Kiribati businesses, enhancing their capacity to access high-value export markets and generate stronger economic returns.

## Any other Information

One of the primary technical challenges faced by the Seafood Verification Division (SVD) and exporting companies is the frequent changes in market laws and regulations. New rules are sometimes introduced, or existing regulations amended, without adequate consultation.

It is essential that any new regulations are discussed collaboratively with all relevant authorities and industry stakeholders. This process helps raise awareness, ensures clear understanding of requirements, and supports a sustainable and enabling trading environment.

Some regulations can be complex or difficult to implement in practice, posing potential technical barriers to trade. Such challenges may impact the ability of Kiribati companies to export products, particularly to markets with stringent requirements, such as the European Union (EU) and other key international markets.

*Image: KSVD Inspection and assessment to fishing vessels and factory*





### 1.1.5 Planning & Development Division (PDD)

The **PDD** of the Ministry of Fisheries & Ocean Resources in Kiribati is responsible for the planning, assessment, and coordinated development of the Ministry's programs and projects. The Division plays a pivotal role in ensuring that all MFOR initiatives are strategically designed, properly evaluated, and aligned with national priorities and available resources. It oversees the preparation, appraisal, and monitoring of projects, ensuring they meet required standards before implementation.

A key function of the Division is managing the financial interface between the Ministry and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development. This includes overseeing the warranting and release of funds, ensuring that approved projects are adequately financed and compliant with government budgeting and financial procedures.

In essence, the Planning & Development Division acts as the bridge between MFOR and MFED -linking technical planning with financial approvals of projects, so that fisheries and ocean resource initiatives are effectively funded, coordinated, and delivered.

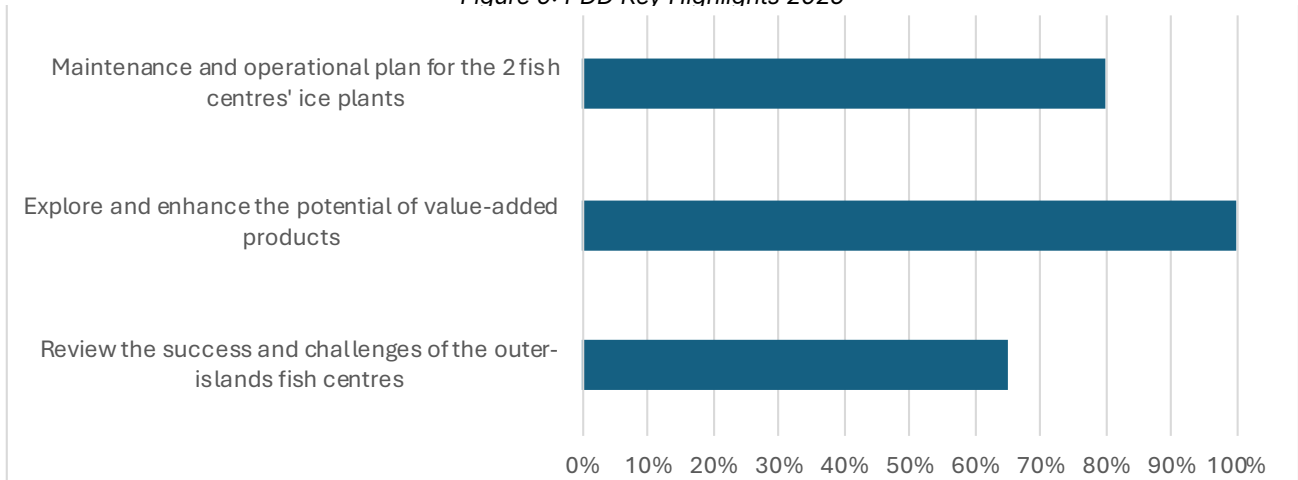
*Image: Value added product workshop with stakeholders*



## 2025 Highlight Achievements

The Planning and Development Division has 3 main highlights set for 2025 which include the following:

Figure 9: PDD Key Highlights 2025



The Outer Island Fish Centres' Assessment evaluates the performance of fish centres across Kiribati's outer islands to identify challenges and recommend improvements, including sustainable business models. These centres play a key role in supporting livelihoods, food security, and fisheries value chains by providing cold storage, enabling income generation, and facilitating trade with Tarawa.

By the end of 2025, assessments were completed for most islands through collaboration between government, development partners, and technical consultants. The project, funded by multiple partners, will continue in 2026 to complete remaining assessments and support ongoing improvements.

This initiative supports the development of small-scale fisheries value-added products, particularly marine-based souvenirs, to create income opportunities for women, youth, and underserved groups. It emphasizes skills development, creativity, and entrepreneurship. Implemented through strong collaboration with government agencies and stakeholders, the project established a coordinating committee and successfully engaged local artists through workshops and a product competition in 2025. The program will continue also in 2026 with expanded training and improvements to product quality and packaging.

The project addresses operational challenges in outer island fish centres caused by aging equipment and outdated refrigerants being phased out under international regulations. With eight centres urgently needing replacement, the initiative prioritizes upgrading two pilot sites before expanding to others.

Key interventions include installing modern ice-making machines, solar power systems, and desalination plants, guided by findings from recent assessments. The project aims to sustain operations, increase production capacity, promote renewable energy use, and improve water quality for ice production.

Image: Assessment to outer island fish centers



## Any other Achievements

Significant progress has been made in strengthening fisheries assets and securing future investments:

- i. Achieved 100% delivery of project outputs, successfully distributing 224 fiberglass boats and 224 engines across 20 islands, enhancing fishing capacity and livelihoods. Monitoring and evaluation systems are planned to ensure long-term effectiveness.
- ii. Successfully secured \$385,606 in funding for the procurement of 25 aluminium boats for three islands, demonstrating strong resource mobilization despite funding constraints.
- iii. Advanced implementation by closing completed project components and developing proposals for additional funding, with the next phase targeted for completion by mid-2026, including a clear project exit strategy.

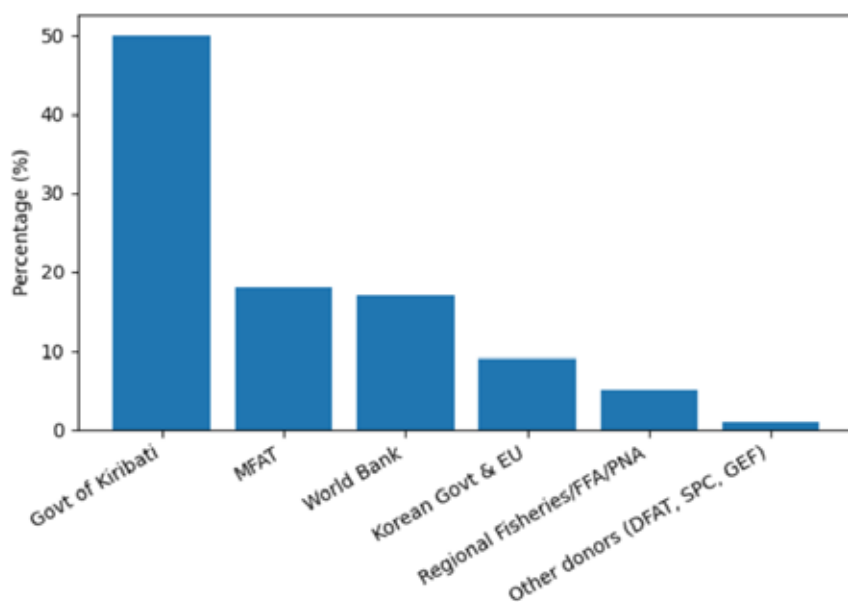
Overall, this initiative demonstrates tangible delivery, effective funding acquisition, and clear forward planning.

## Any other Information

In 2025, the Ministry warranted projects valued at over \$8 million from the development budget in support of the execution of the Ministry projects. These funds are committed under the development budget in support of fisheries projects, with funding constitute from the various donors as detailed in the graph below.

The graph below confirms that the Government of Kiribati provides around 50% of the funding to development projects, MFAT 18%, World Bank 17% Korean Government and EU of 9%, other donors include Regional Fisheries bodies, FFA, PNA contributes fairly of 5% and other donors including DFAT, SPC and GEF which are fairly 1%.

Figure 10: MFOR Development Projects for 2025





### 1.1.6 Seafood Toxicology Laboratory Division (STLD)

The Seafood Toxicology Laboratory Division of the Ministry of Fisheries & Ocean Resources in Kiribati is responsible for ensuring the safety and quality of seafood products for both domestic consumption and export.

The Division conducts scientific testing and analysis to detect toxins, contaminants, and harmful substances in fish and other marine products. This includes monitoring risks such as ciguatera poisoning, biotoxins, heavy metals, and other food safety hazards that may affect public health and market access.

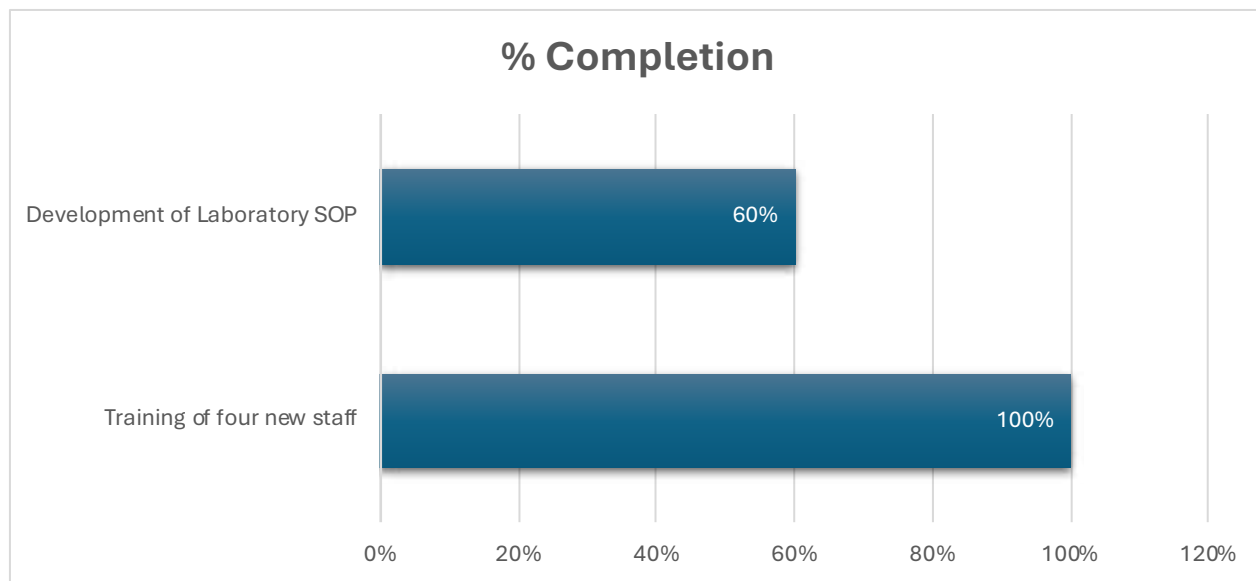
Key functions of the Division include:

- Testing and certifying seafood products to meet national and international safety standards,
- Monitoring and responding to seafood-related health risks,
- Supporting export compliance and quality assurance requirements, and
- Providing technical advice on seafood safety and handling practices
- In essence, the Seafood Toxicology Laboratory Division safeguards public health while supporting Kiribati's fisheries sector by ensuring that seafood products are safe, reliable, and suitable for local and international markets.



## 2025 Highlight Achievements

Figure 11: STLD Key Highlights 2025



The establishment of the Seafood Toxicology Laboratory Division in Kiribati is a key investment in strengthening food safety and supporting sustainable economic development. Funded by the The World Bank through the Pacific Regional Oceanscape Program (PROP), the initiative addresses the critical need to ensure the safety of seafood, a major source of nutrition and export revenue.

The laboratory will enhance national capacity to detect and monitor marine toxins and contaminants, enabling timely responses to emerging risks, particularly those linked to climate change.

In 2025, strong progress was made toward institutionalisation. Four medical scientists completed specialised training in New Zealand with the development of the Laboratory SOP which is 60% completion while the construction of the laboratory is underway.

Once the KSTL is operational, it will support compliance with international standards, strengthen market access, and improve the credibility of Kiribati's seafood products. Overall, it represents a strategic asset for public health, sea food security, and sustainable fisheries development.

### Any other Achievements

The **Seafood Toxicology Laboratory Division (STLD)** has been formally recognized within the Ministry of Fisheries and Ocean Resources (MFOR) through amendments to the Fisheries Act. The supporting legal framework for the establishment and operation of the STLD has been developed and is currently undergoing final review by MFOR and the Office of the Attorney General's drafting team.

### Any other Information

A delay in implementing the technical management system creates several simple but serious constraints for laboratory operations.



### 1.1.7 Corporate Services Division (CSD)

#### 2025 Highlight Achievements

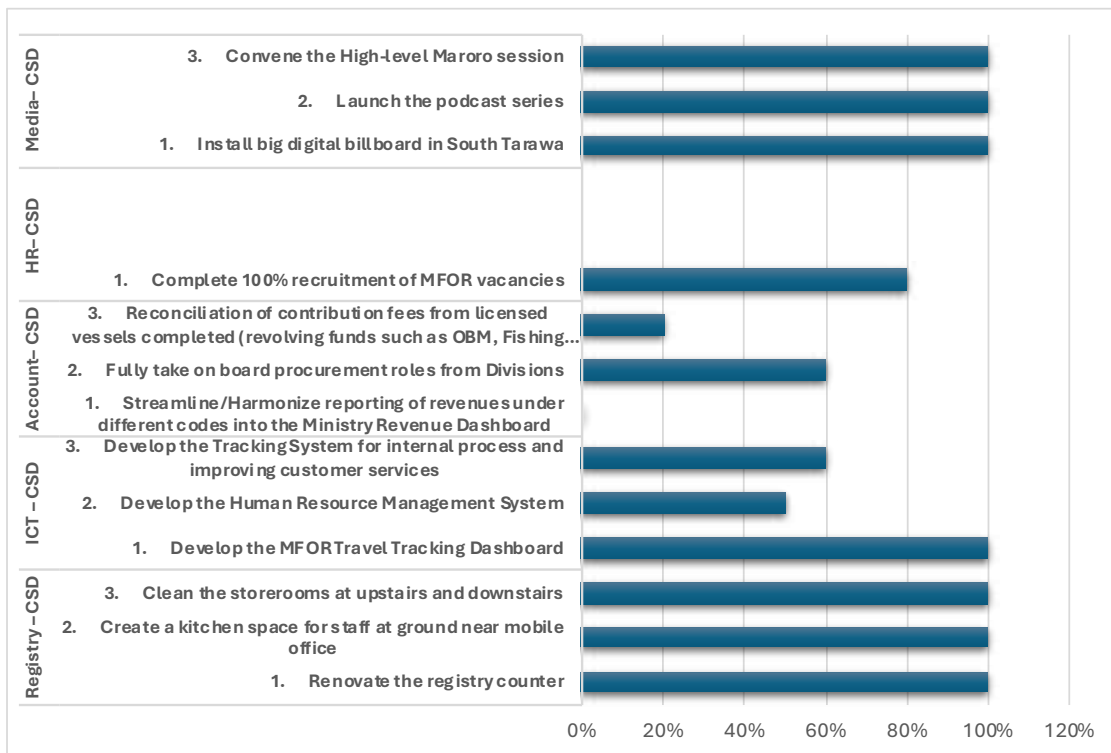
The mandate of the Corporate Services Division (CSD) is to provide support services to all MFOR Divisions, Project Management Units, SOEs and JV Companies, which include registry, ICT, accounts, media and communications, human resources development, administration and general policy guidance.

For the 2025 reporting year, a total of 13 key highlights were allocated to CSD. Of these, eight performed well, achieving over 80 percent progress. A further two were rated as satisfactory, with progress ranging from 50 to 70 percent.

The remaining three highlights fell below the satisfactory threshold due to challenges and disruptions affecting the key personnel responsible for their delivery. These highlights and their respective progress performances are illustrated in the graph below.



Figure 12: CSD Key Achievements 2025



Some of the challenges in meeting performance targets, particularly those indicators falling below the threshold, stem from a lack of updated financial information for reconciliation and limited capacity among accounts staff to support procurement requests from all MFOR divisions. To address these issues, further training is required, especially for accounts staff, focusing on procurement processes and other account-related matters.

### Any other Achievements

The Corporate Services Division has punched beyond their weights, in terms of their performance for last year 2025. In addition to providing support services and policy guidance to the various arms of the Ministry, administrators often lend tremendous technical and leadership support to project staff such as PROP, TWP and many others. Also efforts towards taking on small projects that were outside the scope of divisions such as Tanobakoa, Teriaki, coordinating high level events and many more, were commendable achievements for 2025.

### Any other Information

Among CSD key responsibilities is ensuring that all staff operate in a safe and conducive working environment. However, the current MFOR building is aging and experiences significant congestion. Its deteriorating condition may pose safety risks to staff with prolonged use. Although the detailed design for the new MFOR building in Ambo has been completed, substantial funding is still required to support the construction of the MFOR office complex. This is going to be the long-term project for CSD in the future.



## 1.2 MFOR Projects' Achievements

This section presents an analytical overview of all MFOR projects implemented during 2025, including both government and donor-funded projects. It highlights project performance, key outputs, funding sources, and overall contributions to the Ministry's strategic objectives and national development priorities.

### 1.2.1 MFOR Local Contribution to Development Fund Projects

In 2025, the Ministry of Fisheries & Ocean Resources in Kiribati continued the implementation of projects under the Local Contributions to Development Fund (LCDF), primarily utilizing the remaining balance from prior years, as no new government injections have been made since 2018.

During 2025, a total carryover balance of \$246,002.52 from 2024 was warranted to support key priority activities. These focused on three main areas: the procurement and shipment of fibreglass boats, support for Marawa Board meetings, and outer island visits to undertake repair and maintenance work on fish centres.

Project implementation in 2025 was largely concentrated on ongoing initiatives under the "Support to Fisheries" program, particularly the Development of Small-Scale Fisheries (DSM) and the Fish Centre Boat and Engine Support Project. However, progress has been constrained as available funds near exhaustion.

Overall, 2025 activities reflect a transitional phase for the LCDF-supported program, with efforts focused on completing priority interventions and maintaining essential services in the absence of new funding allocations.

## MFAT Tobwan Waara Phase 3 Project

The Tobwan Waara Programme, a key component of the long-term fisheries partnership between MFOR and New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), continued to provide critical support to MFOR's operations in 2025. Phase 3 of the partnership (2024–2027) aligns directly with MFOR's 2024–2028 Strategic Plan, employing a results-based performance and payment framework to enhance sustainable fisheries management, strengthen sector capacity, and advance Key Strategic Actions (KSAs).

In 2025, MFOR made substantial progress against its strategic results framework. Of the fifteen result indicators, twelve showed advancements—six were fully achieved, and six are expected to reach completion in early 2026. These achievements contributed to improved operational systems and stronger fisheries management. Three indicators experienced delays due to procurement challenges and competing divisional priorities; these remain under active management. Overall, twenty-three activities were supported to accelerate progress toward divisional priorities and KSAs.

MFOR also strengthened its Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) capability. With technical support from Future Partners Ltd., the Ministry established core M&E systems aligned with the Strategic Plan and appointed an M&E Officer in October 2025. Divisional M&E focal points were identified and trained, enhancing data collection, and ensuring more consistent performance reporting.

To further support strategic alignment and partnership coordination, MFOR convened the inaugural Fisheries Partnership Meeting in September 2025. This forum, attended in person and virtually by MFOR leadership, New Zealand representatives, and other partners, established a governance mechanism to guide ongoing collaboration, align fisheries sector support, and strengthen joint oversight of shared priorities.

Table 3: MFOR Strategic Achievement and Progress 2025

Category	Metric / Indicator	2025 Status	Notes / Highlights
Result Indicators	Total 15 strategic indicators	12 advanced	6 fully achieved; 6 expected to complete early 2026; 3 delayed but under active management
Activities Implemented	Total divisional activities	23 supported	Accelerated progress toward Key Strategic Actions and divisional priorities
Monitoring & Evaluation	Core M&E systems established	TOBWAN-WAARA PHASE 3 – Progress 2025 Completed	Aligned with Strategic Plan; supported by Future Partners Ltd.
	M&E Officer appointed	Completed	Central role in tracking performance
	Divisional M&E focal points trained	Completed	Improved data collection, reporting consistency
Partnership & Governance	Fisheries Partnership Meeting convened	Completed	Established governance mechanism for collaboration and joint oversight

## 1.2.2 MFAT Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) Project

In 2025, the Phoenix Islands Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) Project, implemented under the MFAT-funded CAB-SMART initiative, achieved substantial progress toward a nationally led, climate-smart, and biodiversity-smart Marine Spatial Plan. The project benefits from strategic technical support provided by Earth Sciences New Zealand and the University of Queensland, strengthening MFOR's implementation of the MSP 10-Step process and enhancing governance, institutional capacity, and technical foundations.

The partnership combines international technical expertise with national priorities to:

- i. Strengthen the MSP 10-Step framework to ensure that marine spatial planning is science-driven, participatory, and aligned with national priorities, including climate-smart and biodiversity-smart management.
- ii. Enhance evidence-based ocean governance, spatial analysis, and informed decision-making.
- iii. Ensure a balance between conservation objectives and sustainable socio-economic development within the Phoenix Islands EEZ.

Key tools and approaches supporting the project include the ShinyPlanr spatial modelling platform, enabling scenario analysis and data-driven planning, and targeted institutional capacity building for MFOR and the Kiribati Marine Spatial Planning Coordinating Committee (KMSPCC), embedding technical expertise and analytical capabilities within government structures.

Key achievements in 2025 include:

- i. Operationalisation of the KMSPCC.
- ii. Completion of the first National MSP Framework.
- iii. Strengthening of data systems through the Te Baiku Ocean Geodatabase.
- iv. Extensive community consultations and Outer Island MSP missions.

These activities directly support MFOR's strategic priorities of evidence-based ocean governance, sustainable marine management, and nationally led decision-making. Steps 4–10 of the MSP process remain ongoing, with full operationalisation expected by the end of 2026.



Table 4: Pheonix Island MSP Strategic Achievements

Strategic Objective	Key Results / Achievements (2025)	Impact / Alignment with MFOR Strategic Plan
<b>Governance &amp; Institutional Strengthening</b>	Full operationalisation of <b>KMSPCC</b> - Recruitment of core project team (2 GIS Officers, 1 Communications Officer, 1 Finance Officer)	Strengthens institutional capacity and governance for marine spatial planning, ensuring national leadership and coordination.
<b>Technical Foundations &amp; Data Systems</b>	Completion of first <b>National MSP Framework</b> - Continued development of <b>Te Baiku Ocean Geodatabase</b> - Procurement of essential tools and equipment for Project Team and KMSPCC Secretariat	Enhances data-driven decision-making and supports evidence-based management aligned with sustainable fisheries and ocean governance goals.
<b>Spatial Planning &amp; Zoning</b>	Engagement of Earth Sciences New Zealand and University of Queensland for:• Step 4: Baseline data mapping & future conditions analysis• Step 5: SUMA identification• Step 6: Ocean zoning• Step 7: Design principles for zoning	Advances critical MSP steps, enabling climate-smart and biodiversity-smart spatial planning within the Phoenix Islands EEZ.
<b>Community Engagement &amp; Awareness</b>	Co-financed Outer Island MSP missions to Abaiang, Kiritimati, Tamana, Tabiteuea Meang, Onotoa- Conducted school awareness visits and community consultations	Promotes inclusive, participatory planning and strengthens socio-economic and conservation outcomes, supporting national ownership of MSP initiatives.
<b>Integration of Research &amp; Policy</b>	Harmonisation of <b>Marine Scientific Research (MSR) Guidelines</b> with MSP process	Ensures research activities support national marine zoning objectives and evidence-based policy development.

### 1.2.3 World Bank PROP Project

The Kiribati PROP, part of Phase II of the World Bank's Series of Projects (SOP), made significant progress in 2025 across its four main components, advancing fisheries management, coastal livelihoods, and seafood safety.

*Table 5: World Bank PROP Project Achievements*

Component	2025 Achievements	Impact / Significance
<b>1. Monitoring, Control &amp; Surveillance (MCS)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delivery of 2 observer boats- Completion of detailed design and Bill of Quantity (BoQ) for MFOR office complex to house MCS and Seafood Toxicology Lab- Evidence and Case Preparation training for 60+ enforcement officers conducted by the Office of the Attorney General (September 2025)</li> </ul>	Strengthened fisheries monitoring and enforcement capacity, enhanced legal preparedness, and improved operational readiness of observers and enforcement personnel.
<b>2. Diversifying Marine-Based Revenue</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Endorsement of 11 Coastal Based Fisheries Management Plans (CBFMs) by MFOR and OAG (August 2025)- Solar salt production trials with Beru communities showing promising results- Storage shed design initiated for solar salt processing</li> </ul>	Advanced sustainable coastal fisheries management and diversified income opportunities for local communities.
<b>3. Seafood Toxicology &amp; Safety</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruitment of 4 new seafood toxicology lab staff (February 2025)- Completion of staff training at Cawthron Lab, New Zealand (December 2025)</li> </ul>	Strengthened national capacity for seafood safety testing, quality assurance, and laboratory operations.
<b>4. Project Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effective oversight of project activities and coordination of all components</li> </ul>	Ensured timely delivery of project milestones and alignment with overall SOP objectives.

Overall, 2025 Impact:

- i. Strengthened MCS and enforcement capacity,
- ii. Advanced sustainable coastal fisheries management,
- iii. Enhanced seafood safety and laboratory capacity, and
- iv. Established strong project management and coordination.

## 1.2.4 EU Sector Support Project

The European Union Fisheries Sector Support Programme is a key component of the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between Kiribati and the European Union, which entered provisional application in 2023. The programme supports the Ministry of Fisheries and Ocean Resources (MFOR) in delivering its 2025–2028 Strategic Plan and Government priorities, with a strong focus on enhancing community participation in fisheries to generate income, create employment, and increase national revenue.

In 2025, the programme made steady progress in advancing priority preparatory and capacity-building activities. Efforts focused on strengthening community-based fisheries, improving infrastructure and market systems, and enhancing institutional and enforcement capacity. While most activities remain in the early to mid-implementation phase, the progress achieved during the year has established a solid foundation for full implementation and measurable socio-economic impact over the 2026–2028 period.

*Table 6: Kiribati Fisheries Sector: Strategic Areas, Achievements and Impact*

Strategic Area	2025 Achievements	Impact / Significance
<b>Community-Based Fisheries Development</b>	Progressed upgrading and operationalisation of clam hatchery projects on Maiana and Nonouti Islands	Supports sustainable aquaculture development and enhances livelihood opportunities for local communities.
<b>Fisheries Infrastructure &amp; Business Improvement</b>	Conducted assessments of outer island fish centers and developed recommendations to improve business operations	Strengthens efficiency and sustainability of fisheries infrastructure and local enterprises.
<b>Fish Quality &amp; Market Access</b>	Initiated establishment of pilot fish stalls to promote minimum hygiene standards for local fishermen	Improves seafood handling practices, enhances food safety, and increases marketability of fish products.
<b>Private Sector Development</b>	Recruited international technical assistance to support establishment of the Kiribati Purse Seine Fishing Company	Advances national participation in commercial fisheries and supports revenue generation and job creation.
<b>Monitoring, Control &amp; Surveillance (MCS)</b>	Provided institutional support to the Oceanic Fisheries Division through upgraded MCS tools and enhanced enforcement capacity	Strengthens fisheries compliance, reduces illegal fishing, and improves resource management.
<b>Programme Coordination &amp; Strategic Alignment</b>	Continued implementation of activities aligned with MFOR Strategic Plan (2025–2028) and Government priorities	Ensures coordinated delivery of sector support and contributes to long-term institutional strengthening and economic development.

Overall, the EU Fisheries Sector Support Programme demonstrated steady and positive progress in 2025, particularly in laying the groundwork for key strategic interventions. Implementation during the year focused on foundational activities, including assessments, capacity building, and initiation of priority projects aligned with MFOR's Strategic Plan (2025–2028).

While most activities remain in the early to mid-implementation phase, the progress achieved in 2025 provides a solid platform for accelerated delivery in the coming years. Continued coordination across MFOR divisions and stakeholders will be critical to ensure timely implementation and the realisation of intended outcomes.

Overall, the programme is on track, with 2025 achievements effectively positioning it to deliver tangible socio-economic and institutional impacts during the 2026–2028 period.

*Image: Mini Hatchery development on Maiana Island supported by te European Union*



### 1.2.5 Korea ODA Infrastructure Project

The Fisheries Community Development Initiative for Sustainable Fishing Project in Kiribati represents South Korea's first major flagship development effort in the country, valued at approximately US\$12.2 million and funded through the Korea Overseas Development Assistance (ODA). The project spans 2025–2029 and aims to strengthen Kiribati's fisheries sector through infrastructure development, human capacity building, and technical skills enhancement.

The project is structured around three main components:

1. Upgrading Bairiki Wharf and Breakwater – Enhancing key harbour facilities in South Tarawa to improve safety, handling capacity, and reliability for fishing vessels, local boats, and community transport.
2. Establishment of the Fishermen Training Complex in Tanaea – Creating a centre to support skill development, sustainable fishing practices, safety training, and overall human capacity in the fisheries sector.
3. Strengthening Capacity and Skills – Delivering materials, technical training in engine repair, fishing technologies, and Korean language proficiency to support both local fishermen and Ministry staff.

Key achievements in 2025 have laid the foundation for successful project implementation and future milestones, including the commencement of infrastructure development in 2026. These achievements include formal agreements, selection of project management consultants, and the mobilization of the project team to Kiribati.



Table 7: Korea ODA Infrastructure Project Achievements and Impact

Strategic Area / Component	Achievement	Impact / Significance
<b>Project Agreement</b>	Signing of the Record of Discussion (ROD) in Korea on 30 April 2025 between the Government of Kiribati (MFOR) and Korea's Ministry of Fisheries	Establishes formal project commitment and partnership framework
<b>Project Management</b>	Selection of Hogik Consortium as Project Management Consultant on 22 September 2025	Ensures professional oversight, planning, and execution of project activities
<b>Project Mobilization</b>	Establishment of project office and team deployment in Kiribati in October 2025	Provides in-country coordination, management capacity, and operational readiness
<b>Infrastructure Development</b>	Preparatory work for Bairiki Wharf and Breakwater upgrades initiated	Lays groundwork for improved safety, capacity, and efficiency of harbour operations
<b>Human Capacity</b>	Planning for Tanaea training complex and initial skills programs	Enhances local skills, promotes sustainable fishing practices, and supports long-term sector growth
<b>Technical Skills</b>	Delivery planning for engine repairs, fishing technologies, and Korean language training	Builds technical competence among fishermen and Ministry staff to ensure sustainability of project outcomes

## 1.2.6 GEF Ridge to Reef Project

The Kiribati Ridge to Reef (R2R) Project (2018–2028) is part of the broader regional R2R programs aimed at sustaining Pacific Island Countries’ ecosystem services through integrated management of land, water, forests, biodiversity, and coastal resources. The project seeks to enhance climate resilience, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable livelihoods in Kiribati by promoting community participation, ecosystem-based management, and coordinated approaches across land and seascapes.

In 2025, the project focused on pilot islands including North Tarawa, Butaritari, Tabiteuea Meang, and Kiritimati, working closely with Community-Based Fisheries Management (CBFM) initiatives. Key activities centred on community engagement, capacity building, enforcement support, and livelihood development, ensuring that conservation efforts are complemented by tangible benefits for local communities.

*Table 8: Kiribati Ridge to Reef Project Achievements and Impact*

Strategic Area / Component	Achievement	Impact / Significance
<b>Community Engagement</b>	Conducted consultations and awareness programs on coastal fisheries regulations across target islands	Strengthens local knowledge, promotes compliance, and encourages community participation in resource management
<b>Human Capacity</b>	Recruitment of Component Staff and Fisheries Extension Assistants for pilot islands	Enhances project implementation capacity and ensures technical support is available locally
<b>Tools &amp; Resources</b>	Procurement of awareness tools, educational materials, and MCS (Monitoring, Control & Surveillance) equipment	Supports enforcement, education, and sustainable fisheries practices in pilot islands
<b>Training &amp; Capacity Building</b>	Training programs for village wardens on resource management and enforcement	Builds local leadership and monitoring capacity, empowering communities to protect marine resources
<b>Livelihood Development</b>	Revenue-generating activities for post-harvest processing, value-added seafood, and seaweed farming	Diversifies income sources, strengthens local economies, and incentivizes sustainable resource use
<b>Marine Conservation</b>	Successful demarcation of community marine protected areas in North Tarawa and Butaritari	Protects key habitats, enhances biodiversity, and promotes long-term sustainability of fisheries
<b>Education &amp; Awareness</b>	Implementation of fisheries education programs in collaboration with Ministry of Education and CDRC	Instills early awareness of sustainable fishing practices and environmental stewardship among youth

## 1.2.7 Community-Based Fisheries Management Project

The project was initially implemented in 2014 and ran over three phases. The third phase started in 2021 and was currently being wrapped up at the end of last year. The project is still in the third phase and is transitioning to the fourth phase.

The CBFM program has played a crucial role in the management of coastal fisheries resources.

The participation of communities has resulted in the progressive development of a sense of ownership, which in turn gives the community the motivation to control and manage the utilization or harvesting of marine resources in their respective villages.

A number of these management measures, which were enforced by the villagers, include the creation of marine protected areas that are demarcated, while others just concentrate on the development of species closure plans.

*Table 9: CBFM Deliverables for 2025*

Activities	Islands	Village	Status	Output	Funding
Beneficiary surveys	North Tabiteuea	Eita, Tekabwibwi, Tekaman, Tanaeang, Kabuna	completed	report and videos	PROP
	North Tarawa	Buariki, Tabonibara, Tearinibai, Nuatabu,	completed		
	Abaiang	Ribono and Nuotaea	completed		
Endorsement of village management plans	North Tarawa	same as above villages	endorsed	11 CBFM plans endorsed	PROP
	North Tabiteuea				
	Abaiang				
Community enforcement training	North Tabiteuea	same as above villages	completed	11 communities trained	PROP
	North Tarawa		Completed		TW/R2R
	Abaiang		completed		PROP

New management plans developed	Onotoa Tab North	all 8 villages Terikiai, Buota, Taumwa, Tanaeang, Aiwa, Tenatorua and Bangai	consultation completed	14 communities	PROP R2R
MPA construction & procurement	Onotoa Tab North	For all 8 villages Terikiai, Buota, Taumwa, Tanaeang, Aiwa.	completed completed	13 communities	PROP
Billboard designing + printing	North Tarawa	Tabonibara, Tearinibai, Nuatabu, Buariki	completed	5 billboards	TW
	North Tabiteuea	Eita, Tekabwibwi, Tekaman, Tanaeang, Kabuna	completed	5 billboards	PROP

*Image: Nei Tengarengare community group in Tabiteuea Meang*



## 1.2.8 Sustainable Fish Value Chains for Small Island Developing States (SVC4SIDS)

SVC4SIDS, implemented from 27 July 2020 to 26 July 2025 with two no-cost extensions (until 31 Dec 2025 and 30 June 2026), strengthens Kiribati’s domestic tuna and fish value chains through infrastructure development, capacity building, business planning, and climate resilience strategies. The project focuses on empowering women and youth, improving post-harvest operations, and supporting sustainable, high-value fisheries that can thrive in Small Island Developing States.

*Table 10: Achievements of the SVC4SIDS Project for 2025*

Key Achievement	Description / Highlights (2025)
<b>RGA Infrastructure &amp; Product Innovation</b>	<p>Fully equipped the Revenue Generating Activity (RGA) Facility at the Eco-farm in Temaiku with industrial-grade tuna slicers, solar dryers, and cookers.</p> <p>Enabled production of high-margin products such as tuna jerky, samosas, and fish sausages.</p> <p>Facility became a demonstration hub for value-addition training.</p>
<b>Expanded Technical Training Program</b>	<p>Trained 122 participants across North and South Tarawa.</p> <p>Covered sanitation, tuna processing, and climate-smart fish processing techniques.</p> <p>Targeted women and youth groups, helping them professionalize their trade.</p>
<b>Business Planning &amp; Financial Literacy</b>	<p>Conducted strategic roundtables to validate business plans for outer-island fisheries centres (Makin and Nikunau).</p> <p>Delivered workshops for women and youth on project proposal development, risk management, and funding access.</p> <p>Produced business plans, dashboards, calculation spreadsheets, and transport/logistics plans for the tuna value chain.</p>
<b>Climate Resilience &amp; Governance</b>	<p>Consulted with the Kiribati National Expert Group (KNEG) to co-develop the Tuna Value Chain Climate Change Adaptation (TVC-CCA) plan.</p> <p>Initiated sector-specific Early Warning Systems (EWS) planning for fisheries.</p>
<b>High-Level Policy Advocacy</b>	<p>Participated in the “Te Oi Talk show” with the Minister of Fisheries and Ocean Resources to discuss fleet modernization and diversification strategies, including sea cucumber farming and by-catch processing.</p>
<b>Makin &amp; Nikunau Construction Support</b>	<p>Deployed construction supervisors and arranged inspections and critical procurements to keep outer-island fisheries centres progressing despite procurement and supply chain challenges.</p>

Through its original project period and two no-cost extensions, SVC4SIDS in 2025 successfully strengthened infrastructure, expanded technical skills, advanced business capacity, and improved climate resilience across Kiribati’s fisheries sector. The project continued to empower women and youth, support outer-island development, and position the domestic tuna value chain for sustainable growth and replication.

## Ananau Causeway Marina Infrastructure Project

The Marina Project at Ananau Causeway in Kiribati continued to advance in 2025 as part of broader efforts to strengthen fisheries infrastructure and improve access to marine resources. The project addresses longstanding challenges faced by coastal communities, particularly the wide intertidal sandflats that restrict access to deeper lagoon waters during low tides. These limitations have historically affected fishing operations, delaying landings, compromising fish quality, and impacting general lagoon transportation.

The development of a small marina facility in South Tarawa is designed to provide a safe and reliable landing and mooring site for fishing vessels, independent of tidal conditions. Features such as floating pontoons, a jetty, and improved channel access will allow fishers to operate more efficiently, land catches promptly, and maintain product quality. The facility will also support broader marine activities, including transport services, tourism, and recreational use.

In 2025, the project focused on advancing concept design, stakeholder engagement, and preliminary planning. The proposed site at Ananau Causeway, opposite the Eco Farm, was selected due to its current use as a landing area by fishers from nearby communities. Planned components of the marina include berth and ramp access, a fish market, ice production facilities, fuel supply, fishing gear outlets, and small-scale commercial services such as restaurants and dive shops, forming an integrated, multi-purpose marine hub.

A key milestone this year is the formal agreement signed between the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFOR) and China Ocean to carry out a feasibility study to inform the detailed design of the Blue-Lagoon Marina infrastructure. Although the study was originally scheduled for the previous year, delays in the transaction process between the local ANZ Bank and banks in China postponed the work. Nevertheless, the first payment has been made, the preliminary study has commenced, and the contractor's first site visit is scheduled for 2026.

Upon completion, the marina is expected to enhance fisheries value chains, support private sector participation, and generate revenue for sustainable operation and maintenance. If successful, the project also holds potential for replication in other parts of Kiribati.



## Any other Fisheries Projects

The Ministry of Fisheries and Ocean Resources (MFOR) is implementing a broad portfolio of 46 projects that collectively support the sustainable management and development of Kiribati's fisheries and ocean resources. This portfolio reflects a coordinated national effort, supported by key development partners, to strengthen economic growth, food security, and resilience in a large ocean state.

Strategic investments are focused on strengthening fisheries governance and compliance, particularly through major support to monitoring and observer programs, which safeguard national revenue and ensure adherence to international obligations. At the same time, the portfolio prioritizes community-based fisheries and livelihood development, empowering coastal communities and improving sustainability of marine resources.

Significant progress is also being made in infrastructure development, including fisheries facilities, aquaculture systems, and the Blue Lagoon Marina, which are critical to improving service delivery and enabling private sector growth. Complementary investments in value chain development and aquaculture are promoting diversification and income generation, particularly for women and youth.

Looking ahead, the portfolio reflects a growing emphasis on the blue economy and ocean governance, with initiatives in marine spatial planning, ocean capacity development, and emerging sectors.

Overall, MFOR's combined projects demonstrate a balanced and forward-looking strategy, positioning Kiribati to sustainably manage its ocean resources while maximizing economic and social benefits. Continued focus on project completion, integration, and long-term sustainability will be essential to fully realize these outcomes.

*Image: Official Opening of Tobwaan Marawa Maneaba*



## 1.3 MFOR State-Owned Companies/Joint Venture Companies' Achievements

This section highlights the achievements of the Ministry of Fisheries and Ocean Resources' (MFOR) State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) and Joint Ventures (JVs) for 2025. It provides a concise overview of the performance, milestones, and contributions of each entity, demonstrating their role in supporting national economic development, enhancing fisheries value chains, and generating sustainable benefits for the people of Kiribati.

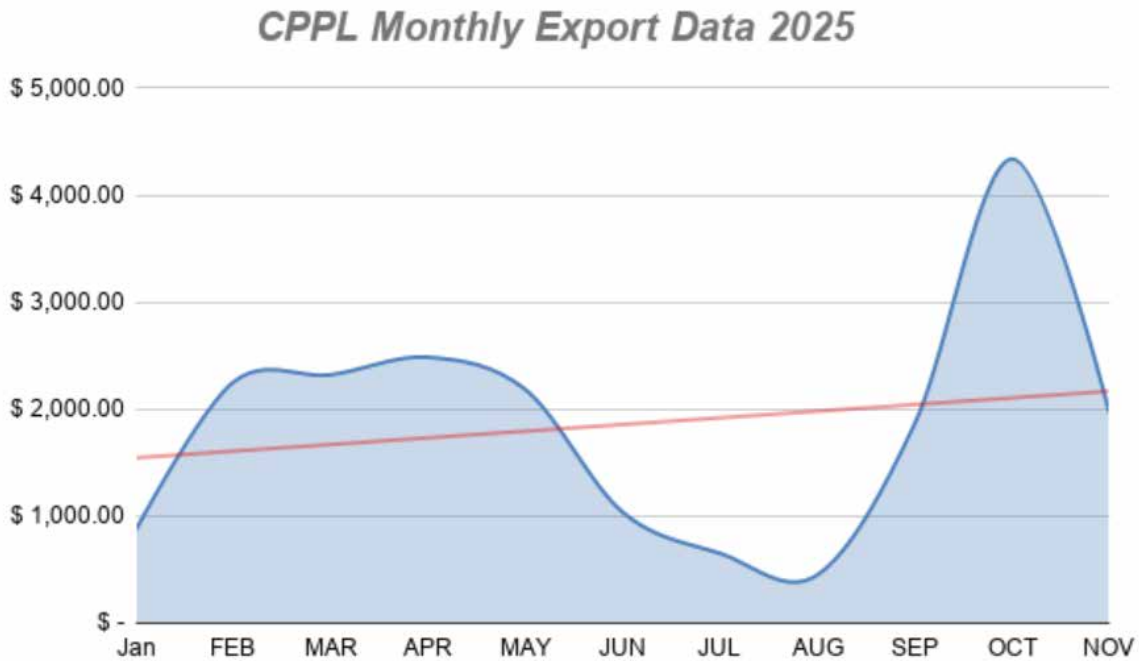
The summaries that follow cover CPPL, TAFL, KFL, KIFL, KBPL, KSCL, and the Marawa Board, showcasing their operational successes, strategic initiatives, and contributions to MFOR's overarching objectives during the reporting year.



### 1.3.1 Central Pacific Producers Limited (CPPL)

The CPPL Tarawa Branch have achieved the approval of HACCP for the export on red snapper. Noting the stringent market requirements and compliance for health and safety, the facility has successfully achieved this milestone with export trials on red snapper implemented in 2025 to Marshall Islands and New Zealand on a trial customer basis.

Figure 13: CPPL Monthly Export 2025



SQF is a US-oriented certifying body for businesses including fishery business operators (FBOs) like CPPL that require SQF Certification of food products, as part of company-driven or customer-focused aspirations for market access. Essentially, an SQF certified fish processing plant could have access to more buyers and customers given the brand and trust that are closely associated to SQF and other certifying instituted in the world.

CPPL Kiritimati initiated its SQF journey back in 2024 as part of the request for its US-based potential buyer or customer called NORPAC, which is based in Hawai'i and the targeted product is cooked and frozen lobster tail. To this end, an SQF Certification Audit was explored with the British Standard Institute (BSI1), and as part preparation, CPPL consulted and engaged 2 local consultants for pre-audit back in October 2024. The local consultants were selected due their known exposure in knowledge-based and hands-on experience for SQF audits and food safety management systems in Kiribati and the region. Furthermore, outcomes of the pre-audit indicated the need to beautify and renovate CPPL Kiritimati's facilities and vicinities, coupled with an adoption of the SQF standards for HACCP2 Plan and Pre-Requisites Programmes (PRPs) which are fundamental for SQF certification.

Likewise, the completion of the pre-audit, a schedule for SQF Certification Audit completed in October with an achievement of CPPL as a SQF facility meeting the US market requirements. This work was supported through WB PROP and the Ministry to have CPPL as an accredited facility for export to meet the international market requirements.

### 1.3.2 Te Atinimarawa Company Limited (TACL)

The overall business results show that TACL has been able to make a gross revenue of \$3,178,106 at the end of 2025 which is 88% of \$3,598,045 for the 2025 annual income budget. This was represented by 21% of the sales of the ungraded mixed aggregates, 53% of the crusher sales and 26% of other business activities.

The amount spends on staff salary, leave grants and other staff benefits is \$1,072,671, approximately 30% of TACL 2025 annual budget.

TACL still faces a lot of challenges in terms of production volume and the quality of the products.

*Table 11: TACL Issues & Challenges 2025*

Challenge	Current Situation	Solution
Insufficient aggregate production	<p>Production is wholly contingent upon the dredging capacity of the dredging barge. The barge employs a grab bucket for dredging, relying solely on the bucket's weight and its mechanical opening and closing mechanisms. Consequently, there is a volume limitation on the amount that the barge can dredge.</p> <p>Dredging is restricted to high tide because the TACL channel and turning basin lack sufficient depth for barge passage during low tide.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procurement of a backhoe dredger. JICA has offered to fund the project in 2018. It has been delayed for a while.</li> <li>• Procurement of cutter-suction dredger.</li> </ul> <p>Deepen the channel, either using the backhoe dredger or the cutter-suction dredger. TACL do not own any of these dredgers</p>
Quality of products	<p>Gravel is always mixed with sand. The happens if the raw materials is processed wet during raining period</p> <p>Concrete made from coral aggregates are weaker compared to concrete made from imported aggregates</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A new prefabricated warehouse has been installed</li> <li>• Procurement of an aggregate washer in 2025</li> <li>• Use of admixtures to strength the concrete. Need more trial test works and proper laboratory for the tests.</li> </ul>

## TACL Projects

Table 12: TACL Project 2025

List of Projects	Rationale	Status
Installation and operation of oxygen generator.	TACL has machineries and vessel relying of regular maintenance work. Such maintenance requires constant production of oxygen which is very limited on South Tarawa	Purchase of the generator was made in 2025. Installment and operation are part of 2026 first 100 days.
Installation and operation of aggregate washer	Improve the aggregate quality by reducing the salt content, and removal of sand from gravels	Purchase of the washer was made in 2025. Installment and operation are part of 2026 first 100 days.
Land reclamation at Steward causeway	Outlet of TACL to serve clients living close to the area.	Land reclamation has been approved by Cabinet.  Environment license to proceed await ECD evaluation.
Establishment of TACL branch on Kiritimati Island	Manage uncontrolled mining activity on the island and to promote easily access to the aggregates	Project document has been submitted to DCC.  Seek funding through soft loan from Government
Procurement of a Cutter-suction dredger	Assist to maintain old, and construct new boat channels on South Tarawa and the outer islands to improve connectivity between the islands, consignment deliveries and access to fishing grounds.  Dredge spoil can be used for construction purposes, land reclamation, and etc.	Seek funding through soft loan from Government

### 1.3.3 Kiribati Fish Limited (KFL)

KFL continues to make progress in its operations, processing and exporting high-grade sashimi fillets to the European Union, Japan, the United States, and China. The company's performance in 2025 has been promising, achieving considerable profits and declaring dividends to the Government of Kiribati.

Key milestones achieved during the year included hosting the President of Shanghai Fisheries Group and his delegation in Tarawa. In addition, a successful high-level visit to China in 2025 resulted in the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) among KFL, the Government of Kiribati, and China National Fisheries Corporation (CNFC) - a state-owned enterprise affiliated with China's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs.

Through this MOU, CNFC formally expressed its interest in becoming a new shareholder in the Kiribati Fisheries Limited Joint Venture and commencing operations in Kiribati. As the largest fisheries company in China and a state-owned enterprise, CNFC presents significant opportunities for Kiribati to expand future commercial fishing ventures between the two countries.

The Government of Kiribati welcomed this expression of interest, which was subsequently formalized through the MOU. This potential partnership is anticipated to create new opportunities for growth and development within the fisheries sector, ultimately delivering greater economic benefits to Kiribati.

### 1.3.4 Kiritimati Island Fish Limited (KIFL)

Kiritimati Island Fish Limited (KIFL) is one of the joint venture companies that focuses its investment on tuna fishing and commercial aquaculture in Kiribati. Listed below are the achievements of the KIFL Aquaculture Initiative in 2025

*The Floating Cages:* By 2025, 93 square cages of 10 × 10 meters and 42 circular cages of 20 meters in diameter were completed along with 3 sets of management and operation platforms covering approximately 1,300 square meters. All the cages are equipped with monitoring systems and water quality testing devices.

*Sandfish Commercial Breeding:* The breeding experiment began in September 2025. Currently, the first batch of sandfish seedlings was successfully hatched and raised in September, with approximately 15,000 seedlings obtained. The largest individual has now reached a length of 10 centimetres. The second spawning was carried out in December 2025, with approximately 100,000 seedlings obtained. Currently the average weight is about 2 to 3 grams.

*Milkfish and Red Snapper Cage Farming:* The project involved the grow-out farming of 30,000 kilograms of milkfish in 2025, with 25,000 kilograms being sold to the public to support food security. An additional 20,000 pieces of red snapper were also farmed in the floating cage, with the major focus on supporting food security in Kiribati. The project is currently employing more than 50 local staff members.

### 1.3.5 Kiribati Blue Pacific Limited (KBPL)

KBPL is one of the Joint Venture Companies that invested and started its fishing operations in Kiribati waters in 2024. Currently, 2 vessels that are in operation mainly Maribo 61 and Maribo 62. These vessels have been approved and listed under the EU external listing in 2025 so raw materials that are caught from these two vessels are qualified to be exported to the EU markets. This is one of the great opportunities for other processing plants including the Kiribati Fish Limited (KFL) to source their raw materials from these vessels for exporting to the EU markets. More vessels are still in construction; thus, it is anticipated that more vessels will be listed and started their fishing operation in Kiribati waters soon and to bring more social and economic benefits to all parties.

### 1.3.6 Kiribati Seafood Company Limited (KSCL)

KSCL is one of the JV companies that established in 2023, between the Government of Kiribati (MFOR) and Guangzhou Xuyuanxing trade Import and Export Company Limited from China.

This JV company is established purposely to promote value addition, products diversification, enhance seafood exports to the international markets, and to take advantage of the zero tariff that has been signed between the Government of Kiribati and the People's Republic of China.

According to the KSCL's master agreement under clause 2.3 the company is willing to purchase all seafood products from local communities for further processing and export these products to overseas markets mainly to China. Thus, the company will assist in providing and promoting economic and social benefits through our fisheries and marine resources for the community at large.

KSCL has started its export to Hongkong on dried sea cucumber or bech-de-mer and purchased most of its fresh sea cucumbers from communities in Tarawa and other outer islands. This is avenue for income generation for local communities. Additionally, KSCL Joint Venture company is interested to venture into the fishing operation and processing of other seafood products, therefore, these activities are within the company's work plan activities and anticipated to be started soon once all requirements are met.

### 1.3.7 Marawa Research and Exploration Company Ltd

Marawa Research and Exploration Ltd is a 100% Kiribati state-owned company established to explore polymetallic nodules in the Clarion-Clipperton Zone (CCZ). Since 2015, the company has held an exclusive 15-year exploration license from the International Seabed Authority (ISA) covering approximately 74,900 km<sup>2</sup> across three designated blocks. These resources are managed as the "Common Heritage of Mankind," ensuring that all exploration and eventual extraction activities adhere to principles of fair and equitable benefit-sharing.

Following the early 2025 termination of its partnership with the Canadian firm DeepGreen (now part of The Metals Company), Marawa is currently in a strategic transition period. While its core exploration contract with the ISA remains secure until 2030, the company has pivoted toward a new partnership arrangement with the Chinese entity. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed in October 2025, and a draft agreement submitted by this potential partner in November is currently undergoing a technical review to define the next phase of Kiribati's deep-sea research and resource development.



## 2. International and Regional Engagement & Support

The Ministry of Fisheries and Ocean Resources (MFOR) of Kiribati engages extensively with international and regional partners to strengthen its mandate as custodian of the nation's ocean resources. These collaborations provide critical technical expertise, financial support, research capacity, and policy guidance to advance sustainable fisheries management, marine conservation, and climate resilience.

At the **international level**, MFOR works closely with United Nations agencies and global institutions. Organizations such as the United Nations Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (UNDOALAS) support the consistent application of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, while the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) assists with aquaculture and mariculture development. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) provide significant financial and technical resources, including climate resilience funding and support to meet international environmental obligations. Additional partnerships with institutions such as the University of Wollongong, Cawthron Institute, and the University of the Sunshine Coast contribute to research, training, and innovation in fisheries and marine science. Specialized organizations like MRAG, INFOFISH, and WOAHO/OIE further strengthen monitoring systems, market development, and aquatic biosecurity.

At the **regional level**, MFOR collaborates with key Pacific organizations to enhance governance, capacity building, and sustainable resource management. The Pacific Community (SPC), Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), and Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA) provide scientific, legal, and technical advisory services for tuna fisheries and broader ocean governance. The Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) support environmental protection and regional policy dialogue, including seabed mineral activities. Capacity development is further reinforced through institutions such as the University of the South Pacific (USP) and regional initiatives like SEAFDEC and PACER-Plus, which promote training, trade facilitation, and technology transfer.

Collectively, these engagements enable MFOR to access global best practices, strengthen institutional capacity, and implement effective policies. This integrated network of partnerships ensures that Kiribati can sustainably manage its ocean resources, meet international obligations, and support long-term socio-economic development while safeguarding its marine environment.

The list of the organizations is shown in Annex I of this report.

### 3. MFOR Challenges & Gaps

Overall, these challenges reflect the need for system-wide reforms in human resource management, financial systems, operational support, infrastructure investment, and governance frameworks to improve efficiency, accountability, and service delivery across the Ministry.

Table 13: Key Issues & Challenges facing MFOR

Category	Status	Key Issues & Challenges	Impact / Description
Human Resources & Staff Welfare	● High Risk	- Delayed salaries, overtime, and allowances- Over-reliance on temporary staff- Staff shortages (drivers, admin, technical)- Low morale due to policy changes	- Reduced productivity- Staff dissatisfaction and turnover risk- Gaps in service delivery
Finance & Administration	● High Risk	- Delays in DSA, procurement, and payments- Weak coordination with Accounts Unit- Unclear approval processes- Document loss & acquittal issues	- Slow implementation of activities- Financial inefficiencies- Accountability risks
Operations & Logistics	● Medium–High Risk	- Limited transport (vehicles & drivers)- Lack of equipment (ICT, office tools)- Weak internet & system access	- Disrupted fieldwork and inspections- Reduced operational efficiency
Infrastructure & Security	● Medium–High Risk	- Inadequate security (theft, break-ins)- Incomplete infrastructure projects- Limited office space & utilities- Environmental concerns	- Asset losses- Poor working conditions- Community/ environmental risks

Governance & Coordination	● High Risk	- Overlapping roles & unclear TORs- Weak partner agreement management- Non-compliance by external researchers- Poor inter-agency coordination	- Conflicts and duplication- Weak regulatory control- Inefficient collaboration
Funding & Sustainability	● Medium Risk	- Heavy reliance on donor funding- Uncertain post-project continuity- Limited maintenance budgets	- Risk of project collapse- Unsustainable operations
Organizational Structure	● Medium Risk	- Delayed restructuring- Fragmented institutional setup- Weak internal communication	- Inefficiencies across divisions- Poor coordination and alignment

## Challenges associated with legal, regulatory & policy frameworks

A strong and coherent legal and governance framework is essential for the sustainable use and management of ocean resources in Kiribati. As a large ocean state, Kiribati relies heavily on its marine resources for food security, livelihoods, economic development, and resilience to climate change. Effective legislation and governance systems are critical to ensure that these resources are managed sustainably, equitably, and in line with both national priorities and international commitments.

The table 15 below provides a high-level assessment of key legal and governance gaps within Kiribati's fisheries and ocean resources sector, using a traffic light (RAG) system to indicate reform priorities. It highlights critical areas where existing frameworks are outdated, incomplete, or lack sufficient legal authority to support emerging sectors and international obligations.

For each thematic area, the table summarizes the main issues and identifies targeted priority actions required to strengthen the legal framework. Overall, it shows that while progress has been made in policy development and implementation, significant legislative reforms are needed, particularly in areas such as marine spatial planning, blue carbon, enforcement powers, and alignment with international agreements, to ensure a coherent, modern, and enforceable ocean governance system.

Table 14: Key Legal & Governance Gaps

Area	Status	Key Issues / Gaps	Priority Action
Fisheries Act & Institutional Scope	● High Priority	Outdated and fish-centric; does not reflect expanded ocean governance mandate or emerging sectors (blue carbon, MSP, mariculture).	Comprehensive review and amendment of the Fisheries Act to reflect the full “ocean resources” mandate and new policy areas.
International & Regional Obligations	● High Priority	Partial domestic implementation of BBNJ, PNA, WCPFC; weak legal basis for Port State Measures enforcement.	Develop enabling legislation to fully operationalize international commitments and strengthen enforcement provisions.
Longline Fisheries Framework	● Medium-High	VDS Regulation near completion but not enacted; past reliance on ad hoc licensing created uncertainty.	Finalize and enact Longline VDS Regulation; establish clear legal framework for management and investment.
Coastal Fisheries Enforcement	● High Priority	Weak enforcement powers; outdated penalties; limited legal support for modern monitoring tools.	Strengthen enforcement provisions, increase penalties, and legally embed electronic monitoring and tracking systems.
Sea Cucumber & Quota Management	● Medium-High	Quota system exists but lacks strong legal foundation, transparency, and enforcement mechanisms.	Strengthen quota legislation with clear allocation rules, appeals processes, and enforcement provisions.
Marine Spatial Planning (MSP)	● High Priority	No enabling legislation; unclear legal authority and hierarchy of MSP decisions.	Develop comprehensive MSP law defining authority, zoning, and legal hierarchy across sectors.
Climate, Blue Carbon & Ecosystem Services	● High Priority	No legal framework for carbon ownership, benefit-sharing, or certification systems.	Establish legislation for blue carbon rights, benefit-sharing mechanisms, and market participation.
Penalties & Sanctions Framework	● High Priority	Penalties outdated and not proportional to commercial value; weak deterrence.	Modernize penalties, introduce administrative sanctions, and strengthen licensing enforcement tools.

## 4. MFOR Priorities & Initiatives for 2026

This section outlines the strategic direction of the Ministry of Fisheries and Ocean Resources (MFOR) moving into 2026. Building on the achievements and highlights of 2025 and guided by the MFOR Strategic Plan 2024–2028, the section presents MFOR's planned priorities for 2026. The priorities for 2026 focus on six key areas: infrastructure development, revenue maximization, sustainable fisheries management, community livelihood improvement, and research and innovation. A total of 35 flagship priorities, referred to as MFOR Highlights, are scheduled for implementation during the 2026 fiscal year. (refer to Annex 2 for detailed descriptions of these Highlights.)

In addition to the primary target of revenue collection, several new tangible initiatives will be undertaken this year, including:

- i. Convening the Fisheries Partners Forum to shape the landscape of development, cooperation in the fisheries sector,
- ii. Completing the design of the state-of-the-art first marina facility in South Tarawa,
- iii. Commissioning a new collection vessel to support income generation in the outer islands,
- iv. Finalizing the establishment of the new Kiribati Purse Seine Fishing Company,
- v. Commissioning the first Seafood Toxicology Laboratory in Kiribati,
- vi. Launching micro-canning facilities in the outer islands,
- vii. Venturing into new partnerships for deep-sea minerals to benefit Kiribati; and
- viii. Deploying new online systems, including a revenue dashboard, asset register, and human resources information system, to enhance productivity and office efficiency.

Below is a summary of the broad categories of priorities, including their respective objectives and key projects.

*Table 15: Table of Broad Categories of Priorities for 2026*

Focus Area	Key Objective	Summary of Actions
Infrastructure Development & Investment	Strengthen fisheries capacity and service delivery	Progress development on MFOR office, marina, fisheries ports, offices, laboratory, and training facilities
Revenue Maximization	Increase economic returns from ocean resources	Enhance VDS value, explore aquaculture, diversify income, assess fishing nation model
Sustainable Fisheries Management	Ensure long-term conservation and compliance	Strengthen MCS systems, combat IUU fishing, expand community-based fisheries management
Community Livelihood Improvement	Improve income and wellbeing of local communities	Promote value addition, micro-canning, and outer island fisheries support
Innovation & Research	Support data-driven decisions and future growth	Strengthen research, adopt new technologies, improve data systems and climate resilience

## 5. Other Matters

The section also presents efforts to strengthen coordination and reporting systems, enhance monitoring and evaluation practices, and promote corporate and social responsibility. Together, these elements demonstrate MFOR's commitment to transparency, effective implementation of national priorities, and continuous improvement in delivering services to the people of Kiribati.

### 5.1 MFOR Commitment to Parliament Issues

The Ministry of Fisheries and Ocean Resources (MFOR) remains fully committed to addressing issues raised in Parliament, ensuring that its policies, programs, and development initiatives are aligned with national priorities and the expectations of the Government. The Ministry continues to uphold transparency, accountability, and responsiveness in its operations, particularly in relation to matters concerning fisheries development, ocean resource management, and community livelihoods.

MFOR actively works to respond to Parliamentary directives and concerns by prioritizing key projects, improving service delivery, and strengthening coordination across divisions and stakeholders. This includes aligning the Ministry's resources and policies towards specific Parliament issues raised. The general trend of issues raised from Parliament includes outer islands projects such as ice plants, boat and engines, mini-hatcheries, fishing aggregated devices, fish cage, training, ponds for milkfish farming, marine export, and many more.

Furthermore, the Ministry recognizes the importance of continuous engagement with Parliament to provide timely updates, evidence-based reporting, and clear communication on progress, challenges, and future outlooks. Through this annual report, MFOR hopes to provide more information and clarity to Honourable Minister of Parliament for their planning and decision making for the development of their own respective constituencies.

### 5.2 MFOR Contributions to National Policies

In 2025, MFOR activities and project performances and deliverables focused on five key areas: (i) building critical infrastructure and enabling capacities to advance sustainable fisheries development; (ii) maximizing economic benefits and investments from ocean resources; (iii) maintaining the health of ocean resources through sustainable approaches; (iv) forging new, genuine, and impactful partnerships to address development gaps and leverage greater investment; and (v) conducting ongoing research while mainstreaming traditional knowledge.

These contributions align with several strategies articulated in the KV20, particularly the Wealth Pillar and *Motinnano*, which aim to increase revenue and benefits to communities from ocean resources. They are also aligned with the economic development objectives of the new Kiribati Development Plan.

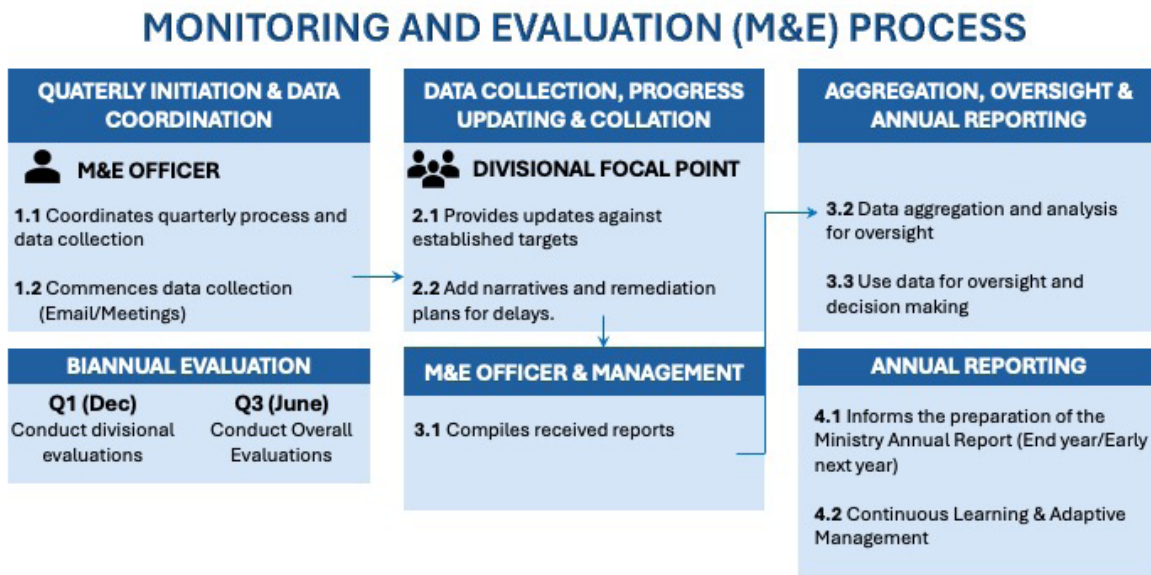
### 5.3 MFOR Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Schemes

This section highlights the synergies in MFOR reporting, focusing on how integrated coordination across divisions, programmes, and partners enhances consistency, efficiency, and overall reporting effectiveness.

The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework serves as a fundamental instrument for tracking the progress of the ministry’s strategic plan. Developed directly from the MFOR Strategic Plan, the framework is structured around Key Result Areas (KRAs), Key Strategic Actions (KSAs), and annual performance targets.

Monitoring activities are carried out on a quarterly basis, commencing with the collection of progress updates against established targets from designated divisional focal points. The M&E officer coordinates this process by emailing or meeting in person with focal points to obtain their respective progress reports. Focal points are required to provide status updates accompanied by narratives, particularly in cases of delays or incomplete tasks, including explanations and proposed remediation plans as necessary. Divisional and overall progress evaluations are conducted biannually. This compiled information supports management oversight and contributes to the preparation of the Ministry’s Annual Report, typically prepared at the end of the year or early the following year.

Figure 14: MFOR Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Process



Through this structured process, the M&E Scheme supports timely performance reporting, strengthens internal coordination, and enables early identification of implementation challenges. The Ministry utilizes M&E findings to guide planning adjustments, enhance programme delivery, and promote continuous improvement across its operations.



## 5.4 MFOR Corporate & Social Responsibilities

### Teriaki Canoe Paddling Tournament 2025

The Teriaki Canoe Paddling Tournament 2025 was successfully held on 15 November 2025 at Takoronga, Betio. The tournament continues to serve as an important platform for promoting and preserving Kiribati's cultural heritage and traditional knowledge through the practice of canoe paddling, while also recognizing the vital role of ocean resources in sustaining livelihoods and identity.

The concept of *Teriaki* holds deep cultural significance, symbolizing unity, cooperation, and collective effort—values embodied in the act of paddling together as one team. Beyond competition, the tournament reinforces the importance of teamwork, resilience, and shared responsibility, reflecting the strong communal spirit that underpins Kiribati society.

Figure 15: Teriaki Competition 2025



The 2025 event marked the third year since the tournament's establishment in 2023, highlighting its growing importance as an annual cultural and sporting event. This year, a total of seventeen (17) teams participated, including representatives from MFOR State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) and other Government Ministries. Competitors raced across three categories: the Male Category was won by the MFOR staff team, the Female Category by the Ministry of Tourism, Commerce, Industry and Cooperatives (MTCIC), and the Mixed Category by the Australian High Commission.

The tournament was officially opened by the Honourable Minister, Harry Tekaiti, who emphasized that Teriaki is not merely a race, but a meaningful celebration of cultural values, the richness of marine resources, and the enduring connection between the people of Kiribati and the ocean.

The successful delivery of the event was made possible through the generous support of key development partners, including the Tobwaan-Waara 2 Project (TWP2), the European Union (EU), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). Their continued support remains essential to sustaining and growing this important cultural initiative.

*Image: Teriaki Competition 2025*





## Tanobakoa Coastal Cleanup Campaign

The Tanobakoa Cleanup Campaign is an initiative led by the Geo-Science Division of the Ministry of Fisheries and Ocean Resources (MFOR). The campaign was established to promote the cleanliness and aesthetic value of coastal areas, while fostering public awareness and responsibility in maintaining a clean and healthy coastal environment.

Launched in May 2024, the initiative began as a coastal cleanup effort involving collaboration with other ministries, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and interested stakeholders. Its primary objective was to encourage community participation and instill a sense of stewardship toward coastal conservation.

Over time, the campaign evolved beyond its initial scope. By 2025, the initiative expanded to include the development of the site as a recreational space accessible to the public, as well as to government ministries and partner organizations. This progression reflects MFOR's broader vision of integrating environmental management with community engagement and sustainable use of coastal areas.

While the core objective of maintaining coastal cleanliness and beautification remains unchanged, the initiative has been further enhanced with the introduction of a complementary concept—the **MFOR Christmas Display**. This addition aims to transform the site into a multi-purpose space that not only promotes environmental stewardship but also serves as a venue for community activities and public engagement.

*Figure 16: Tanobakoa Spot Christmas Displays 2025*



The images illustrate the outcomes of the MFOR Christmas Display at the Tanobakoa site. This initiative and its vision were made possible through the collective efforts of MFOR's joint ventures (JVs) and state-owned enterprises (SOEs), with additional support from private sector partners who recognized the long-term potential of the project. Key contributions from MFOR-supported initiatives, including the TWP2 and EU-funded projects, were instrumental in bringing this vision to fruition.

The Tanobakoa site continues to present opportunities for further development, with several creative concepts yet to be explored. As the initiative progresses, there is strong optimism that the site will evolve beyond its current role as a cleanup and recreational area into a more dynamic, multi-purpose community space.

Achieving this vision will depend on sustained support from ongoing projects, private sector partners, and development agencies, as well as the continued dedication and commitment of MFOR staff.



## 6. Charting the Course from Ocean Wealth to National Prosperity

The 2025 performance of the Ministry of Fisheries and Ocean Resources (MFOR) confirms that Kiribati stands at a pivotal moment in its development journey. As one of the world's largest ocean states, Kiribati controls vast natural capital, particularly in its world-class tuna fisheries. Our waters are resource-rich, yet our domestic industry remains limited in scale and scope. The central challenge and opportunity ahead, is to transform our ocean resources ambitiously into tangible outcomes such as yielding skilled quality jobs in the fisheries and maritime sector, development of appropriate domestic industries, increasing sustainable export income from our ocean products, and enduring government revenue.

The progress of 2025 has laid a strong foundation and steppingstones towards a prosperous future. Record revenue from tuna licensing, the first-ever coastal fisheries revenue, new infrastructure investments, and strengthened monitoring and compliance systems and abilities to secure powerful partners, all demonstrate what is possible when governance, strategy, and investment are aligned. However, to realize the vision of a truly prosperous nation built on ocean wealth, the pace and scale of transformation must accelerate.

Looking ahead, Kiribati (MFOR and all other stakeholders) must strategically develop four key ocean sectors:

**Tuna Fisheries:** Beyond access fees, the future lies in establishing fisheries hub facilities to accelerate downstream processing, domestic fleet participation and repair, and capturing greater value from each fish landed. Advancing the Kiribati-owned purse seine company and strengthening partnerships for on-shore processing will be critical.

**Marine Biodiversity for Conservation and Genomics:** Kiribati's unique and pristine marine ecosystems harbor genetic resources of immense potential value. By engaging in emerging international frameworks for access and benefit-sharing including investing in laboratories/facilities required in this sector, Kiribati can position itself to receive fair returns from marine biotechnology and genomic discoveries derived from its waters.

**Deepsea Research and Minerals:** While deep-sea research and deep-sea utilizations remains governed by stringent international regulations and environmental safeguards, Kiribati must continue building technical and legal capacity through the Marawa Research and Exploration Company Ltd and world renown companies in this sector. Prudent, science-based exploration can ensure that when extraction becomes viable and responsible, Kiribati is ready to benefit. Deepsea research is an area that Kiribati need to strengthen capacities and invest resources on, in partnership with other world-class universities and institutions.

**Marine Tourism:** Beyond South Tarawa, Kiribati's pristine islands, rich marine environments, and vibrant culture offer untapped tourism potential. Developing low-impact, high-value marine tourism, particularly in the Phoenix Islands and the Line Islands group, can diversify livelihoods, create local employment, and incentivize conservation.

The future must therefore focus relentlessly on getting the governance, strategy, and investment right, and scaling these efforts ambitiously. This means modernizing legal frameworks, strengthening national institutional capacity, securing patient and targeted investment, and empowering local communities and global partners as stewards and beneficiaries.

Kiribati has the supply of ocean resources. 2025 has proven the potential. With continued discipline, bold partnerships, a long-term vision driven by strong leadership, Kiribati can indeed become a rich country from its ocean resources, transforming the blue ocean into a tide of lasting prosperity for every I-Kiribati.

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# Annex 1: International and Regional Organizations supporting MFOR in 2025

International Organizations	Types of Engagements and Support provided to MFOR
UNDOALAS	Provide technical assistance to ensure the consistent and effective application of the convention on maritime boundaries issues.
UNFAO	Support the Coastal Fisheries Division in it Aquaculture and Mariculture projects.
UNDP	Provide technical and financial support of USD \$1M for climate resilience and sustain long term development.
GEF	Provide financial resource to meet international environmental obligations.
UNISA	Support for dual mission of regulating deep seabed activities and ensuring the effective of protection of the marine environment.
University of Wollongong	Lead research for project funded by ACIAR on Community based fisheries management in Kiribati.
Cawthron Institute	Provide a 4-month capability training to four seafood laboratory officers in Microbiology, Chemistry, Equipment & calibration and Quality Management System ISO17025.
IGF	Assists governments in strengthening mining governance to benefit local communities, national economies and the environment.
UNESCO	
SEAFDEC	Support Kiribati in building capacity and technological transfer around sandfish and giant clam culture through training programs.
Earth Science	
Queensland University	Provide strategic technical support to MFOR for the development of the Pheonix Island Marine Spatial Plan
Conservation International	Assist in securing funds for Climate Adaptation Project in which Kiribati through the MFOR.

INFOFISH	Provide and promote marketing information, products development, capacity development and technical advisory services pertaining to fisheries within Asia, the Pacific region and beyond.
MRAG	The engagement aimed to assist Kiribati in trialling and implementing a national Electronic Monitoring (EM) system for its longline fleet.
WOAH/OIE	Assist Kiribati in building the capacity and technological transfer in Animal/Aquatic Animal Disease Notification.
COMSEC	Provides the administrative and technical framework for its 56 member nations to promote democracy and development.
SIO	Become a key technical partner to support the establishment of a National Ocean Observation Centre.
OFCF	Provide support to Kiribati fisheries development projects through the MFOR for more than 10 years.
INK FISH	Contribute to improving ocean literacy and public understanding of deep-sea science.
University of the Sunshine Coast	UniSC has been leading the seaweed project in the Pacific islands targeting Kiribati, Fiji and Samoa, and has been working in close collaboration with ACIAR and now with the International Development Research Centre (IDRC)
Regional Organizations	
WCPFC	Support developing member nations in meeting their convention obligations.
SPC	Provides technical and scientific support to Pacific Island Countries to strengthen ocean governance, maritime boundaries, extended continental shelf claims, and geospatial capacity.
FFA	Provide technical and legal advisory services to member countries on how to manage, conserve, sustain and develop tuna resources for social and economic benefits for all members.  The Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) is an intergovernmental organization that assists its 17 member countries in managing, controlling, and developing their tuna fisheries for maximum social and economic benefit.

PNA	The PNA manages the world's largest sustainable tuna purse seine fishery and has pioneered several conservation measures that have been adopted internationally.
OPOC	provides high-level technical and professional support to the Pacific Ocean Commissioner within the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat to advance regional ocean governance.
USP	Provide courses include certificate-level courses on coastal fisheries and aquaculture monitoring, control, and surveillance, as well as the development of micro-qualification courses on fisheries management and development initiatives.
PIFS	Provide engagement to member countries in dialogue to share technical information and policy developments related to seabed mineral activities, shaping decision-making and regional cooperation.
SPREP	Protect and manage the environment and natural resources of the Pacific.
PACER-PLUS	Aims to make it easier for Pacific countries to trade, attract investment, grow their economies by improving trade systems, providing capacity building and assist in reducing technical barriers to trade.
MPI	MPI has been supporting the Ministry in close collaboration with SPC FAME in improving the capacity of fisheries staff in fisheries monitoring, control and surveillance, and enforcement programs.

## Annex 2: – List of MFOR Highlights (flagship initiatives) for 2026

Team	Key Highlight for 2025
ICT – CSD	Centralize MFOR ICT infrastructure (fingerprints, ID cards etc.)
	Migration of local system to cloud services.
	Installation of all security cameras for all office branches (Security Monitoring for Ministry's Assets)
Registry – CSD	1. Extend registry space and Kitchen space for staff
	2. E-Registry to improve customer service
	3. Registry tracking system implemented and operationalized.
Media - CSD	Complete the installation of Tuna Statue at Tanobakoa site, Bonriki
	Install 2 digital billboards for MFOR on South Tarawa
	Launch the MFOR Digital Newsletter containing analytics, messages and key impacts
	Launch the Ocean Art and Creativity Gallery event
Account - CSD	1. Streamline/Harmonize reporting of revenues under different codes into the Ministry Revenue Dashboard
	2. Reconciliation of contribution fees from licensed vessels completed (revolving funds such as OBM, Fishing Gears, Maneaba, etc)
	3. Strengthening and improving account system to reduce customer complaints.
Administration - CSD	Deliver Prefab Office materials for MFOR Kiritimati Branch
	MFOR Digitalization Asset and Data Management and Operationalization.
	Secure funding and complete the tender documents for MFOR Office Complex in Ambo.
	Development of an MFOR HR Information System (to contain staff profiles, training, medical, entitlements, etc.)
	Develop recreational concepts and designs for Tanaea and Ambo
	Complete the detailed design of the Blue lagoon Marina at Bonriki

Geoscience Division (GSD)	Complete the process to claim Kiribati Extended Continental Shelf at the UN level (include data consolidation, international engagements, etc.)
	Signing of the Joint Venture Agreement between Marawa Board Government of Kiribati and Jinhang DSM
	Launch the Kiribati Marine Spatial Plan for the Phoenix Islands Group and complete the draft MSP Act
	Complete the concept for Kiribati cooperation with US on Tuna Fisheries and Phoenix Island development (implementation of the MSP Phoenix Islands Framework)
Project Development Division (PDD)	Launch of the solar salt first production and marketing of products from Beru
	Operationalization of the DBK loan scheme on small scale community fisheries development
	Continue the work on the assessment of outer island fish centers and deliver final report
	Launch of the Japan ESDP funded Fish Collection Vessel
	Complete the design of the Korea ODA Fishermen Training Complex in Tanaea and Bairiki Wharf infrastructure in Bairiki
Oceanic Fisheries Division (OFD)	Complete the CFD adjoining veranda
	Achieve AUD\$205 million revenue
	Finalize review on Reefer Carrier / Bunker arrangement
	Complete the feasibility study on the establishment of a Kiribati Purse Seine Fishing Company and communicate its findings to Cabinet
Kiribati Seafood Verification Division (KSVD)	Implementation of the Electronic Monitoring on the 3 Kiribati Longline Fishing Vessels (JV Vessels)
	Develop and launch the KSVD e- database (on health certificates, lab results, inspection reports, profiles of HACCAP, cases of operators, etc.)
	Achieve revenue of AUD\$80 K
	Launch the e-licensing system of the marine export license by the SVD
	Listing of few more vessels on the EU external listing (Yunrun. Kibena 6 and 7)
Kiribati Seafood Verification Division (KSVD)	Finalize the new regulation on harvesting, processing, and marketing National Seafood Regulation, 2026

Kiribati Seafood Toxicology Laboratory Division (KSTLD)	Launch the inaugural operation of the Seafood Toxicology Laboratory
	Complete the laboratory Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)
	Finalize the Seafood Toxicology Laboratory Regulation
	Develop and launch the Seafood and Toxicology Laboratory Database
Coastal Fisheries Division (CFD)	Launch the completion of the Makin and Nikunau Fish Center and first micro-canning production
	Upgrading of Makin Tenamo (lagoon) for fish farming (milkfish, sea cucumber and other aquaculture opportunities)
	Complete the construction of Tab North Mini Hatchery and launch its first operation
	Successful introduction of sandfish broodstock from Palau for sea cucumber commercial farming
	New FAD design deployed in 5 islands (Islands TBC)
	Launching of milkfish deboning fish products by private sectors supported by CFD in Kiritimati
	Launching of Business plans and Farm Establishment for Maiana and Nonouti Island Hatcheries
	Development of Blue Carbon Committee
	Scale up the implementation of the Artisanal Boat tracking system
	Launch nationwide consultation and implement the Shark-fin harvest and export licensing system
	Launching of Quarantine & MSC Container Office in Bonriki
	Achieve AUD\$1.1 million revenue from the coastal fishery licenses

CPPL	1.Export marine products to Honolulu, Nauru and Marshall Islands
	2. Upgrading of Central Fish Market at Bikenibeu
	3.Upgrading of integrated fish market in Bairiki
TACL	Installation and operation of aggregate washer
	Installation and operation of an oxygen generator
	Production of an updated maintenance plan for LC Tekimarawa, crushing plants, heavy plants/machineries, and vehicles
	Implementation of "Strategic Action 4.3" wholesaler for construction materials" by identifying overseas suppliers and to start ordering
Marawa Board	Secure a soft loan through submission of a cabinet paper for i. the purchase of a cutter-suction dredger ii. Purchase of equipment needed for the importation of scories from New Caledonia iii. Establishment of TACL branch on Kiritimati Island
	Signing of the Joint Venture Agreement between the Marawa Board, Government of Kiribati and the JDSM
Marawa Board	Study tour to Cook Island to learn governance arrangements of their deep mineral industry





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& Ocean Resources**