

Marianas Visitors Authority

Citizen-Centric Report Fiscal Year 2025

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WHO WE ARE

Pursuant to Public Law 11-15 Section 5, Public Law 13-5, Public Law 13-9, and Executive Order 03-02 of March 10, 2003, the Marianas Visitors Authority shall promote the orderly growth of the CNMI tourism industry. It is our mission to promote and develop The Marianas as a premier destination of choice for visitors from throughout the world while providing a maximum quality of life for our people. We nurture and encourage cultural interchange and environmental sensitivity for visitors' enjoyment and for our children's children.

Headed by a 9-member Board of Directors, the MVA is led by a Managing Director and Deputy Managing Director, along with division managers in Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. As of September 2025, the MVA had 28 employees: 20 full-time and one part-time employee in Saipan, three full-time employees in Tinian, and four in Rota.

The MVA has 11 divisions:

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|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Executive | 7. Product Development |
| 2. Accounting | 8. Research |
| 3. Marketing | 9. Tour Guide Certification |
| 4. HR & Admin Services | 10. Rota Field Office |
| 5. Community Projects | 11. Tinian Field Office |
| 6. Procurement | |

The MVA operates representation offices in its major source markets. In FY 2025, the South Korea and Japan offices were responsible for working with tour agents and media to create Marianas tour products, coordinate events to showcase the Marianas, generate positive exposure through media outlets and social media influencers, execute targeted ad campaigns, implement digital media strategies, and more.

The MVA also organizes annual signature events through its Community Projects division to attract visitors and media to the destination. Product Development undertakes destination enhancement projects. Tour Guide Certification tests and certifies Official Marianas Guides. Research compiles monthly statistics of visitors arriving into The Marianas. Field offices head operations in Tinian and Rota.

MVA IN FY 2025

The Marianas Visitors Authority supports tourism, the sole economic driver of The Marianas. It is our duty to aggressively promote The Marianas and attract visitors to our islands by initiating marketing strategies through our off-shore offices.

Visitor arrivals to The Marianas decreased 32% in Fiscal Year 2025 (October 2024-September 2025) compared to the prior year due to a sequence of regional events impacting air service from our primary source markets, South Korea and Hong Kong/China. The Marianas received a total of 160,640 visitors this year compared to 237,498 visitors in FY 2024 and 424,858 visitors in FY 2019.

In terms of market share, South Korea comprised 69% with multiple daily flights from Seoul throughout the year, although the flight schedule was sporadic. Twice-weekly flights from Hong Kong were suspended for several months due to the abrupt halt in CNMI Economic Vitality & Security Travel Authorization Program processing. As a result, China accounted for only 7% of the market share. Guam had 8% market share, and Japan and USA each had 7% market share, with 3x weekly flights from Tokyo-Narita and daily flights from Guam.

Visitor arrivals from Korea were 37% lower compared to FY 2024 at 111,560 visitors. Visitor arrivals from Japan dropped 14% to 10,864 visitors. Both markets continued to be stymied by a strong U.S. Dollar, while Japan market recovery was also hampered by lower outbound travel compared to pre-pandemic. China—which had comprised about 40% of visitor arrivals before the pandemic with direct flights from five cities in mainland China—registered 10,764 visitors, 37% lower than FY 2024 and 62% lower than FY 2019. Guam registered 11,987 visitors. Visitors from USA (excluding Guam) registered 10,449 arrivals.

Air service was the top challenge facing the Marianas tourism industry in FY 2025, making stabilization and expansion of airlift the top priority for the MVA. In addition to an unfavorable exchange rate with Korea and Japan, other airline challenges included global production delays in the delivery of new aircraft, an over-supply of seats to Guam under mandates of the Korean Air-Asiana Airlines merger, and higher profitability for routes to non-U.S. Dollar destinations. Equally, the need to improve the on-island visitor experience also become a priority in order for The Marianas to remain a competitive destination.



WHAT DID 2025 LOOK LIKE?

AIRLIFT URGENCIES, REFOCUS ON VISITOR EXPERIENCE

MARKETING HIGHLIGHTS



- Maintained continual communication and negotiations with airlines toward stabilizing or expanding flight service
- Generated over \$20M in unpaid ad value in Japan through extensive TV, web, and print coverage
- Gained over \$4M in combined PR value with TV documentary and celebrity YouTube programs in Korea, including “Choi-Da Cheese” and “My Child’s Private Life.”
- Gained \$1M in PR value with Hey!Travel magazine’s feature of actor Gong Myung in The Marianas, covered on 60+ print pages and multiple digital stories
- Leveraged influencer-generated posts, videos and tagged content to promote Taste of The Marianas International Food Festival, Hell of The Marianas, Saipan Marathon, and other attractions
- Appointed actress UIE as Official Sports Ambassador promoting Saipan Marathon and pro golfer and former Saipan resident BK Park as Official Golf Ambassador
- Partnered with six major travel agencies (Hana Tour, Mode Tour, Very Good Tour, YB Tour, NOL-UNIVERSE, E-Tourtalk) in Korea on co-op promotions, influencer collaborations, and live commerce sales
- Launched the new campaign “This is The Marianas” at the Marianas Day event with 166 attendees, including 22 journalists, 19 influencers, and 125 partners
- Launched the Marianas Revival Project to re-establish ties of government, business, tourism, and cross-cultural exchange with Japan, with special emphasis on historic connections with Hiroshima
- Strengthened brand visibility and highlighted Marianas attractions in Japan at Tourism Expo Japan 2024, Asia Dive Expo Japan 2024, Marine Diving Fair 2025, Toyota Thanks Fair 2024, and HIS Grand Thanks Day 2025, and in Korea at The Marianas Night, Brand USA events, and Seoul International Travel Fair 2025, where the MVA won the Best Booth Award
- Implemented an integrated marketing campaign in partnership with Hong Kong Airlines and travel agencies. to promote Saipan across Hong Kong and mainland China
- Conducted multi-platform collaborations with major Chinese online travel and social media platforms including Fliggy, Ctrip, Tongcheng, Tuniu, Xiaohongshu, Douyin, and WeChat Channels
- Collaborated with key influencers (e.g., Honey 夫妇要去野) to showcase authentic travel experiences and promote The Marianas hospitality and attractions on Xiaohongshu.
- Operated official Instagram, Facebook, NAVER Blog, YouTube, TikTok, KakaoTalk and other channels, growing combined followers and engagement through targeted posts, events and giveaways.



EVENTS

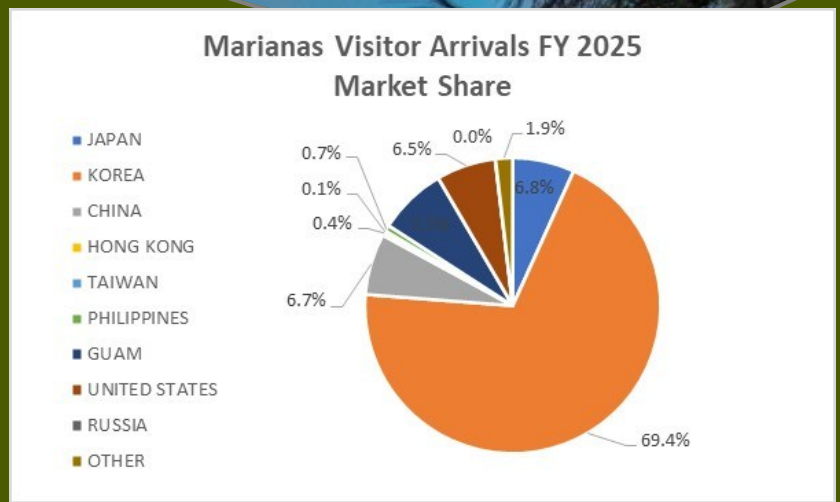
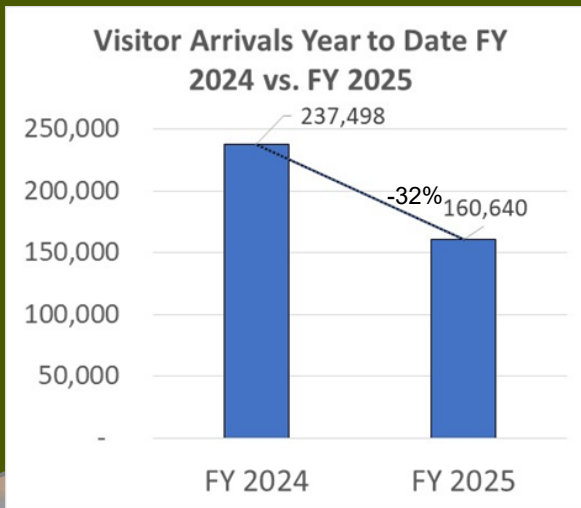
- Celebrated the 20th Annual Christmas in The Marianas with special events in Saipan, Tinian, and Rota.
- Attracted 150 registrants from 10 countries and territories to the 2nd Annual Rota Marathon, nearly double the # of registrants in the inaugural race.
- Featured a hot pepper eating contest, Pika Fun Run, cooking contest, and more at the 21st Annual Tinian Hot Pepper Festival in February
- Attracted 512 registrants from nine countries to Skechers Saipan Marathon 2025 in March while incorporating the first-ever festival at the finish line, featuring food vendors, entertainment, awards, and more.
- Marked Marianas Tourism Month in May 2025 with a proclamation signing, clean ups, radio trivia, social media photo contests, “Tourist for a Day” tours, and more
- Celebrated the 26th Annual Taste of The Marianas International Food Festival & Beer Garden every weekend in May with 27 food and beverage vendors, the Inas’ Kitchen International Food Challenge, Subway Sandwich Challenge, the HANMI-NMTEch Chefs Competition, free taste testing and more

DESTINATION ENHANCEMENT

- Maintained twenty-two tourist sites on Tinian and 17 sites on Rota year round
- Continued Garapan Area Trash Collection with daily trash collection and shoulder sweeping in the main tourist district
- Commissioned public art signage for Governor Inos S. Inos Peace Park.
- Opened an Invitation to Bid for construction of improvements at Last Command Post, Bird Island Lookout, and Suicide Cliff.
- Began construction of airport welcome signs on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota
- Reconvened discussion with the Office of Grants Management on improvements to Banzai Cliff, with final design nearing completion
- Water blasted and cleared walkways at the Okinawan and Japanese peace memorials in Marpi ahead of annual commemoration ceremonies
- Replaced Rota directional signboards, constructed benches for public agencies, and built a display case at Rota airport
- Fabricated and repaired direction signs on Tinian as needed and in coordination with the U.S. military on military-leased land
- Launched the pitch competition Mafuti Tank, supporting new products, services or experiences aligning with the MVA’s objective to improve the visitor experience



VISITOR ARRIVALS



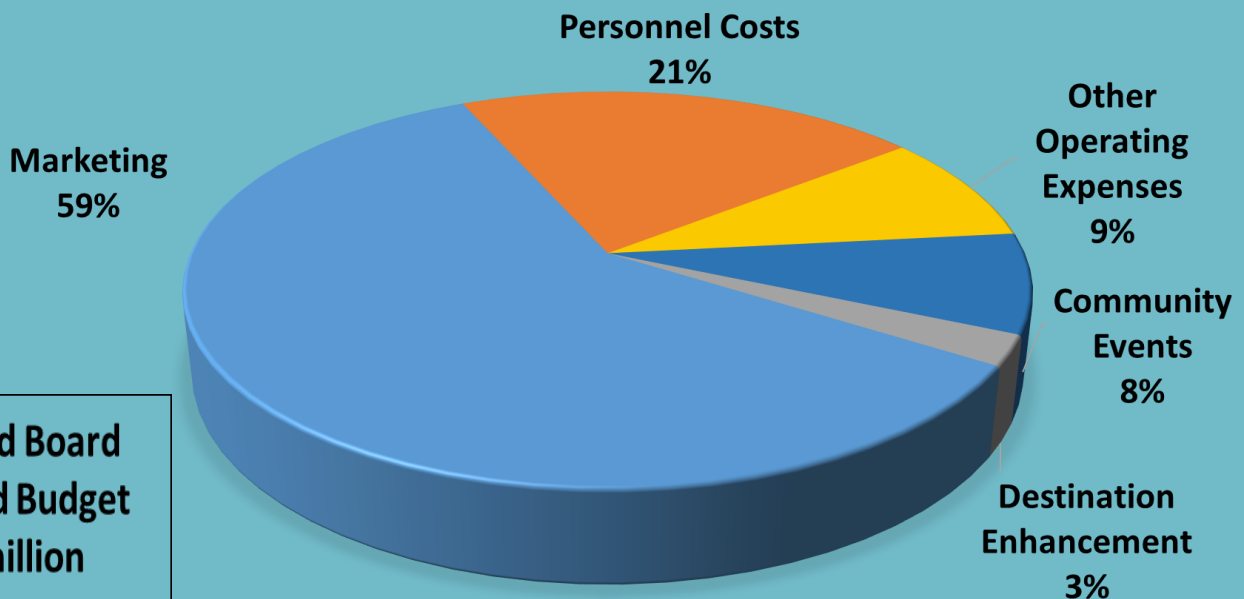
OPERATING BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025

Where does the money come from?

The CNMI Budget Appropriations Act of FY 2025 provided a majority of the MVA's budget through Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT). From the tax collected, 80% is given to the MVA and 20% to other agencies. After HOT appropriations to other agencies in FY 2025, the MVA's share was 72.4%. Other funding sources in FY 2025 included the Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery grant from Northern Marianas Housing Corp. and U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) grant.

What are our funding priorities?

MVA FY2025 Expense Distribution



**Amended Board
Approved Budget
\$6.7 million**

WHAT IS NEXT?

CHALLENGES AND PLANS

DEVELOPING MARKETS

- Advance international development through airline and travel trade partnerships, pursuing market diversification, and negotiating new route developments

PROMOTING THE MARIANAS

- Launch a comprehensive global brand and related marketing strategies, providing a clear and unique identity for The Marianas that resonates with the worldwide travel community
- Implement a lean, ROI-driven marketing strategy under financial constraints, aligning both local and international efforts with the new global brand
- Increase brand awareness, boost visitor arrivals, enhance visitor satisfaction, and foster cultural and community pride.
- Execute quarterly social media and digital contests, influencer collaborations, and seasonal global campaigns across major source markets.
- Highlight The Marianas' unique culture and heritage through partnership with non-profits like 500 Sails and agencies like Dept. of Community & Cultural Affairs, develop WWII heritage features, and introduce new cultural tourism products

ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS

- Strengthen community engagement: increase social media engagement, cooperate closely with Marianas Tourism Education Council targeting youth, distribute a monthly e-newsletter to MVA members and the legislature, host pop-up booths, and conduct small business co-ops.

ENHANCING EVENTS

- Annual signature events will be enhanced and new niche-market events will be explored with emphasis on increasing ROI and global brand alignment.

IMPROVING THE EXPERIENCE

- Provide staff training on the new global brand
- Support the launch of new visitor products, services, and experiences developed by winners of the Mafuti Tank pitch competition
- Establish a visitor feedback system, including scannable QR codes on Rota
- In collaboration with the Northern Marianas College Community Development Institute, re-establish the Tour Guide Certification Program training program with slight modifications mirroring Lute principles while maintaining key content areas as required by law
- Launch a multilingual platform that allows visitors to book activities and experiences, supporting local businesses

BEAUTIFYING OUR ISLANDS

- Break ground on improvements to Bird Island Look-out, Suicide Cliff, and Last Command Post, with completion in FY 2027
- Complete airport welcome signs on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota by Christmas 2025
- Begin construction on the Banzai Cliff Improvement Project, to be completed in 2027
- Seek federal funding to make improvements to Tinian Suicide Cliff, including new railings, pavilions, lighting, and other amenities.
- Enhance signage, including adding QR codes to Rota site signage linking to more information on the official MVA website.
- Clean and paint Sabana Peace Memorial Park



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