Marianas Visitors Authority

MARIANAS VISITORS AUTHORITY

Citizen-Centric Report Fiscal Year 2026

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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 (MVA) 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 2026, the MVA had 27 employees: 26 full-time and one part-time employee in Saipan, four full-time employees in Tinian, and four in Rota.

The MVA has 11 divisions:

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

The MVA operates representation offices in its major source markets. In FY 2026, South Korea and Japan offices were responsible for working with tour agents and media to create Marianas tour products, coordinate events to showcase the destination, generate positive exposure through media outlets and social media influencers, execute targeted ad campaigns, implement digital media strategies, and stay connected with our airline partners and other stakeholders.

The MVA also organizes annual signature events through its Community Projects division to attract visitors and media coverage. Product Development undertakes destination enhancement projects. Tour Guide Certification trains and certifies Official Marianas Guides to improve the quality and safety of visitor experiences. Research compiles monthly statistics of arriving visitors, including arrivals, performance by airlines and markets, visitor profiles and historical data. Field offices on Tinian and Rota support tourism programs, activities, events, and destination operations in cooperation with local municipalities.

MVA IN FY 2026

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

Visitor arrivals to The Marianas decreased 38% in Fiscal Year 2026 (October 2025-September 2026) compared to the prior year due to a sequence of regional and int'l events impacting air service from our primary source markets. The Marianas received a total of 99,476 visitors this year compared to 160,640 visitors in FY 2025 and 237,498 in FY 2024.

Visitor arrivals from Korea were 52% lower compared to FY 2025 at 53,726 visitors. China—which had comprised about 40% of visitor arrivals before the pandemic with direct flights from five cities in mainland China—registered 12,927 visitors, 20% lower than FY 2025. Visitor arrivals from Japan dropped 22% to 8,437 visitors. Visitors from USA (excluding Guam) registered 11,806 arrivals (13% more), while Guam registered 8,304 visitors (31% lower).

In terms of market share, South Korea comprised 54% with a sharp reduction in the number of direct flights from Seoul. China accounted for 13% market share, having twice weekly flights from Hong Kong. USA had 12% market share. Japan had 9% with 3x weekly flights from Tokyo-Narita, and Guam had 8% market share with daily flights. Twice weekly flights from Manila launched in March. All international flights were temporarily suspended following Super Typhoon Sinlaku in April, contributing significantly to the drop in annual arrivals.

Air service remained the top challenge facing the tourism industry in FY 2026, making stabilization and expansion of airlift the top priority for the MVA. In additional to an unfavorable exchange rate with Korea and Japan, other challenges included rising fuel costs, an over-supply of seats to Guam under mandates of the Korean Air-Asiana Airlines merger, and a continued Japanese preference for domestic travel.

The Marianas Far From Ordinary global brand was launched, providing a commonwealth-wide focal point for both marketing and the development of enhanced visitor products, services, and experiences.

WHAT DID 2026 LOOK LIKE?

CONTINUED AIRLIFT URGENCIES, LAUNCH OF MARIANAS GLOBAL BRAND

MARKETING HIGHLIGHTS

- Launched the Marianas Far From Ordinary global brand in November 2025, creating a unified, commonwealth-wide focal point for marketing and destination enhancement around the brand pillars of environment, culture, history, adventure, diversity, and sustainability
- Marianas Far From Ordinary named Global Destination Brand of the Year at the Brand of the Year 2026 Awards in Seoul
- Based on social media engagement of the destination, Marianas named the Western Pacific's #1 Mountain Destination and #2 Beach Destination by TripScount
- Met in person with travel trade partners, media reps, and consumers at Tourism Expo Japan 2026 in Tokyo. Approximately 180,000 attendees and world-wide exhibitors joined the event.
- Retained professional golfer Bo-Kyeom "BK" Park as Marianas Sports Ambassador as she climbing the ranks of the Korea Ladies Professional Golf Association (KLPGA) Tour
- Promoted the Marianas as a premier winter golf destination with projects including JTBC Golf show "JTBC LaoLao Bay Invitational Season 1 The Memories" and two familiarization (FAM) tours in July that gave Korean travel industry representatives firsthand exposure to Marianas' leisure offerings
- Participated in 2026 Brand USA Korea & Japan Mission alongside other U.S. destinations and attractions
- Signed an MOU with Good Choice, one of Korea's leading travel and leisure platforms, to launch joint marketing initiatives aimed at increasing arrivals to the Marianas
- Touted the Marianas' Far From Ordinary attractions as a sports and adventure destination at Inside Run W Festival in Ilsan, South Korea, the only tourism office to participate
- Promoted edu-tourism and English camps to overseas families, travel agencies/tour operators, and institutions
- Joined Marine Diving Fair in Japan, winning 3rd Place as Best Overseas Diving Country

TOUR GUIDE CERTIFICATION

- Certified three tour companies and five tour guides. Certification for an additional 24 tour guides and nine tour companies to be conducted in partnership with the Northern Marianas College Community Development Institute was postponed due to Super Typhoon Sinlaku,



EVENTS

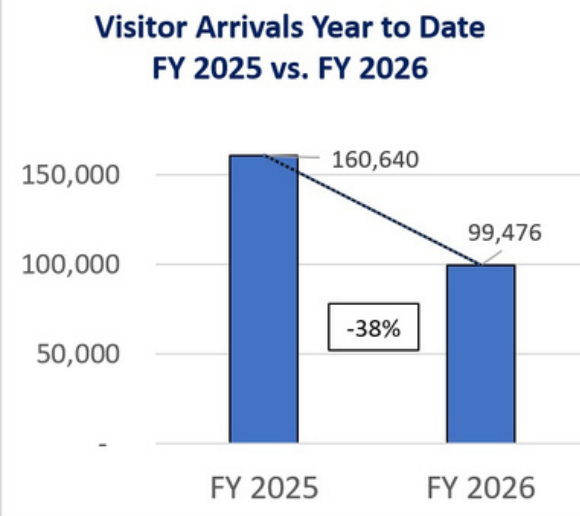
- Celebrated the 21st Annual Christmas in The Marianas across Saipan, Tinian, and Rota
- Organized SWIM in The Marianas with the Guangzhou Tianhe District Swimming Asso.
- Held the first-ever Saipan Sugarcane Railroad Journey Run 81KM with Sports Aid Japan
- Attracted 101 registrants to run with nature at the 3rd Annual Rota Marathon
- Featured a hot pepper eating contest, Pika Fun Run, cooking contest, and more at the 22nd Annual Tinian Hot Pepper Festival
- Attracted 782 registrants from 20 countries and territories to SKECHERS Saipan Marathon 2026 with the first-ever Saipan Marathon Business Expo
- Organized the Paseo de Marianas Area Cleanup before the relaunch of international flights
- Partnered with Marianas Tourism Education Council to engage students at every public school
- Due to Super Typhoon Sinlaku, Marianas Tourism Month and the Taste of the Marianas International Food Festival were cancelled.

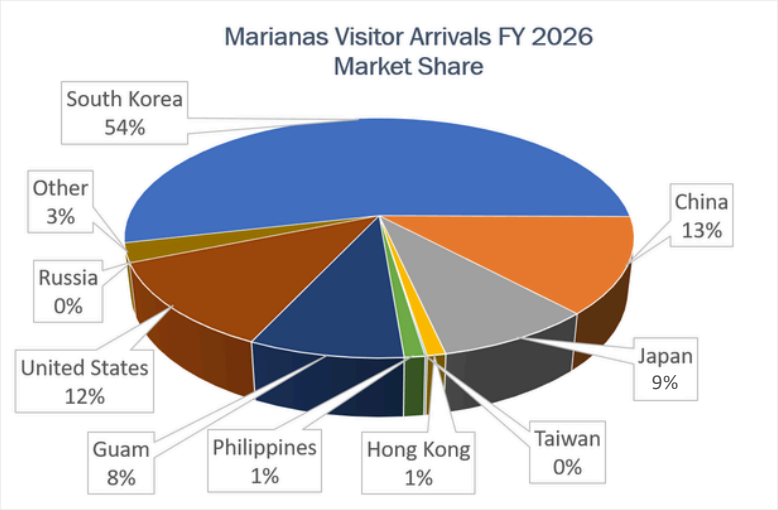
DESTINATION ENHANCEMENT



- Maintained twenty-two tourist sites on Tinian and 17 sites on Rota yearround
- Broke ground on improvements at Last Command Post, Bird Island Lookout, and Suicide Cliff
- Unveiled airport welcome signs on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota
- Reopened Bird Island Trail with Dept. of Fire and Emergency Medical Services; met with Saipan hiking expert on the development of hiking trail experiences
- Constructed pitching bullpen at Oleai Sport Complex and attracted South Korean National Baseball Team training
- Completed design of safety and comfort upgrades at Banzai Cliff for both historic commemoration and stargazing
- Renovated Songsong sports facility restroom, partnered in building community planter boxes, and assisting government departments with groundskeeping on Rota
- Awarded five start-ups in inuagural Mafuti Tank competition
- Prepared sites for peace memorial ceremonies on Tinian and Saipan
- Renovated Tinian office to include conference rooms and storage container

VISITOR ARRIVALS



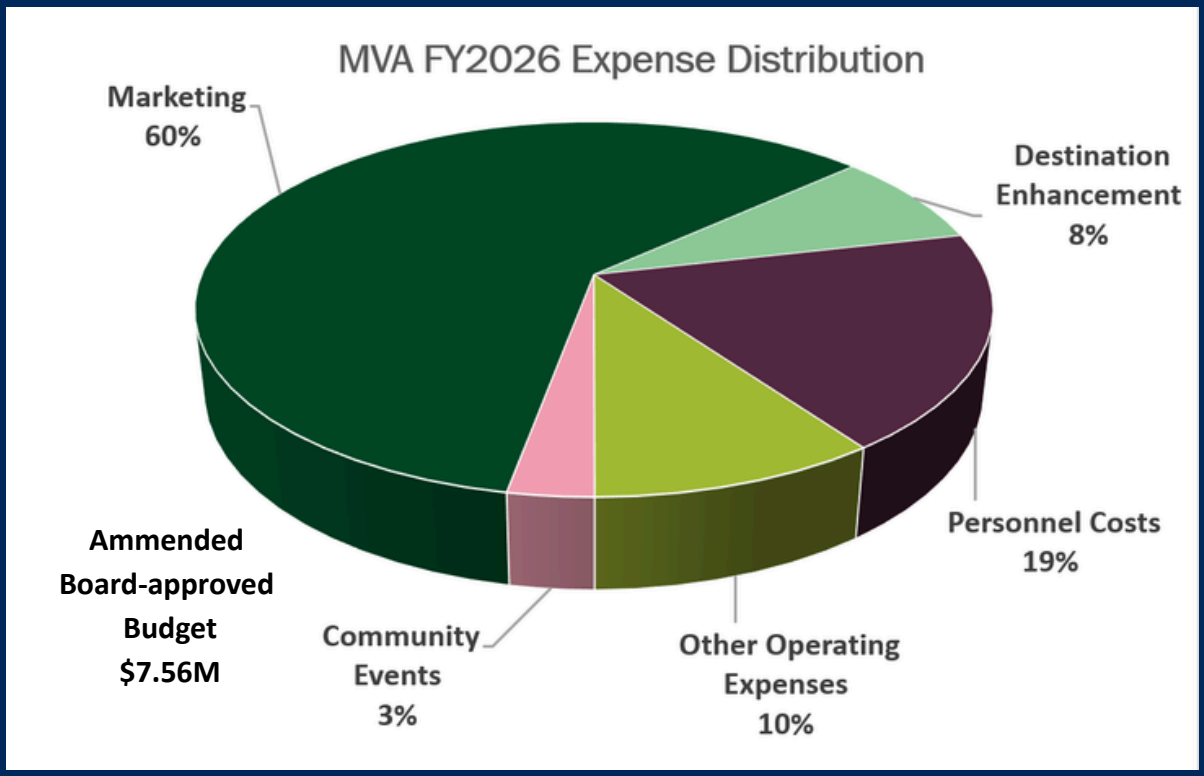


OPERATING BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026

WHERE DOES THE MONEY COME FROM?

The CNMI Budget Appropriations Act of FY 2026 provided a majority of the MVA's budget through the Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT). Of the collected tax, 80% is given to the MVA and 20% to other agencies. After HOT appropriations to other agencies in FY 2026, the MVA's share was 64%. Other funding sources in FY 2026 included the Community Development Block Grant-Discovery Recovery grant from the Northern Marianas Housing Corp. and U.S. Economic Development Administration grant.

WHAT ARE OUR FUNDING PRIORITIES?



WHAT IS NEXT?

CHALLENGES AND PLANS

CHALLENGES

- Tourism is a volatile industry. Challenges in FY 27 include the temporary suspension of the Economic Vitality & Security Travel Authorization Program, unfavorable currency exchange rates with key source markets, rising fuel costs, deterioration of tourism infrastructure, fierce destination competition, and more.

DEVELOPING MARKETS

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

PROMOTING THE MARIANAS

- Strengthen the Korea market through seasonal promotions and travel trade partnerships, highlighting sports, wellness, and leisure travel
- Support recovery in Japan through digital promotion, travel trade engagement, and the Meet the Marianas Seminar
- Develop Philippines market by building destination awareness and strengthening cooperation with airlines and travel trade partners
- Support China and Hong Kong market development while adapting promotions to travel conditions and air service availability.
- Expand the Marianas Far From Ordinary brand through targeted promotion of the culture, natural beauty, and unique experiences of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota.
- Work with local businesses and tourism partners to expand cultural, sports, wellness, and educational travel opportunities.

ENHANCING EVENTS

- Enhance annual signature events and explore new niche-market events with a strong focus on maximizing return on investment (ROI), increasing visitor spending, and strengthening global destination branding

IMPROVING THE EXPERIENCE

- Support and promote the expansion of products, services, and experiences aligning with the Marianas Far From Ordinary pillars of environment, culture, history, adventure, diversity, and sustainability
- Solicit input from local artists and practioners on the creation of a strategic plan for the Commonwealth Council for Arts & Culture divion; promote opportunities for artists and cultural practitioners to connect with visitors
- Collaborate with Regenerative Tourism partners to curate an immersive experience that includes a cultural component
- Assist with the development and launch of Mafuti Tank winner E's Custom Furniture woodworking class
- Resume certification activities of the Tour Guide Certification Program by the second quarter of FY 2027
- Open a permanent MVA office and visitors center at the historic Japanese lighthouse
- Prioritize Far From Ordinary indigenous culture in performances, culinary, attire, and greetings

BEAUTIFYING OUR ISLANDS

- Maintain 17 historic and scenic sites on Rota and 22 sites on Tinian
- Complete Marpi Tourist Sites Improvement Project in Summer 2027, covering Last Command Post, Bird Island Lookout, and Suicide Cliff
- Begin construction on the Banzai Cliff Improvement Project, to be completed in 2028
- On Rota, renovate Sabana Peace Memorial and Tonga Cave stairway and plant more flowers and fruit trees at sites
- Assist the Dept. of Public Works with Forbidden Island trail and lookout improvements
- Reopen and enhance Long Beach Interpretive Trail, Masalok Trail, Ginoza Trail, and others.
- On Tinian, create a Botanical and Limestone Garden in Tinian to include Chamorro medicinal & herbal plants; Reconstruct the Suicide Cliff concrete view wall and install railings; install railings at Japanese Canon Barcinas Bay

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