

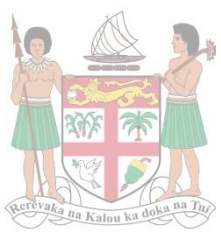


National Transport Infrastructure Consultative Forum

Government Shipping Franchise Scheme (GSFS)

Presenter: Ralph. Lalabalavu

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OVERVIEW

DoT- Advising on strategic planning and monitoring transport sector developments.

Ensuring regular, reliable, and affordable maritime transport to Fiji's outer islands where commercial viability is low

SIGNIFICANCE



Enhancing social and economic inclusion



Supporting national development and trade



Ensuring safe and consistent passenger and cargo movement

Strengthening connectivity between the mainland and maritime islands





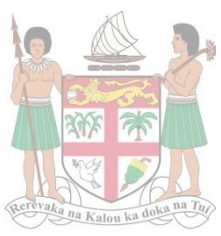
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- *Evolution of Operations: 2018–2025.*
 - *Operator Consolidation:* A strategic reduction from seven (7) operators in 2018 to four (4) in 2025 has improved compliance and oversight efficiency.
 - *Budgetary Allocation* \$3.7m
 - *Contract management*
 - *Vessel Modernization: 2018–2022:* Used "convertible" vessels with limited speed and capacity.
 - *2023–2025:* Transitioned to modern, faster, purpose-built passenger vessels, enhancing safety and comfort.



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Current Landscape

Monthly Service: Currently delivers 15 franchise trips across 10 specific routes.

Route Coverage: Includes critical lifelines like Rotuma, Yasawa, Lower Southern Lau, and the Beqa-Yanuca-Vatulele expansion (added in 2021).

Operational Structure: A Public-Private Partnership (PPP) where the government funds the gap to ensure accessibility

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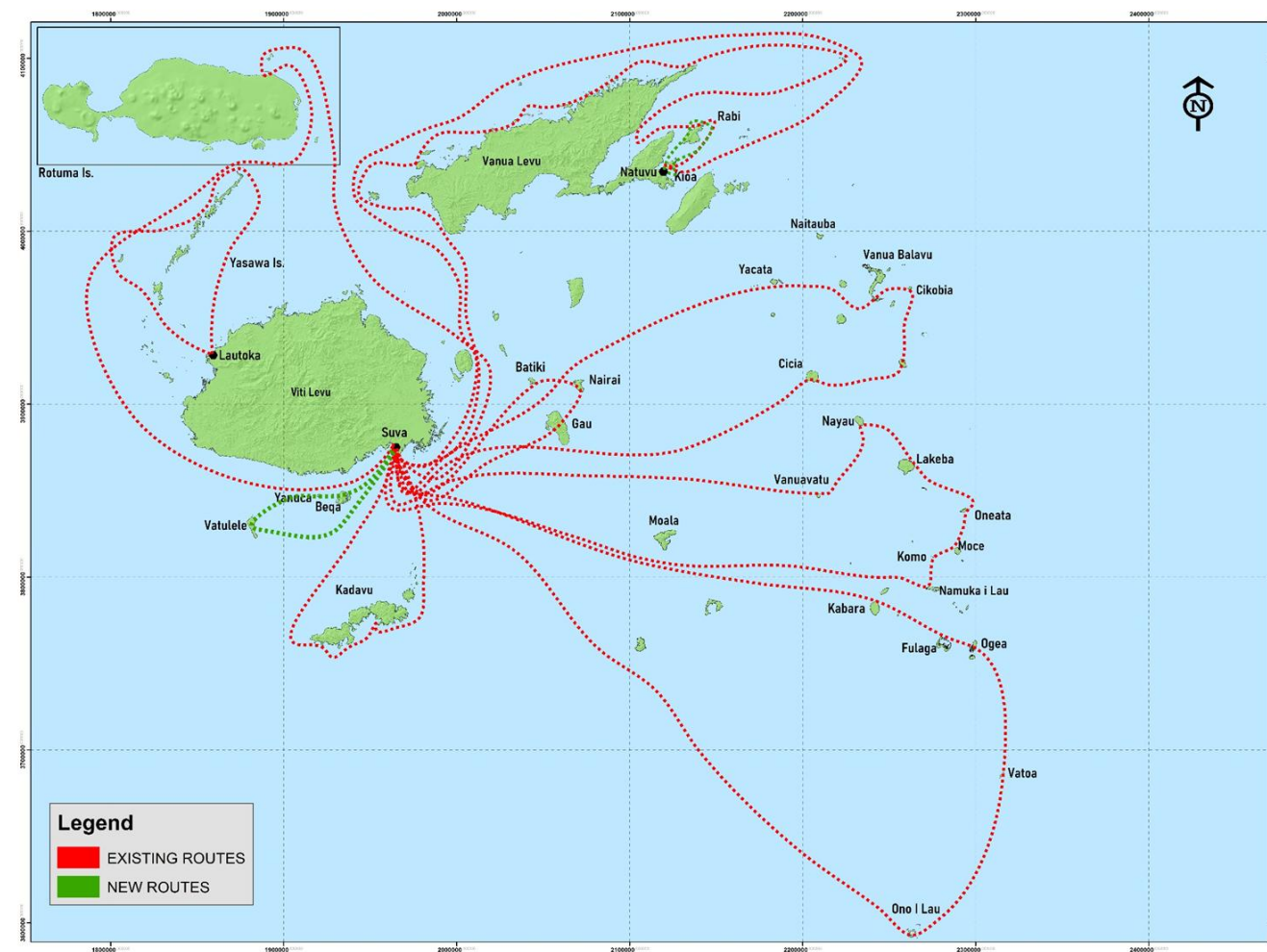




ESTABLISHED FRANCHISE ROUTES



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Performance Metrics – Cargo & Passengers

- Total Volume (2018–2025): Passengers: 135,509
- Total Cargo: 48,856.49 tons total.
- Growth Trend: 906 tons in 2018 to 2,819 tons in 2025.





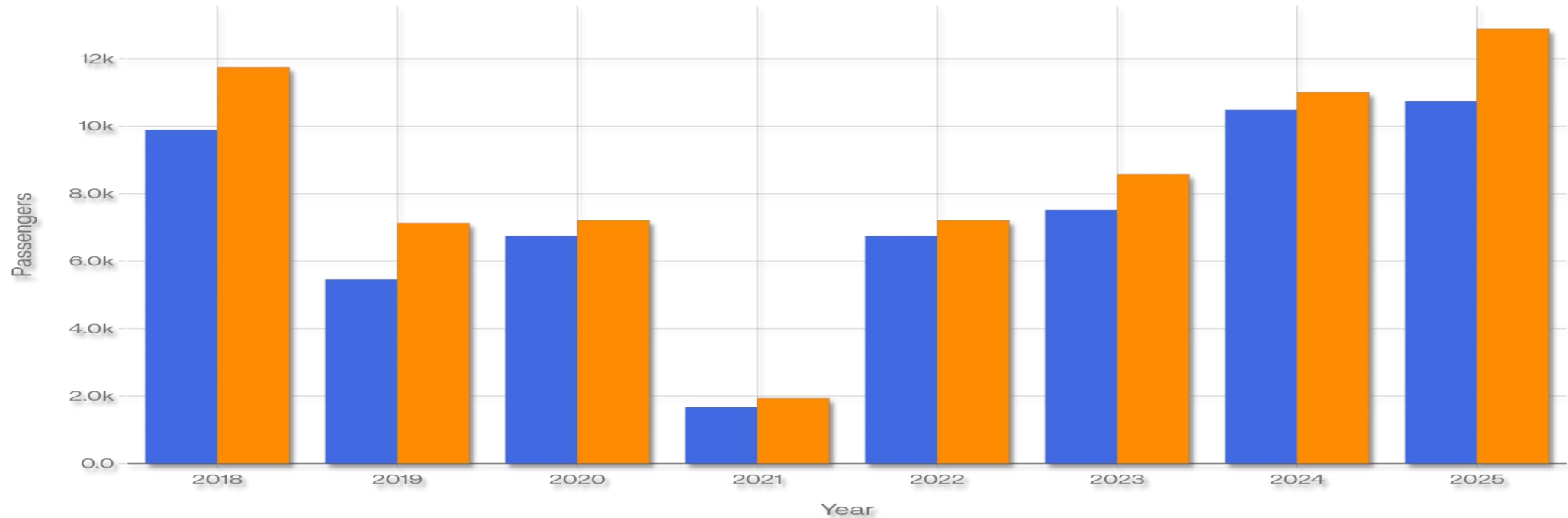
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Passenger Movements Recovering from 2021 Low (2018-2025)

Outward passengers consistently exceed inward across all years

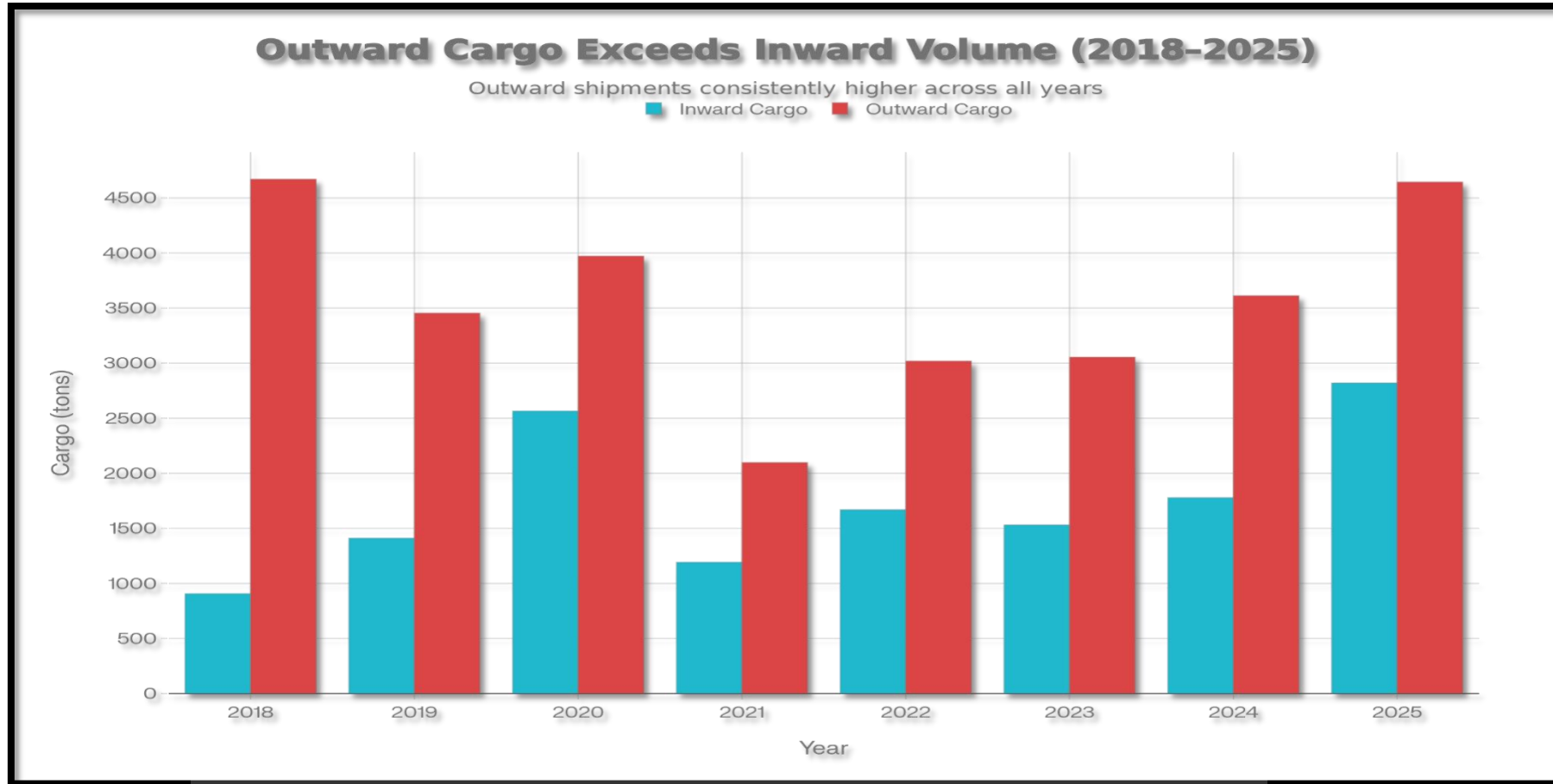
■ Inward Pass. ■ Outward Pass.



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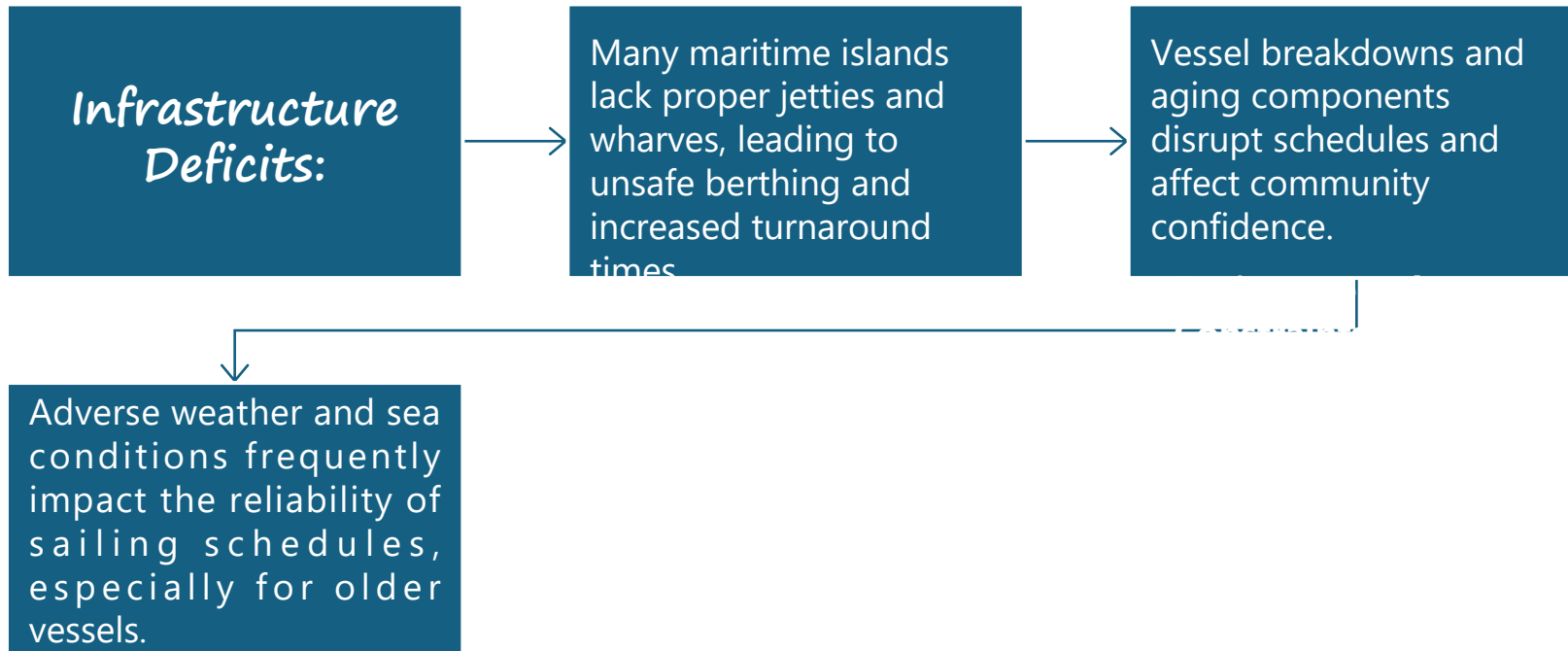


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Critical Operational Challenges



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Strategic Reform Roadmap



From Subsidy to Sustainability:

Transitioning toward performance-based contracts that reward efficiency and reliability.



Infrastructure Linkage:

Synchronizing shipping schedules with the rehabilitation of water transport infrastructure.



Green Transition:

Incentivizing the adoption of hybrid or fuel-efficient vessels to reduce long-term operating costs and carbon footprint





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Pipeline Projects & Future Outlook



Digital Integration

Using data to optimize route planning and monitoring.



Sustainability

Promoting environmentally sustainable maritime operations in line with national priorities.



Integrated Planning

Ensuring maritime projects are part of a broader intermodal transport strategy.





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Conclusion

- The Government Shipping Franchise Scheme (GSFS) is a key driver of social and economic inclusion for Fiji's remote maritime communities.
- The shift from seven to four operators, alongside modern purpose-built vessels and longer performance-based contracts, has strengthened safety, reliability, and fleet investment.
- Success depends on integrating infrastructure upgrades, green tech, and digital tools to build an inclusive, intermodal maritime network via continued partnerships