

Marine aggregation
Partnership in action: What are the Bright Spots?
Partnership Fact sheet

Name	Micronesia Challenge
When established	2006
Membership/ Governance/TNC role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Micronesia Challenge is a shared conservation commitment by the Chief Executives of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), the Republic of Palau, the U.S. Territory of Guam and the U.S. Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). They jointly discuss the MC's progress and endorse recommendations provided by the MC Steering Committee during the annual Micronesia Chief Executives Summit. The MC Steering Committee (MCSC) was established in early 2007 to oversee the regional coordination and implementation of the MC, and is made up of the five MC Focal Points (designated by the Chief Executives from each of the MC jurisdictions), the Executive Director of the Micronesia Conservation Trust, and the Chairman of the MC Regional Support Team, currently held by TNC's Micronesia Program Director. In November 2008, the Micronesia Chief Executives signed an agreement formally establishing the Micronesia Challenge Regional Office (MCRO) and awarding it the full legal status necessary to operate as an official, non-profit, intergovernmental agency. The agreement also gives the office the capacity to function as a semi-autonomous body under the auspices and direction of the MC Steering Committee. • TNC helped to establish and currently chairs the MC Regional Support team, an informal group of local, regional, international, and U.S. Federal agencies and organizations who work together to provide a higher level of support to partners in Micronesia in their efforts to implement the MC. As such, we sit on the MC Steering Committee and provide coordination support. We also focus our technical and financial support on capacity-building of our local partners, sustainable finance (e.g. giving \$3 million toward the MC endowment, along with another \$3 million pledged from Conservation International, to seed additional commitments of \$12 million from the Global Environment Facility and the MC countries), tracking progress toward achieving the goals of the MC, marketing and communications, and exploring innovative policies and practices in such critical areas as fisheries reform and watershed management.
Purpose	The MC commitment to effectively conserve at least 30% of the near-shore marine resources and 20% of the terrestrial resources across Micronesia by 2020, was initiated to sustain the island biodiversity of Micronesia in order to ensure a healthy future for the people of the region, protect their unique island cultures, and sustain the livelihoods of island communities.
Bright spot: Key result/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustained political will – over an eight year period, the MC has continued to thrive through numerous changes in elected leadership at the highest levels.

<p>achievement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrated progress toward achieving conservation and sustainable finance goals. • Peer learning networks, such as the Micronesians in Island Conservation (MIC) and the Pacific Islands Managed and Protected Areas Community (PIMPAC) contribute greatly to implementation success.
<p>Success factors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful cultivation / maintenance of at least 1-2 “Champions” among the Chief Executives, inclusion of the MC as an official committee within the existing framework of the Micronesia Chief Executives Summit, allowing for annual reporting in a venue guaranteed to have maximum participation by the Chiefs, and incentivizing sustained support for the MC through such strategies as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ keeping a global spotlight on successes and lessons learned ○ providing examples of successful activities to showcase to local constituents ○ steadily building the MC endowment, and demonstrating solid returns on investment (Note: no funds have yet been distributed as the corpus is allowed to continue to grow, but once mechanisms are in place for dissemination of interest income, this will also assist in maintaining support) ○ attracting other financial and technical support based on the large, regional scope of the MC • Establishment of the MC Measures Working Group, providing a forum to develop and test marine, terrestrial, and socio-economic indicators and methodologies, in order to track steady progress toward achieving the conservation goals. • Prior existence of peer learning networks, such as MIC and PIMPAC, really strengthened conservation efforts in the region through enhancing leadership and management capacity, and laid a solid foundation for the MC, and continue to contribute greatly to its success.
<p>Key learnings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although the MC has benefitted from sustained political will in the executive branch of government, we still need to better engage the legislative branch, especially as we work to advance new legislation in support of critical priorities such as establishing protected areas networks, sustainable finance, fisheries management, climate adaptation, payment for ecosystems services, etc. • We have recognized the need to raise awareness of the MC in local communities and have begun taking action to do this (e.g. Rare Pride MC cohort launched in July 2013, MC communications plans completed and are being implemented in all jurisdictions, results of monitoring data are being translated for local audiences, etc.) • The MC, because it is a politically recognized and government sanctioned initiative, contributes to the success of what is happening on the ground (e.g. through passing of legislation, enforcement, etc.), but it is essential to include non-government entities, which have a conservation purpose, to maximize effectiveness

