

5.1 Whistleblower Protection Policy and Procedure

The Micronesia Conservation Trust is committed to high standards of ethical, moral and legal business conduct. In line with this commitment and MCT's commitment to open communication, this policy aims to provide an avenue for employees, grantees, local partners and any individual to raise concerns, as well as provide reassurance that the individual will be protected from reprisals or victimization for whistle blowing. This whistle blowing policy is intended to cover protections for an individual if concerns are raised regarding MCT. This includes concerns regarding incorrect financial reporting and unlawful activity.

5.1.1 *Harassment or Victimization*

Harassment or victimization for reporting concerns under this policy will not be tolerated under any circumstance. Any Board member, employee or volunteer who is found guilty of such action will be terminated from MCT immediately in accordance with MCT's policy on termination. Victimization of whistleblowers is considered a Major Offence, making employees of such subject to immediate termination. Also, any grantee and/or contractor of MCT who is found guilty of such action will be suspended from doing business with MCT immediately.

5.1.2 *Confidentiality*

Every effort will be made to treat the complainant's identity with appropriate regard for confidentiality.

5.1.3 *Anonymous Allegations*

This policy encourages complainants to put their names to allegations because appropriate follow-up questions and investigation may not be possible unless the source of the information is identified. The confidentiality clause ensures that when a name is included in an allegation, it will remain anonymous to the best of MCT's ability. Concerns expressed anonymously will be explored appropriately, but consideration will be given to the:

- Seriousness of the issue raised;
- Credibility of the concern; and
- Likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

5.1.4 *Bad Faith Allegations*

Allegations in bad faith may result in disciplinary action and may be cause for termination from MCT. Examples of "bad faith allegations" may include accusations made against employees out of spite or malice or those intended to cover the accusers own fraudulent actions.

5.1.5 *Procedure: 1. Process for Raising a Concern*

- *Reporting*- The whistle blowing procedure is intended to be used for serious and sensitive issues. Such concerns, including those relating to financial reporting, unethical or illegal conduct, may be reported directly to the Executive Director at director@ourmicronesia.org or to P.O. Box 2177 Kolonia, FM 96941 or to 691-320-5670. Should the allegation involve the Executive Director, such concerns may be sent directly to the Chairman of the MCT Board of Trustees at TrusteeChair@ourmicronesia.org.
- *Timing* - The earlier a concern is expressed, the easier it is to take action.
- *Evidence* - Although the complainant is not expected to prove the truth of an allegation, s/he should be able to demonstrate to the person contacted that the report is being made in good faith.

5.1.6 *Procedure: 2. How the Report of Concern Will be Handled*

The action taken by MCT in response to a report of concern under this policy will depend on the nature of the concern. If it is directed at an employee or volunteer, the Executive Director shall receive information on each report of concern and take action as required in MCT Policies regarding the disciplinary process and respecting the employees' rights to the grievance process

as well. In cases where the complaint is directed to the Executive Director, the MCT Board Executive Committee shall receive information on each report of concern and follow up information on actions taken. When the complaint is directed against a member of the Board of Trustees, the Executive Director will assist with the formation of an ad hoc committee of the Board comprised of members of the Board not implicated in the allegation to take action on the complaint.

- *Initial Inquiries* - Initial inquiries will be made to determine whether an investigation is appropriate, and what form it should take. Some concerns may be resolved without the need for investigation.
- *Further Information* -The amount of contact between the complainant and the person or persons investigating the concern will depend on the nature of the issue and the clarity of information provided. Further information may be sought from or provided to the person reporting the concern. Activities that are not in line with MCT policy, including the Code of Business Conduct; or Other activities, which otherwise amount to serious improper conduct.