

STRATEGIC PLAN

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Mission Statement

To revive, promote, and preserve the maritime cultural traditions of the Mariana Islands through community engagement in canoe culture values and activities.



Vision Statement

The CNMI is enriched by a healthy, thriving native community that has successfully integrated traditional cultural values into modern life.



Historic Context

Over 5,000 years ago, the first Chamorros crossed a vast, unknown ocean to settle the 14 Chamorro islands. In these islands, they found everything an islander could want - high mountains and plateaus providing protection from the storms and sea, rich volcanic soil supporting lush tropical forests, freshwater lakes and streams, and an ocean teeming with life. Isolated by the distance from the rest of Oceania, the Chamorros thrived in their new home. Over thousands of years, their language changed, and their society developed in response to the environment. Their lives were centered around the forests and the ocean. Their gods were in the wind and the sea. They venerated their ancestors, kept their bones nearby, and they sometimes spoke to them, asking for help and guidance. Chamorro clans lived in villages of

extended family where wise women made important decisions, and strong men enforced them. Although conflicts between villages sometimes lead to skirmishes, there was no real war. The Chamorros lived for the most part in peace and good health in a paradise of light and land and ocean. It was in this paradise that they built and sailed beautiful, fast canoes.



In the 16th and 17th centuries, Europeans who came to the Chamorro islands marveled at what they saw. Hundreds of sailing canoes would meet their ships at sea, surrounding them, sailing circles around them at speeds that were 2 to 3 times greater than their fastest ships. In their own words...

"...their outrigger boats passed by our ship very quickly even though we were under full sail...they are like dolphins bounding from wave to wave." – Antonio Pigafetta, with Magellan's squadron, 1521

"We were no more than two leagues from [the island] when fifty or sixty proas under sail surrounded the fleet. These proas were furnished with lateen sails of palm mats and were as light as the wind...The day had scarcely begun when a great number of these proas appeared about us...more than four or five hundred around the ships..." – Legazpi aboard the San Pedro, 1565



"...the canoes were coming out from all sides to barter. There must have been over 200 canoes and aboard each two, three, four and five men...Their canoes are very beautiful and well made... they knew how to handle them well, sailing before the wind rather skillfully..." – Oliver van Noort, 1600



"The natives are very ingenious beyond any people in making boats...and therein they take great delight...I do believe they sail the best of any boats in the world. I did here for my own satisfaction try the swiftness of one of them...I do believe she would have run 24 mile an hour. It was very pleasant to see the little boat running along so swift by the other's side...The native Indians are no less dextrous in managing than in building these boats." – William Dampier, 1686



"..Islands of the Lateen Sails" [is] an appropriate name...on account of the great quantity of canoes that were seen to come out of these islands to the sea, all with sails - as soon as these islanders had seen our ship, that it seemed they covered the sea all around us...For a while they gave us great pleasure and a wonderful entertainment, to see their canoes so well made, of narrow boards painted in various colors and skillfully joined and laced together, in a fine and very beautiful form, so light that they looked like birds that fly in that sea..." – Carlettis, Italian traders aboard the San Pablo in 1596.

But it was all to end. In 1668, Spanish soldiers and missionaries established a permanent settlement on Guahan. In their arrogance, they set about the business of systematically destroying a culture and society that they considered had no right to exist. The Spanish colonial era brought near cultural genocide and epidemic diseases that reduced the population to about 2,000. The Chamorro way of life ended in 1698 when all the Chamorros living in the northern islands were rounded up and relocated to Guahan, leaving only the southern islands of Guahan and Luta inhabited. The Spanish banned the building and sailing of Chamorro canoes as a means of preventing the Chamorros from returning to their homes in the north.



In 1815, Carolinians from typhoon-devastated Satawal were granted permission by the Spanish governor to settle on Saipan. In 1885, worried that other European nations might establish colonies in the north, the Spanish encouraged Chamorros to resettle in the islands of Saipan, Tinian, and Luta with offers of land grants. Spanish colonial rule ended in 1898 with the conclusion of the Spanish-American War. Spain was forced to sell Guahan to the United States and was allowed to sell the islands north of Guahan to Germany. Early in World War I, Japan seized Germany's colonial possessions in the North Pacific including the islands north of Guahan. After the war the League of Nations mandated that the Northern Marianas become a protectorate under Japanese administration. Like Germany, Japan established economic enterprises in the Northern Marianas. More Carolinians came to the Marianas as laborers during the German and Japanese colonial eras and settled permanently in the Northern Marianas.

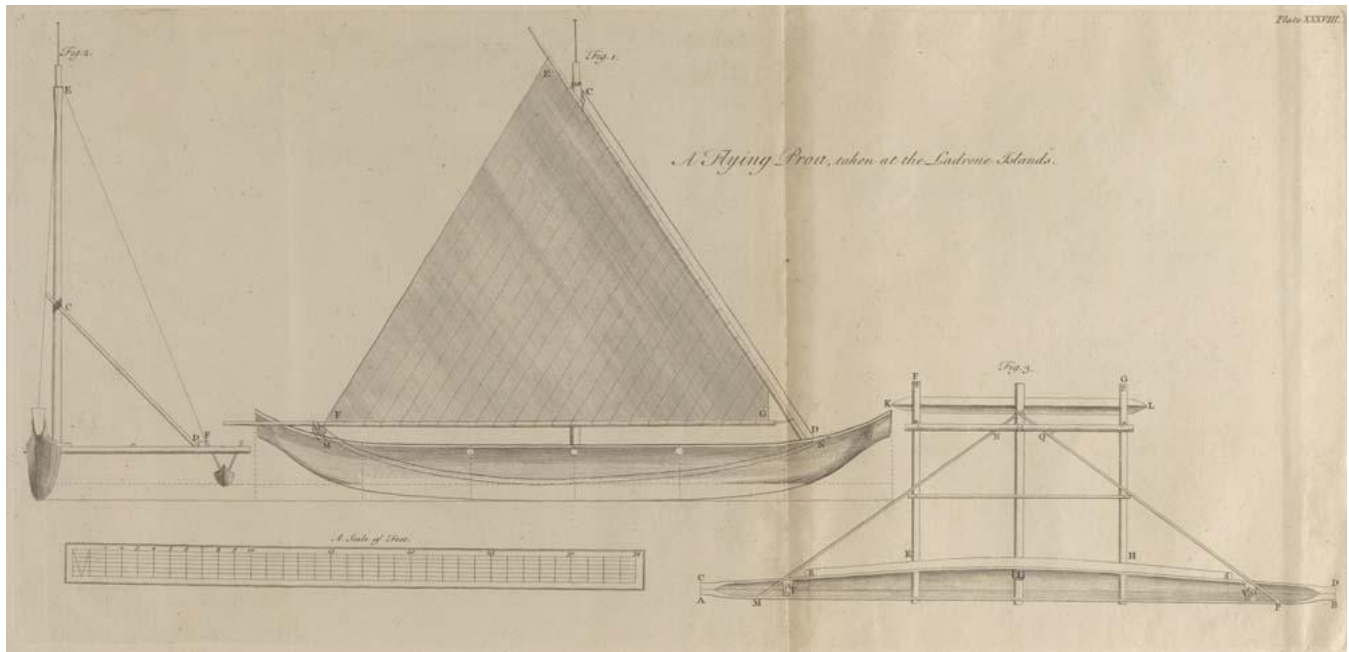


During World War II, Japan attacked and occupied Guahan, holding all the islands for 32 months. At the conclusion of World War II, Guahan returned to its colonial status under the United States while the Northern Marianas became part of the United Nations mandated *Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands* under United States administration. Between 1972 and 1975, the people of the Northern Marianas negotiated for commonwealth status with the United States, becoming the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) in 1978.

500 Sails Beginnings

In 2008, Sakman Chamorro Inc. (SCI), a CNMI non-profit founded by Pete Perez and Noel Quitigua, began to plan the build of the first large Chamorro voyaging canoe in over 265 years. The canoe would be based on the “Anson Drawing” of a 40-foot Chamorro canoe, called a *sakman* in Chamorro, that the English captured off Tinian in 1742. In 2009, SCI handed the project off to the nonprofit group, “CHE’LU” (Chamorro Hands in Education Links Unity) in San Diego, California. A team of builders led by Mario Reyes Borja, completed the build of 47-foot Chamorro *sakman Che’lu* from a redwood log in 2011. *Che’lu* cost in excess of \$150,000 and

took a year to build. Perez and Borja realized that in order for canoe culture to take hold, a more affordable and faster way of building canoes was needed. This led to the formation of 500 Sails in Saipan with the goal of building hundreds of fiberglass canoes based on the same Anson drawing.



Established in 2014 by Emma and Pete Perez, 500 Sails is a CNMI nonprofit and federally recognized 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to the revival, promotion, and practice of the maritime cultural traditions of the Mariana Islands. Through community engagement in canoe cultural values and maritime activities, 500 Sails is working to build a healthy, thriving native community that has successfully integrated traditional cultural values into modern life.

500 Sails' name was inspired by the arrival of the Spanish galleon *San Pedro* at Guam in 1565, when it was met at sea and escorted to the coast by hundreds of Chamorro sailing canoes. An observer on the *San Pedro* that day wrote that he counted 400-500 canoes around the ship. 500 Sails' goal is to see 500 canoes on the water in the Marianas again by 2030.

500 Sails operates out of two venues – a canoe house on the beach in Susupe, Saipan, and a boatyard and offices housed in a large warehouse in Lower Base, Saipan. Both the canoe house and the boatyard venues are provided by the CNMI Indigenous Affairs Office.

The canoe house, called “Guma Sakman” in Chamorro, is where the canoes are stored and where 500 Sails’ swim and sail programs take place. These include the *Adult Learn-to-Swim* program; the *Sirena Project*, that teaches swimming to women and teenage girls; the *Gamsun Project*, that prepares teens for lifeguard certification; and *Dolphin Club Saipan* that supports daily group swimming and produces open water swimming events. Canoe sailing programs include formal classroom and on-the-water training through the *Lalayak* program, and both canoe rides and informal sailing instruction in the *Sunday Sails* program that is led by a Carolinian Navigator.



The Guma Sakman is also 500 Sails' venue for cultural presentations, as well as youth summer camp swimming and sailing activities for students from Saipan, Tinian, and Luta. Such programs are conducted in partnership with organizations like 4-H Marianas, Northern Marianas College (NMC) CREES Family, Community, & Youth Development, NMC's Project PROA and Western Pacific Fisheries.

500 Sails also operates a fully tooled and provisioned teaching boatyard in a large warehouse in Saipan where canoes are built and maintained. The public is invited to learn and help build canoes in the boatyard under the guidance of skilled canoe builders called Sakman Leaders. Each semester, through the Public School System (PSS) Co-op Job Program, high school juniors and seniors work in the boatyard for 15 hours a week to gain employment experience while learning how to build traditional canoes.



The boatyard is also the venue for 500 Sails' Cultural Maritime Training Center, which offers professional and vocational maritime learning tracks that lead to culturally relevant and personally satisfying careers in the CNMI's emerging maritime industry.

500 Sails' community programs were largely initiated through a three-year Social & Economic Development Strategies (SEDS) grant from the Administration for Native Americans (ANA) under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Programmatic funding for the Cultural Maritime Training Center is also provided by an ANA SEDS grant.



Other projects, both upcoming and underway, include:

- The *Songsong Mâmi (Our Village)* project that immerses young artists in canoe building and sailing in order to inform the creation of new artwork, dances, and songs with canoe cultural themes of canoe building, sailing, voyaging, and traditional navigation.
- The construction of a Carolinian proa based on the design of *wa Mikael*, a traditional Carolinian voyaging canoe built on the island of Polowat.
- The design and construction of a regional fishing canoe designed specifically for local waters. This twin hulled sailing canoe will have an auxiliary outboard engine. The sail

power will reduce dependency on fossil fuels, while the auxiliary engine will allow the canoe to hold a position at sea for bottom fishing and to operate in windless conditions.

- The *Canoe Building Instructional Videos* multimedia project that provides detailed information on how to build a Chamorro canoe using fiberglass.
- The *Peskan Taddong* project that teaches adults and youth the art of open ocean deep bottom fishing.
- The *Introducing Navigation in the Public School System* project that brings traditional knowledge into the classrooms by teaching a song in the Carolinian language about the star compass, called “Pafiu”, that is fundamental to Carolinian traditional navigation.

Our Core Values

It is said throughout Oceania that “the canoe is the people.” Canoes and canoe culture are at the heart of all Pacific Island peoples, and canoe culture forms the foundation of 500 Sails’ core values.

Canoes brought our ancestors to these islands. They provided transportation between the islands, access to ocean fisheries, and enabled trade with distant islands. They brought people together as builders, sailors, fishermen, voyagers, and navigators. They shaped how people lived, what they ate, and what they saw and experienced.

Canoe culture is a way of life that embodies our relationship with the practice, our observation of the natural world, and how we behave. As on a canoe, we must work together, support each other, be respectful, responsible and reliable. We put the interests of the community before our own.



Canoe culture values include:

- *Respetu* – Showing respect to others, one’s self, and the environment
- *Responsibilidât* – Being a responsible and dependable presence in the lives of those around you.
- *Inafa’maolek yan Tipiyeew* - Maintaining harmony, resolving conflict, and taking care of one another for the common good.
- *Maolek Kotdura* – Making conscientious decisions that have value, worth, and merit.
- *Minagâhet* – Having consistent integrity of thoughts, words, and actions rooted in honesty.
- *Minesngon* – Having the willpower and firmness of purpose to reach our goals, despite the difficulty of the journey; perseverance.

Other Values

- *Maintaining Safety and Well-being* – Reducing the risk of threats and hazards to the community, resources and cultural assets; encompassing wellness in daily practice and behavior towards self and others.
- *Stewardship* – Taking responsibility for the planning and ethical management of our resources, environment and practices.
- *Spirituality* – Recognizing the interconnectedness of people, the land and the water over time, and being aware of the gifts and continuing influence of those who came before us. Being respectful of the sacredness of canoes and voyaging, and continuing the traditions, protocols, ceremonies, and chants that have been practiced for millennia. We recognize that spirituality is highly personal and are respectful of the beliefs and practices of others.



- *Resilience* – Persevering through challenges with a positive outlook and creative problem solving to perpetuate the practice of canoe culture.

Internal Analysis

A realistic analysis of internal resources is critical to strategic planning. The following core strengths and weaknesses tell us what resources we have to leverage now, and what we need to acquire or develop in order to best achieve our mission.



Strengths

- Diversity and inclusion in the Board of Directors (BOD) and Board Committee Membership
- The BOD has a broad range of skills and experience and is committed to the mission of the organization
- The BOD is committed to strategic planning and the ongoing assessment of the impact of the organization's activities
- 500 Sails enjoys strong support from the community. This includes financial support, community assets, and volunteers
- Strong partnerships with community organizations that support the mission of the organization
- Well established foundational programs that teach swimming, sailing, and canoe building
- Excellent and low-cost venues - boatyard and canoe house

Weaknesses

- New Board members are not provided an orientation on the organization
- Insufficient administrative infrastructure to facilitate the growth of the organization
- Limited capacity to secure financial and human resources
- Inconsistent staffing levels due to fluctuating funding

External Analysis

500 Sails will need to expand its partnerships, navigate political challenges, adapt to climate change, and develop a more secure funding base.



Opportunities

- Financial support from multiple departments within the CNMI government
- Hosting events to encourage participation in the organization's programs
- Participation in events hosted by partners to expand outreach
- Cultural workforce development
- Networking and establishing partnerships

Threats

- Typhoons that could damage assets and/or impact program activities

- Inconsistent funding
- Limited revenue streams
- The constantly changing local political environment creating challenges that can impede the progress of the organization in accomplishing the mission



Plan Goal

In formulating this 5-year strategic plan, 500 Sails strives:

- to expand and strengthen partnerships with the community, as it continues to be inclusive of all backgrounds;
to ensure economic stability so that programs and services are sustainable, efficient, and have a lasting presence in the community; and
- to fully implement its Cultural Maritime Training Center (CMTCC) in order to develop a thriving native presence in a growing maritime workforce.



Long Term Objectives

- I. SAILING COMMUNITY – Increase the number of sailors each year who sail regularly and practice canoe culture in their daily lives.

- II. CULTURAL MARITIME TRAINING CENTER (CMTTC) – Foster a community with an active and skilled maritime industry and workforce in which local Chamorros and Carolinians are highly successful participants that have successfully integrated traditional cultural values into modern life.

- III. COMMUNICATIONS – Increase awareness of 500 Sails and its collective impact on the community so as to ensure ongoing commitment and support by all key stakeholders in the CNMI through the collection and communication of the qualitative and quantitative results of programs in its marketing and public relations campaign.

- IV. PARTNERSHIPS – Develop, enhance, and secure local partnerships with the community, business, and governmental organizations in support of our mission as well as to develop regional and oceanic partnerships with cultural, seafaring and maritime organizations that will support and expand the activities which align with the mission of 500 Sails.

- V. SUSTAINABILITY – Develop and secure resources and assets that will ensure 500 Sails’ long-term survival.



SAILING COMMUNITY

SAILING COMMUNITY

Strategy: To engage with existing sailors and community members and develop connections with potential sailors.

Tactics:

- Increase outreach to the community by targeting youths and young adults.
- Increase the number of sailors by targeting health organizations who then can encourage participation to their patients so as to improve the health status of the community.
- Increase the number of available sailing canoes in the water throughout the Marianas.

Performance Indicators:

- Surveys - including quantity and responses compared over time
- Log of health organizations and other organizational referrals
- Increased number of canoes in the Marianas each year.

Next Steps:

- Identify health partners who have a vested interest in 500 Sails missions to promote healthy lifestyle, increase cultural presence, and will draw community members.
- Increase 500 Sails' presence in the schools in the Public School System (PSS), private schools, and Northern Marianas College (NMC) to increase cultural knowledge and encourage participation.
- Network with at-risk youth agencies to develop outreach activities to increase 500 Sails' presence in the community.
- Network with businesses and other agencies who can benefit from a 500 Sails package promoting team building activities centered on swimming, building, and sailing programs.
- Increase 500 Sails' presence in major community events in Tinian, Luta, and Saipan.
- Network with the fishing industry to incorporate sailing lifestyle into activities.
- Network with other marine/aquatic lifestyle organizations in the recruitment of sailors.



CULTURAL MARITIME
TRAINING CENTER

CULTURAL MARITIME TRAINING CENTER

Strategy: To develop and deliver culturally grounded maritime training programs that leverage the native community's strengths and prepare a local workforce for successful entry into maritime professions.

Tactics:

- Seek to foster occupational and professional opportunities that are compatible with the local cultural values and islander's natural affinity to the sea.
- Seek to foster occupational and professional opportunities that are satisfying, financially rewarding, and allow workers to work and live in their home islands.
- Prioritize those occupational and professional opportunities that leverage local and regional maritime technologies and skills, and that are a good fit with the CNMI's long-term economic and community development strategies.
- Look for opportunities for mutually beneficial partnerships with local educational, business, governmental entities, as well as with cultural organizations.
- Welcome the non-native community members in these opportunities to foster a community that is inclusive and that understands and appreciates native maritime culture and traditions.

Performance Indicators:

- Establishment of the CMTC.
- Acquisition of accreditation from appropriate accrediting bodies.
- Student completion of training tracks and entrance into maritime professions.
- Number count of canoes built each year.

Next Steps:

- Finalize target training tracks within the proposed CMTC that lead to maritime occupations.
- Develop a strategy for initial funding of the CMTC.
- Develop a student recruitment strategy and plan.
- Research accreditation and requirements to secure accreditation.



COMMUNICATION

COMMUNICATION

Strategy: To further develop, strengthen, and expand 500 Sails' reach that will allow for increased awareness of the benefits and opportunities that 500 Sails brings to the community.

Tactics:

- Conduct an Annual Stakeholder Meeting on all three islands that informs the public about 500 Sails activities, strategic plan, and successes.
- Invite members to the Marketing and Public Relations Committee that will include those with a strong social media presence or communications background.
- Expand our social media presence on Facebook and Instagram to include Twitter and TikTok and other platforms that would allow for regular incorporation of output and/or outcome statistics into communications activities.
- Develop monthly promotional reports/flyers that can be distributed to all health and wellness centers, schools, and government agencies on all three islands through a subscription mailing list to gain ongoing awareness and support from the community.
- Participate or host a Canoe Festival with races, prizes, and sponsors.

Performance Indicators:

- Tracking and measuring via social media analytics.
- Evaluation of a percentage of awareness in social interactions
- Surveys - including quantity and responses compared over time

Next Steps:

- Develop a media package for use by board members, staff, and community members to communicate the activities of 500 Sails.
- Develop a flyer advertising the benefits of swimming, sailing and other maritime activities that caters to those seeking a healthier lifestyle. Distribute the flyers to clinics, schools, NGOs, and government agencies. Flyers should be non-date specific, but provide basic information and contact information.
- Expand outreach to local community members through online, printed, and broadcast media.
- Continue partnership with Pacific voyagers to collaborate on joint events and initiatives.

Thank you

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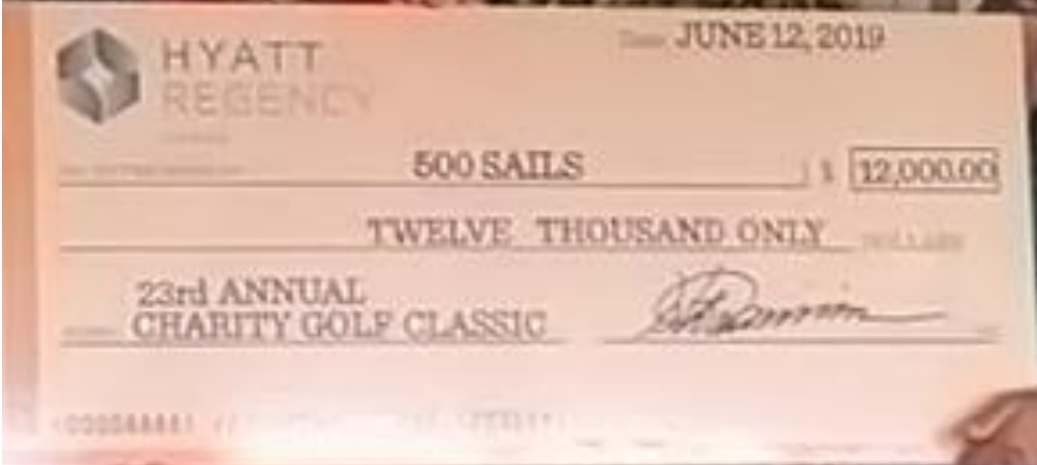
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PARTNERSHIPS

PARTNERSHIPS

Strategy: To develop a diversified portfolio of partners that will support 500 Sails to allow the organization to fulfill the mission over the long term.

Tactics:

- Select potential partners with complementary interests, visions, goals, and objectives.
- Understand potential partners' motivations and interests.
- Choose diverse and credible partners.
- Participate in and/or host a cultural summit.

Performance Indicators:

- Evaluation and analysis of current partnerships (count, contributions, reach)
- Diversity asset mapping of partnerships

Next Steps:

- Conduct an evaluation of 500 Sails' current partnerships and research potential additional partnerships.
- Establish a resource directory of Pacific seafaring organizations.
- Develop a plan for recruiting and managing partners and enhancing current partnerships based on evaluation and research completed.
- Secure the financial and human resources to support the plan.
- Implement the plan.



SUSTAINABILITY

SUSTAINABILITY

Strategy: To develop a diversified funding base and assets that will support 500 Sails to allow the organization to fulfill the mission over the long term.

Tactics:

- Expand the funding sources of the organization to include federal, local, foundation, private businesses and individuals.
- Acquire assets that will support the activities of the organization and stabilize the financial position of 500 Sails.
- Establish a revenue-generating division (500 Sails goods and services) to support the activities of 500 Sails.

Performance Indicators:

- Increased public and private sources
- Increase in other resources that allow for the expansion of activities for 500 Sails
- Expansion of assets for 500 Sails

Next Steps:

- Establish a resource directory of all federal, local, foundation, and corporate resources.
- Work with the community to identify five priority projects each year and develop project plans for each of the projects for a total of twenty five projects.
- Secure funding for the organization's priority projects.
- Conduct a feasibility study on the establishment of a revenue-generating division.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS / EXECUTIVE TEAM

Emma Perez — President (Saipan)
Marjorie A. Daria, Vice President (Saipan and Tinian)
Sophia Perez --- Secretary (Saipan)
Dave Guerrero -- Treasurer (Saipan)
Kuen-Hee Han — Director (Saipan)
Gordon I. Marciano — Director (Saipan)
Crispin Ogo — Director (Saipan and Luta)
Cecilio Raiukiulipiy — Director (Saipan)
Mario Borja — Director Emeritus (Saipan and San Diego, California)
Peter J. Perez — Executive Director (Saipan)

Board Committees

Standing Committees:

Executive & Nominating Committee - Emma Perez, Chair
Finance Committee - Dave Guerrero, Chair
Marketing and Public Relations Committee - Gordon I. Marciano, Chair
Program Committee - Peter J. Perez, Chair
Resource Development Committee- Kuen-Hee Han, Chair

Ad hoc Committees:

Facilities Committee - Emma Perez, Acting Chair
Strategic Planning Committee - Marjorie Daria, Chair

Advisory Council

Resident Executive, Indigenous Affairs Office - Roman Tudela, Jr.
Executive Assistant, Carolinian Affairs Office - John Tagabuel

500 Sails Strategic Planning Committee

Marjorie Daria, Chair	Anthony Camacho	Victoria Deleon Guerrero	Jayna Meyer
James Arriola	Leslie Camacho	Tiara Evangelista	Emma Perez
Jessica Barcinas	Joshua Castro	Gordon Marciano	Peter Perez
Daniel Brown	Arthur De Oro	Rose Lazaro	John Sablan

Special thanks to Susan White who guided the Strategic Planning Committee in the development of this Strategic Plan, and to the Marianas Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (MANGO) who provided training and facilities through their Lemmai-Mei project.

The Lemmai-Mei project is made possible by a generous grant from the Administration for Native Americans. Si Yu'us Ma'ase yan Ghilisow!