Micronations have been created and established with varying degrees of acceptance and recognition for many different reasons since the beginning of the nineteenth century. Whether you are trying to get out of paying income taxes, wish to fulfill your daughter’s dream of being a real princess, want to experiment with a political simulation, or simply just want to be king, there are several steps one must take to make their micronation a reality.

The first and most important aspect of any nation is land. Whether it is personally owned property or an unclaimed or uninhabited piece of land elsewhere, a micronation can be formed on an area as small as a bedroom, as large as the Antarctic Kingdom which claims 1,610,000 square kilometers of land—the largest micronation in the world, or in as far off places as the Republic of Molossia—which has laid claim to land on both Planet Venus and the bottom of the Mariana Trench (Listverse). According to the constitutive theory of statehood, a state is defined as having a permanent population, defined territory, one government, and the capacity to enter into relations with other sovereign states. Another important aspect is that the state must be recognized as such by other established states. While some leaders of micronations remain hopeful, it is a tad absurd for them to expect world powers like the United States of America, Russia, or China to respect and acknowledge a newly declared nation in a child’s bedroom or at the bottom of the ocean. Micronations have settled the working definition to require that a any new micronation must simply be recognized as such by other fellow micronations. However, “the micronation of Sealand does claim to have more or less been recognized as a sovereign entity by the Germany and the UK after two court cases involving warning shots when british workmen entered their territory and a separate case of holding a lawyer under charges of treason in 1978” (Davis).
Each micronation must also have an established, functioning government. Though all options are available, most appear to choose the traditional monarchy either due to ease and simplicity or perhaps for the sake of vanity or self-aggrandizement, likely the latter. Whichever the case, His Excellency of the Republic of Molossia and outspoken advocate for micronations Kevin Baugh suggests, “any leader should conduct themselves with formality and take it seriously at all times. Most other micronations will not open diplomatic relations a seemingly fake or joking micronation, as dealing with a nation that doesn’t even take themselves seriously may damage their own micronation’s legitimacy and endanger their goal of sovereignty” (Baugh).

If a micronation has land, a government, legitimate citizenship and is recognized by other micronations, it is officially a micronation—however, it seems a shame to stop there. Any legitimate micronation should also have a flag. It is not necessary, but any self-respecting micronation should really have a flag of its own design flying high. Or one could find themselves in agreement with the late, great Frank Zappa who stated: “a real country needs a beer, an airline, and preferably a football team.”

Micronations do not have founding fathers—they have founding uncles. Few really know the reasons or motivations that drive a person to “start” their very own country. Perhaps it is boredom, perhaps it is some form of protest, perhaps someone is attempting to outwit the IRS, or perhaps it is a creative outlet for someone who would otherwise go completely mad. After all, what is there to gain from an endeavor one knows is fruitless? Despite the myriad of understandable questions, it’s highly likely that the only ones who would know the motives are the same people who have made this highly unlikely attempt themselves.

It is no secret that the larger number of micronations that have ever been conceived, failed to achieve the recognition of other fully functional world governments. But that is not to
say they go completely unnoticed. The USA State Department houses an “Ephemeral Nations File” which consists of applications from these confident upstarts for the international recognition of their brain children. The State Department E.N.F. also consists of each letter of rejection written in response to the corresponding application (Parker). But is international recognition the actual goal? According to research, the first micronation ever documented was done so by a group of Cambridge students during the mid 19th century. For them, the goal was sheer fantasy—a goal that was easily met. It was not until a century later that the first attempt at territorial micronational establishment came to be tried, when an engineer from Italy attempted to turn a man made platform in the Adriatic Sea, a little more than 6 miles off of Italy’s east coast, into its own independent state (Parker). Unfortunately for the ingenuous Italian, the preexistent Italian Navy blew up this great nation known as The Republic of Rose Island in its embryonic phase, by rigging the platform with dynamite, because the new nation was unable, or unwilling, to pay taxes, thereby providing a perfect illustration of an asset that will help any micronation get more attention--money.

International governments tend to take seriously other governments that have beaucoup monies. Look at a micronation called Monaco. They are taken seriously enough to have a seat at the United Nations. This is due to the fact that they are financially stable. Vatican City is another example of a micronation that is actually taken seriously, but this is most likely because of the Pope. Many micronations exist merely in cyberspace, where their “cybercitizens” somehow manage to complain about how the government abuses their power to rule a sovereign that does not actually exist. Hopefully, this is all done in the name of fun. However, the number of cyber nations is tiny when compared to the number of micronations that really exist, but only in the minds of the creator and often times their unlimitedly patient and generous families.
Many people recognize Ernest Hemingway’s brother, Leicester, with propagating the concept of developing a micronation when he hauled a bamboo raft to a spot off the southwest coast of Jamaica and declared it New Atlantis in the mid 1960s. Leicester was able to do this under the obscure Guano Islands Act of 1856 (Johanson).

Greenpeace tried to create a micronation to protect glaciers in Chile (Torres-Laclercq).

A group of gay rights activists formed a micronation in southeast Queensland Australia called The Gay and Lesbian Kingdom of the Coral Sea Islands as a symbolic political protest (McCarthy).

A nation needs four things to exists: a permanent population, clearly defined territory, a government, the capacity to enter into relations with other states (Davis).

The president of the Republic of Molossia, Kevin Baugh, has declared the capital as Baughston.

The earliest known micronation, the Republic of Fredonia, was established with some dispute in 1826 (Wikipedia).

A man operating under the pseudonym Lazarus Long attempted to create a micronation for the sole reason of taking anti-aging hormones that were illegal, but everyone thought it was a scam and he ended up dying anyway (Wikipedia).
References


