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## GULF UNITED FOR LASTING FISHERIES (G.U.L.F.) RESPONSIBLE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATION SCHEME

### OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Audubon Nature Institute's Gulf United for Lasting Fisheries (G.U.L.F.) is a program devoted to the advancement of sustainable seafood throughout the Gulf Coast through certification of fisheries under the G.U.L.F. Responsible Fisheries Management (RFM) Certification Scheme. G.U.L.F. utilizes the skills of an Oversight Committee (OC) to assist with the development and implementation of the G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Scheme (the Scheme).

The OC is an objective-based group of selected stakeholders who provide governance over the Scheme to ensure decisions are consistent with the objectives of G.U.L.F. and that the Scheme is operated in a credible and transparent manner. Members are not involved in the day to day running of the Scheme in order to maintain impartiality and integrity. Separate Technical Advisory Committee(s) are also appointed to review and present the documents that comprise the G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Scheme for approval by the OC.

#### Committee Responsibility

The primary function of the OC is to ensure the integrity, credibility and functionality of a robust independent certification program consistent with key documents, policies, and procedures of the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Organization of Standardization (ISO). All OC members shall act in the interests of the Scheme with respect to preserving its credibility and integrity according to the stated objectives and scope. The OC will ensure that program operations are in accordance with the Scheme's stated policies and procedures as well as Audubon's own policies, including transparency and consensus-oriented decision making.

#### Key Activities of the Oversight Committee

The OC has been tasked by the Audubon Nature Institute to provide oversight and governance for the operations and performance of the G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Scheme; specifically:

- Ensure management of the Scheme is consistent with the stated objectives;
- Provide advice and guidance, by way of proceedings and recommendations documented in meeting minutes, to Audubon, the G.U.L.F. team, and Technical Advisory Committee(s);
- Review reports and documents produced by staff and Technical Advisory Committee(s);
- Approve the issue of Scheme documents, including the Standard, Certification Requirements, and Operating Procedures Manual;

- Adjudicate over complaints and appeals lodged to the Scheme;
- Approval of rules authorizing the use of claims and logos associated with the Scheme;
- Review and comment on contracts needed for the operation of the Scheme;
- Oversee cooperation and/or mutual recognition with other certification schemes and applications to any external review/benchmarking processes which are deemed of interest to the Scheme;
- Advise on and approve a strategic plan and communications strategy for the Scheme;
- Approval of an annual review of Scheme activities.

### **Guiding Principles**

OC members are appointed by Audubon Nature Institute. Membership will be based on advice, consultation and nominations put forward from stakeholders associated with the G.U.L.F. RFM Certification program. All OC members will be asked to provide a resume identifying their relevant experience as contribution to the Committee.

The OC does not have a finite number of seats, and the Audubon Nature Institute will determine the number of voting members. As such, it is not a requirement to appoint all members of the OC from the outset. The OC shall be chaired by a member of Audubon Nature Institute, who will also hold a voting right. The G.U.L.F. Scheme Manager will be an ex-officio member of the OC and will not hold a voting right. The G.U.L.F. Scheme Manager will act as the Secretary. G.U.L.F. Staff and special experts may attend, or be asked to present at OC meetings, but will hold no voting rights.

Members of the OC do not necessary need to be technical experts in aspects of conservation biology or marine biology, but an understanding of and interest in the foundations of a sustainable seafood program, marine conservation and/or certification systems is necessary.

The OC representation will be adapted from time to time to ensure it continues to represent the interests of the Gulf Coast region and areas of broader certification interest.

### **Rules of Procedure for the Oversight Committee**

The normal term of office of the Chairperson and members of the OC shall be no more than four years, with no member serving more than three consecutive terms, provided that:

- any member of the Committee serving as a representative of an organization or company shall retire on ceasing to be employed by that organization or company;
- any member may retire by notice in writing to the Secretary of the Committee;
- any member may be required to step down at any time by the request of Audubon Nature Institute;

- any person whose term of office expires shall be eligible to be re-appointed to the Committee;
- the Chairperson may ask for an incumbent member to be replaced if the member fails to attend meetings of the Committee regularly;
- OC meetings shall be convened by notice in writing (e-mail) to each member at such times as the Chair shall direct and not less than once a year. An appointed Secretary shall be responsible for taking and presenting a correct record of the proceedings at each meeting;
- a Quorum at such meetings shall consist of not less than one-half of the voting members of the Committee;
- the Chairperson shall confirm the qualifying quorum is present at each meeting;
- minutes of all meetings will be prepared and circulated at least 24 hours in advance of the next meeting and these minutes will be approved at the next meeting, providing a quorum is present;
- members shall strive to meet consensus in decision making; however, will operate on a majority vote when consensus cannot be reached;
- each member shall have one vote; the Chair or person presiding shall, in the event of an equal division, have a second casting vote;
- in the absence of the Chair at any meeting of the Committee the Chair shall be taken by a member of the OC selected by the Chair in advance or, failing which, elected by a majority of those present;
- with the consent of the Chair, specialist advisors may attend meetings of the OC but they shall not be entitled to vote.

### **Authority:**

- The authority of the OC will extend to making recommendations, on the Scheme's management, oversight of the Technical Advisory Committee(s) process, approval of documents, developments and work programs presented to it. However, Audubon Nature Institute remains the authority on implementation of any such recommendations concerning the Scheme and on all matter relating to finance and personnel.

### **Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest**

Members shall be:

- Willing to contribute to an overview process and lend their time and/or expertise without promise of compensation, and able to attend meetings as required;
- Unaffiliated with any public or private entity that will try and leverage decisions based on a private or public agenda;

- Committed to neutrality, transparency and fairness in all dealings with the G.U.L.F. program;
- Cognizant of the sensitive nature of information discussed, such that information, proceedings or findings of the Committee are not disclosed without express permission from Audubon.

All Committee members will be asked to provide a summary bio/resume identifying their relevant experience as a contributor to the Committee and sign the Impartiality and Confidentiality Statement written below. Should a conflict of interest arise, the member is requested to report this to the Chairperson as soon as reasonably possible. The Chairperson shall decide on and instigate appropriate action including recusal from voting on the subject matter from which conflict arises. All such reported conflicts of interest and follow up action agreed shall be recorded in the OC files.

**Oversight Committee Member Agreement of Participation:**

This document stands as a non-binding agreement of participation for the below signatory; the person named herein has agreed to participate as a member of the Oversight Committee of the G.U.L.F. Responsible Fisheries Management Certification Scheme.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_