



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

CHAIN OF CUSTODY TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Audubon Nature Institute's Gulf United for Lasting Fisheries (G.U.L.F.) utilizes the skills of a Chain of Custody Technical Advisory Committee (CoC TAC) to assist with the development and maintenance of traceability of products certified to the G.U.L.F. Responsible Fisheries Management Certification Scheme (the Scheme). The Scheme is adapted from the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries Management and Ecolabelling Guidelines for Fish and Fishery Products from Marine Capture Fisheries, and is appropriately cognizant of the unique environment and fisheries found in the U.S. Gulf of Mexico.

The CoC TAC is an objective-based group, broadly representing the U.S. Gulf of Mexico seafood industry, including seafood processors, dealers, fishermen, regulators, researchers and other interested stakeholders. Representation is sought from both fishery-specific and wider seafood industry stakeholder interests.

Committee Responsibility

The function of the committee is to provide technical input into development and review of a Chain of Custody Standard (the Standard) and supporting technical documents of the Scheme, including the technical relevance and appropriateness of the Standard for use as a third party, accredited certification scheme.

Main Objectives:

- Support the development and maintenance of credible and robust traceability for the G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Scheme.
- Provide technical oversight for a Chain of Custody Standard and associated technical documents and confirm that these documents represent an accurate translation of the normative references, principally the FAO Guidelines for the Eco-labelling of Fish and Fishery Products from Marine Capture Fisheries.
- Provide input, expertise, oversee and facilitate any necessary improvements and edits to the Standard in line with overall Program objectives and best practice.
- Provide expertise and guidance on the identification (logo) and labelling of products certified under the Scheme.

Key Activities for Members of the CoC TAC

- To maintain the technical specifications for the Standard under periodic review, in order to confirm their relevance to current practice and market requirements.

- Based on fishery and supply chain insight of Gulf fisheries, provide knowledge, professional judgement and guidance that will contribute to accurate interpretation and alignment of the Standard for assessment purposes.
- Provide advice, by way of proceedings and decisions provided in minutes of meetings, to the Oversight Committee on any amendments considered to be necessary or desirable to ensure the accuracy, relevance and credibility of the program.
- Provide input and advice on documents prepared on the technical interpretation of the Standard used in the assessment process.
- Provide technical oversight to the Standard revisions and supporting technical guidance documentation.

Guiding Principles

The CoC TAC is appointed by Audubon Nature Institute. Membership will be based on advice, consultation and nominations put forward from fishery managers and seafood industry stakeholders associated with the Scheme. All members will be asked to provide a resume identifying their relevant experience as contribution to the CoC TAC.

The CoC TAC does not have a finite number of seats, but will endeavour to keep to no more than 12 voting members plus a chair. As such, it is not a requirement to appoint all members of the Committee from the outset. The CoC TAC shall be chaired by a member of Audubon Nature Institute's G.U.L.F. Program, who will also hold a voting right. The certification body will be an ex-officio member of the CoC TAC and will not hold a voting right. Other non-TAC personnel from G.U.L.F. may be present, but will not have voting rights.

The membership of the CoC TAC will be such that sufficient representation of the U.S. Gulf of Mexico seafood industry and management is available, including fishermen, seafood processors, regulators, and seafood industry researchers, with selection based on an appreciation of the traceability of certified products throughout the Gulf supply chain.

The CoC TAC representation will be adapted from time to time to ensure it continues to represent the interests of the Gulf seafood industry and areas of broader certification interest.

Rules of Procedure for the CoC TAC

The normal term of office of the Chair and members of the CoC TAC shall be no more than five years provided that:

- any member of the CoC TAC serving as a representative of an organisation or company shall retire on ceasing to be employed by that organisation or company;
- any member may retire by notice in writing to the Chair of the CoC TAC;
- any person whose term of office expires shall be eligible to be re-appointed to the Committee;

- the Chair may ask for an incumbent member to be replaced if the member fails to attend meetings of the CoC TAC regularly.
- 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-third of the voting members of the CoC TAC.
- The Chair 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. These minutes will be approved at the next meeting, providing a quorum is present.
- 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 CoC TAC the Chair shall be taken by a member of the CoC TAC 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 CoC TAC but they shall not be entitled to vote.

Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest

Members of the CoC TAC are appointed to support the objectives of a robust and transparent certification scheme. Members should be:

- Willing to contribute to a technical review process and lend their time and 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 Audubon.
- Cognizant of the sensitive nature of information discussed, such that information, proceedings or findings of the CoC TAC are not disclosed without express permission from Audubon Nature Institute.

Members will be asked to sign an Impartiality Declaration and Confidentiality undertaking. Should a conflict of interest arise, the member is requested to report this to the Chair as soon as reasonably possible. The Chair shall decide on and initiate appropriate action. All such reported conflicts of interest and follow up action agreed shall be recorded on the Committee files.

Member Agreement of Participation, Impartiality and Confidentiality

This document stands as a non-binding agreement of participation for the below signatory. The person named herein has agreed to participate as a Chain of Custody Technical Advisory Committee member of the Audubon G.U.L.F RFM Certification program and to abide by the Chain of Custody Technical Advisory Committee Responsibilities and Guiding Principles.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Title: _____

Signature: _____