

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

PROCEDURE FOR MANAGING STAKEHOLDER INPUT (SECTION 7, G.U.L.F. RFM PROGRAM OPERATIONS MANUAL)

7.1 Purpose

Audubon recognizes the value and necessity of external public stakeholder comment on the operation and development of the RFM Program, including revisions to the documents, such as the Standards. This document defines who is considered an external stakeholder, when and how comments shall be solicited, the categories under which comments will be considered, the response comments shall receive, and how changes to any scheme document will be handled and publicized.

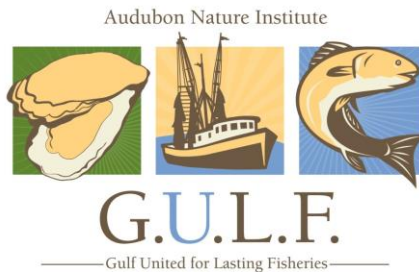
7.2 Scope

The scope of stakeholder input can include the full range of RFM Program documents, procedures and operational matters but will be determined by Audubon as advised by its Committees. However, at a minimum, revisions and re-issue of the G.U.L.F. Standards will always fall within the scope of stakeholder input.

7.3 Definition of Eligible Stakeholders

An **Eligible Stakeholder** is any person, identifiable group, party or organization that is external to the entities involved in the scheme, but who may be directly affected by or who have an interest in the scheme. Stakeholders can include but are not limited to:

- People employed directly and indirectly in the Gulf of Mexico fishing and seafood industry, such as fishermen, processors, and buyers (restaurant or retail) of Gulf seafood
- People associated with the fishing communities in the Gulf of Mexico
- Consumers of Gulf seafood
- Users of Gulf of Mexico marine resources, and resource-sharing groups
- Marine scientists and relevant policy experts
- Special interest and focus groups, including nutritional health, society, environment, economic, education, and quality organizations



7.4 Solicitation of Comments

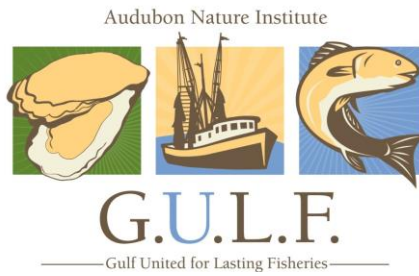
- 7.4.1 When a decision to enter a review process is taken, the review is announced in appropriate media outlets and the document(s) under review are posted on the G.U.L.F. website for a 60-day public stakeholder input period.
- 7.4.2 Revised and new document(s), approved in draft by the TAC, will be announced in the same media outlets and the document(s) posted on the G.U.L.F. website for an additional 30-day public stakeholder input period.
- 7.4.3 On each occasion, the scope and objectives of the review, guidance on comment process, timelines and decision making procedure will be provided to stakeholders in the announcement.

Specifically;

- contact information and information on how to contribute to the consultation
- Summary of the Terms of Reference for the Standard(s), including proposed scope, objectives and justification of the need for the Standard
- Steps in the standard-setting-process, including timelines and clearly identified opportunities for contributing
- Decision-making procedures, including how decisions are made and who make them.

7.5 Responding to Stakeholder Input

- 7.5.1 All comments received will be reviewed and a determination of their eligibility will be made based on the review scope as communicated to stakeholders at the commencement of each review period and any other qualification criteria given.
- 7.5.2 Stakeholder comment is defined as written comments received from named individuals and/or organizations external to the parties that are directly involved in the operation of the program. Anonymous, outwardly offensive, nuisance or otherwise distasteful comments shall not be recognized and will not be used for inclusion in the review process.
- 7.5.3 Consideration or acceptance of unsolicited comments will be to the discretion and decision of Audubon.



- 7.5.4 Audubon will retain a record of all comments and eligible comments will be presented to the relevant Committee(s) for their consideration.
- 7.5.5 All stakeholder comments will be made publicly available in a non-attributable way.
- 7.5.6 Outcome of Committee(s) decisions on stakeholder comments will be documented and a summary of how eligible comments are addressed shall be made publically available in a non-attributable way.