

## **GULF Responsible Fisheries Management Certification COVID-19 Policy**

Health risks and travel restrictions due to COVID-19 are impacting the ability to conduct on-site audits for the foreseeable future (at a minimum of 6-12 months). In response to this, GULF, [in alignment with GSSI](#), has set forth the following policy regarding its Responsible Fisheries Certification Scheme to ensure the greatest possible level of assurance under these extraordinary circumstances.

Both the Certification Body (CB) and Scheme Owner shall follow requirements stipulated by applicable national regulations to manage the impacts of the extraordinary event and if those differ from the content of this position paper, regulatory requirements shall prevail.

1. In regards to the application of the GULF RFM Scheme, the Scheme Owner shall adhere to the following policies:
  - a. Certified Organization Risk Assessment: Scheme Owners shall ensure a risk assessment on the impact of the extraordinary event is conducted on the certification status of certified organizations. This risk assessment will be carried out under guidelines from the IAF ID3:2011 “Management of Extraordinary Events or Circumstances Affecting ABs, CABs and Certified Organizations” (see: [www.iaf.nu](http://www.iaf.nu); criteria for CBs and ABs respectively listed in Section 3 and Section 4). Based on background information and the current context, the goal of the risk assessment is to confirm that the certified organization is equipped to maintain the practices and processes guaranteed by their certificate.
  - b. Certification Body Risk Assessment: The Scheme Owner will continue to monitor the accreditation status of the CB performing inspections/audits for their schemes. The CB must maintain accreditation and remain in compliance with relevant policies of their Accreditation Body and International Accreditation Forum (ID3:2011 “Management of Extraordinary Events or Circumstances Affecting ABs, CABs and Certified Organizations”). GULF will monitor compliance with this policy through regular communications with the CB while this policy is active and through normal annual surveillance of CB activities.
2. In regards to the application of the GULF RFM Scheme, Certification Bodies are required to adhere to the following policies:
  - a. Initial Audits: CBs are required to conduct an on-site visit. In the case of certified organizations who are applying for certification of a new site, CBs can conduct a remote audit.

- b. Surveillance Audits: Surveillance audits may be postponed for a maximum of 6 months, with approval from both GULF and the CB. Remote audits are encouraged when on-site audits have been postponed.
- c. Re-certification Audits: With approval from both GULF and the CB, the validity of a certificate may be extended for a maximum of 6 months. Remote audits are encouraged when on-site audits have been postponed.
- d. Remote Audits: CBs shall adhere to the following when executing remote audits:
  - i. Follow the requirements of IAF MD4:2018: “The use of information and communication technology (ICT) for auditing/assessment purposes” (see [www.iaf.nu](http://www.iaf.nu)).
  - ii. Follow with an on-site audit during the course of the certificate cycle to complete any part of the regular audit/assessment not covered by the remote audit.