BENCHMARK REPORT

SCHEME: **Aubudon Gulf United for Lasting Fisheries (G.U.L.F.) Responsible Fisheries Management (RFM) Certification Program**

SCOPE: **Fisheries Certification (Audubon G.U.L.F. Responsible Fisheries Management Standard, version 1.2), effective July 10th, 2018**

DATE: October 4, 2018

Confidence in certified seafood

TABLE OF CONTENTS

For further information, please contact: secretariat@ourgssi.org

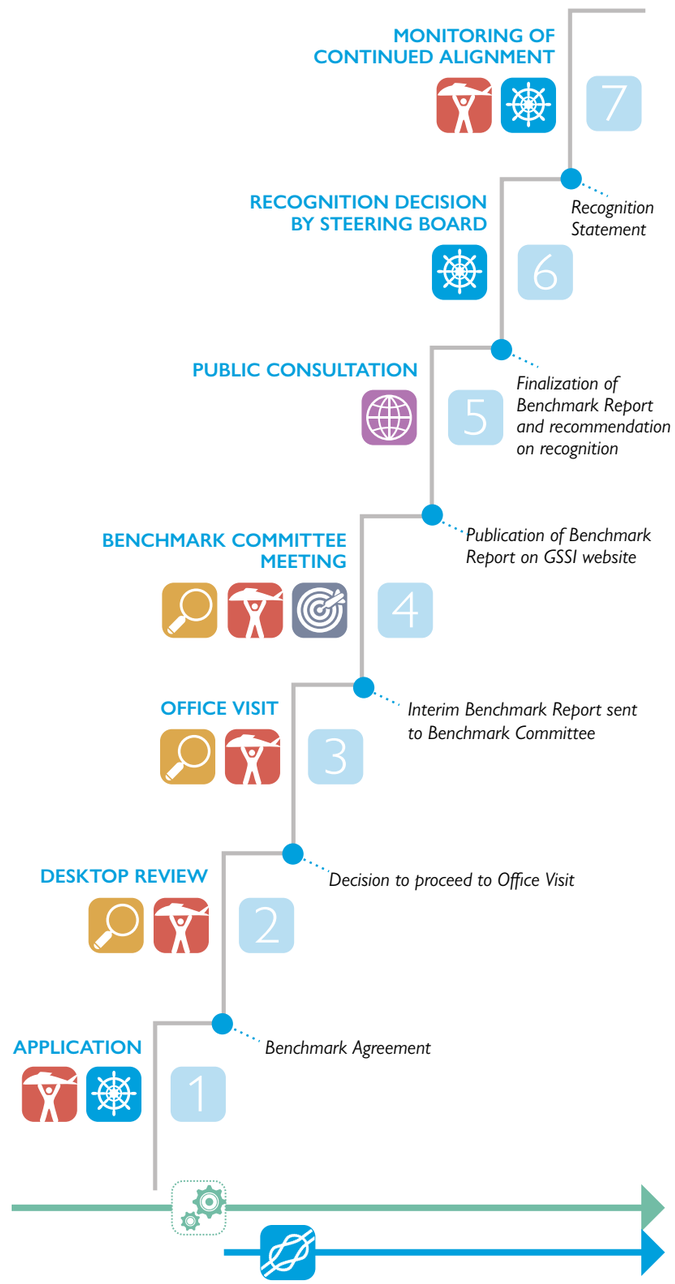
SCHEME OVERVIEW

SCHEME NAME	Audubon Gulf United for Lasting Fisheries (G.U.L.F.) Responsible Fisheries Management (RFM) Certification Program
STANDARD	Aubudon G.U.L.F. Responsible Fisheries Management Standard, version 1.2, effective July 10th, 2018
FOUNDING DATE	2012
FOUNDING PARTIES	Audubon Nature Institute and the State of Louisiana
MISSION	1. Promote sustainable practices through holistic science-based fishery management programs 2. Foster a community that is knowledgeable and invested in Gulf seafood 3. Create a more stable and confident fishing industry
OBJECTIVE(S)	Key Objectives of the G.U.L.F. RFM Program are: 1. to create a cost effective, credible sustainability program for the Gulf fishing and seafood industry 2. to establish a program that is accessible to all types of U.S. Gulf of Mexico wild-capture fisheries (gear types, geography, structure and supply chains) 3. to meet international best practices and benchmarks for market acceptance and be publicly transparent and credible
SCOPE	The scope of the standards includes any U.S. Gulf of Mexico fishery, including any fish species, production systems/gear types, geographical locations, and company structures.
WEB SITE	https://www.audubongulf.org

FROM APPLICATION TO RECOGNITION:

KEY STEPS AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE GSSI BENCHMARK PROCESS

	DESCRIPTION
1	**Application received on January 23, 2018** The Benchmark Process began when G.U.L.F. applied for recognition and contacted the GSSI Secretariat, who provided an overview of the process. This was followed by the signing of a Benchmark Agreement to formalize the relationship between G.U.L.F. and GSSI on February 22, 2018. The Steering Board then appointed a Steering Board Liaison to support the Benchmark Process; a team of two Independent Experts (IE) who conducted the Benchmark Process; and a Benchmark Committee to review the work of the IEs (see section: Who Is Involved). The appointed experts were approved by G.U.L.F. and after submitting the completed application to GSSI the Secretariat initiated the Desktop Review.
2	**Deskop Review from January 18 to February 12 (Section D) and February 19 (Section A & B), 2018** This Desktop Review helped to assess the capability of G.U.L.F. to proceed and successfully complete the Benchmark Process within the expected time frame. The submitted application was reviewed by two IEs; a Process IE (Josie Foster), who reviewed evidence for alignment against Sections A and B, and a Technical IE (Joseph DeAlteris) who reviewed evidence submitted for Section D. Following an exchange with G.U.L.F., the IEs issued a Desktop Report and recommended to proceed to the Office Visit.
3	**Office visit on the 8th and 9th of May 2018** The Office Visit was conducted by the Process IE, while all issues were resolved between G.U.L.F. and the Technical IE. The visit helped to clarify outstanding issues from the Desktop Review. Findings of the Desktop Review and Office Visit were documented in the Interim Benchmark Report.
4	**Benchmark Committee Meeting on July 6, 2018** The Benchmark Committee acts as the "Quality Assurance" for the work undertaken by the IEs in the Desktop Review and Office Visit. It consists of the Steering Board Liaison (Chair of the Committee), IEs from the respective Sections and voluntary experts from across the sector. This meeting resulted in this Benchmark Report with a consensus-based recommendation to proceed to the Public Consultation.
5	**Public Consultation on August 7 to September 6, 2018** A 30 day Public Consultation was held to allow for a transparent Benchmark Process, with opportunity for engagement and comments. There were no comments received during this period, thus this Benchmark Report was forwarded to the Steering Board for recognition.
6	**Recognition Decision by Steering Board on October 4, 2018** The Benchmark Report was forwarded to the Steering Board on September 12th, 2018, for recognition. The Steering Board reviewed the report and process and accepted the Benchmark Committee's recommendation on October 4, 2008. Following the decision for recognition by the Steering Board, a GSSI Recognition Statement, the Benchmark Report, and GSSI's responses were published online at www.ourgssi.org on October 4, 2018.
7	**Monitoring of Continued Alignment** GSSI ensures continued alignment of recognized schemes with GSSI Essential Components through an annual reporting process of relevant changes. A full assessment will be required every 3 years, or after significant change to the Aubudon G.U.L.F. Responsible Fisheries Management Standard



Who is involved?

Scheme Owner
An organisation, which is responsible for the development, management and maintenance of a certification scheme.

Independent Experts
A team of professional, competent and trained individuals appointed by GSSI's Steering Board to conduct the assessment of a seafood certification scheme applying for GSSI recognition.

Steering Board Liaison
An appointed member of GSSI's Steering Board assigned to support and monitor the Benchmark Process on behalf of the Steering Board.

Benchmark Committee
A multi-stakeholder committee of technical experts appointed by GSSI's Steering Board to review the Benchmark Report and provide a recommendation on recognition.

Public
Members of the global seafood industry, NGOs, academics , international organizations, and general public.

Steering Board
GSSI governing body who is responsible, with the support of the Secretariat, for the general management and performance of GSSI.

GSSI Secretariat
Concerned with operations, facilitation and communication, and all other work that may be required for the operational management of GSSI and the Benchmark Process.

WHO IS INVOLVED*

SCHEME REPRESENTATIVES

John Fallon, Director of Sustainability & Coastal Conservation
John is the current Scheme Manager for G.U.L.F.'s Responsible Fisheries Management (RFM) Certification and oversees G.U.L.F.'s operations and other sustainability initiatives. He has been a team member at Audubon Nature Institute since 2008, starting with the Aquarium Husbandry Department where he was a founding member of the Aquarium Conservation Committee, the group that spearheaded the development of the Sustainable Seafood Project for Audubon Nature Institute. In August 2012, John became the Coordinator of the newly founded G.U.L.F. program. In his current position, John also manages Audubon's Coastal Wildlife Network and leads green initiatives across Audubon's campuses.

Laura Picariello, Fisheries Specialist
Laura was the Scheme Manager for G.U.L.F.'s Responsible Fisheries Management (RFM) Certification program and G.U.L.F. Technical Programs Manager, from August 2015-June 2018, and continues to serve on G.U.L.F. RFM's Fisheries and Chain of Custody Technical Advisory Committees and as advisor on the GSSI Benchmarking process. Laura oversaw all aspects of the development and operation of the G.U.L.F. RFM program including outreach and communications, stakeholder advisory committees, stakeholder consultations and day to day operations. Prior to her work on the certification program, Laura worked directly with industry and management representatives across the U.S. Gulf of Mexico to identify and address sustainability challenges in several major fisheries including blue crab, stone crab, oyster and shrimp. She holds a master's degree in marine conservation and policy from Stony Brook University. Laura joined Texas Sea Grant as the Fisheries Specialist in June 2018 and her primary role is to help commercial fishing communities to understand and apply the latest in fisheries management, research and technology to develop applicable solutions for sustainable fisheries.

INDEPENDENT EXPERT (PROCESS)

Josie Foster, Director, J Foster Consulting LTD
Josie Foster is very well known to many as both a BRC Approved Training Provider and as an auditor. Having spent many years with Tesco she is well grounded in both aspects and has traveled the world training for the BRC. In addition to her many achievements she is also an assessor for UKAS, specialising in ISO 17065, primarily for the BRC Global Standard for Consumer Products. She also runs her own business as a consultant, coach and mentor. The summary of Qualifications includes: ISO 9000 Lead Assessor qualification, ISO 22000 Lead Assessor qualification, RIPHH Advanced HACCP Certificate, BRC Food and Consumer Products Auditor, Graduate of the Royal Society of Chemistry.

INDEPENDENT EXPERT (TECHNICAL)

Prof. Dr. Joseph DeAlteris, President, DeAlteris Associates Inc.
Joseph retired from the University of Rhode Island (URI) in May of 2012, and was awarded Professor Emeritus status. In 30 years of service to URI he has taught course work, conducted research, and developed outreach programs in fisheries conservation engineering, fish population dynamics and quantitative ecology, and shellfish aquaculture. He mentored more than 40 graduate students completing MS and PhD degrees. He served on numerous government committees including the National Research Council. He authored more than 35 publications in peer-reviewed journals, and also authored and coauthored numerous books, manuals, non-referred articles, and technical reports in the fields of fisheries biology, stock assessment and fishing gear technology.

STEERING BOARD LIAISON

Judy Panayos is the Sr. Director of Sustainability in Supply Management at Sodexo with responsibilities for sustainability and corporate responsibility in supply. Judy works to incorporate internal and client goals for sustainability and corporate responsibility into sourcing strategies including local sourcing, sustainable products (including seafood), responsible supply chain practices and sustainability innovation. Previously, Judy worked in medical device manufacturing at Becton Dickinson (BD). Over the 10+ years at BD, Judy had oversight of various supplier programs including Sustainable Procurement, Supplier Diversity, Supplier Risk, Supplier Quality Management, and Supplier Recognition. She also held positions in Strategic Sourcing, Planning, Distribution, Transportation and Customer Service. Previous to BD, Judy has over fifteen years of experience in key roles in Performing Arts Logistics Management, including urban renewal projects including government, industry and non-profit partnerships. Judy also sits on the Strategic Advisory Committee of the Sustainable Purchasing Leadership Council. She has a Corporate Responsibility certificate and an M.B.A. from Rutgers University and a B.F.A. from New York University.

STEERING BOARD MEMBERS

On October 4, 2018, the GSSI Steering Board voted in favor of GSSI's recognition of G.U.L.F.

** Please include short biographical information*

WHO IS INVOLVED*

GSSI SECRETARIAT REPRESENTATIVE

Florian Zuber is the Benchmark Manager and joined GSSI in July 2017. He studied at Wageningen University in the Netherlands and graduated as M.Sc. in Aquaculture and Marine Resource Management. Due to his career, he is experienced in both the technical work with fish and seafood, besides that he also worked with various seafood certification standards and quality control schemes. He works in Germany in home office.

BENCHMARK COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Sally Ananya Surangpimol, Director, The Food School
Sally is a pioneer in standards-setting and conformity assessments for food exports and imports, with special focus on integrated management systems. Originally from the Philippines, she has made Thailand her base, assisting stakeholders within the global food supply chain. This has allowed enterprises and governments within Asia-Pacific, North America, Africa and EU to meet and/or develop industry and government requirements for visibility in international markets. Through The Food School and Food Partners programs, which she founded and runs as Director within her wholly-owned Thai company and a second base in Canada, she supports retailers, producers, associations, NGOs, UN agencies, by consultation or auditing or training, to develop or enhance food safety and quality.

Nigel Peacock, Director, Napfisheries & Aquatic Environment
Nigel Peacock has over 40 years experience working on most aspects of aquaculture and fisheries, including a wide range of seafood sector activities, many of which had a sustainability focus. This has included directing major fisheries management projects (e.g. management of the Peruvian anchoveta fishery – one of the world's largest) and involvement in numerous aquaculture schemes (salmon, shrimp, seabass & seabream, tilapia, pangasius). Experience of the broad spectrum of fisheries and aquaculture include feasibility assessment, market research, investors due diligence, trade analysis and the regulatory environment. Nigel has worked in 95 countries globally in the Americas , Europe & Former Soviet Union, Africa, Middle East, Asia and Oceania.

Rebecca Clarkson, Environment Manager, Aquaculture New Zealand
Rebecca Clarkson has over 15 years' experience in a variety of roles within the New Zealand aquaculture industry, particularly focussing on regional and central government policy and planning, advocacy, environmental management and quality programmes. Her role at Aquaculture New Zealand is currently divided between policy advice and advocacy and implementing the recently launched A+ Sustainable Management Framework for New Zealand aquaculture. Her particular areas of expertise are providing advice and advocacy on legislative and regional policy and planning matters. She also has a broad understanding of environmental certification schemes and has knowledge and experience relating to current science and research into the interactions of marine farms and their environment.

Steve Minor, Managing Partner, Waterfront Associates
Steve Minor has worked with Alaska's coastal communities and the seafood industry to develop and manage world-class sustainable fisheries for more than twenty years; including business investment, business management and shore-based infrastructure development projects in the salmon, cod, halibut, crab and pollock fisheries. Steve is one of the primary authors of the Bering Sea crab rationalization program and a member of several seafood industry and science-based organizations. In the last decade his focus has shifted from "resource access" issues to "market access" initiatives for a variety of clients; including shellfish and groundfish businesses and Native Alaska communities. This work has included efforts to eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated ("IUU") fishing.

Dr. Trevor Ward is a widely recognised and published marine ecologist—more than 140 technical publications in international journals, books and reports, including two university texts on ecolabelling in marine fisheries. His 40-year career includes more than 20 years with CSIRO, Australia's premier science organisation, and in 1996 he was jointly awarded the CSIRO Chairman's Medal for Excellence in Science. Dr. Ward specialises in the development and implementation of monitoring, evaluation and reporting (MER) systems for the natural resources and biodiversity of ocean and coastal ecosystems. Recent areas of consulting activity include strategic policy support and evaluation in ocean biodiversity and marine natural resources management for UN agencies, governments, business and NGOs. He has led research projects at four Australian Universities, is currently appointed to several national and local advisory boards/panels, and holds an honorary appointment at the University of Technology Sydney in the Faculty of Science.

** Please include short biographical information*

SUMMARY

HOW TO READ THE SUMMARY

Each summary is a graphical display of all GSSI Essential Components and those GSSI Supplementary Components with which the benchmarked scheme is in alignment. *GSSI Components* which are not applicable are marked with "NA". All *GSSI Components* are organized by Topics and Elements. Source documents are colour-coded and referenced.

GSSI Benchmark Report identification number

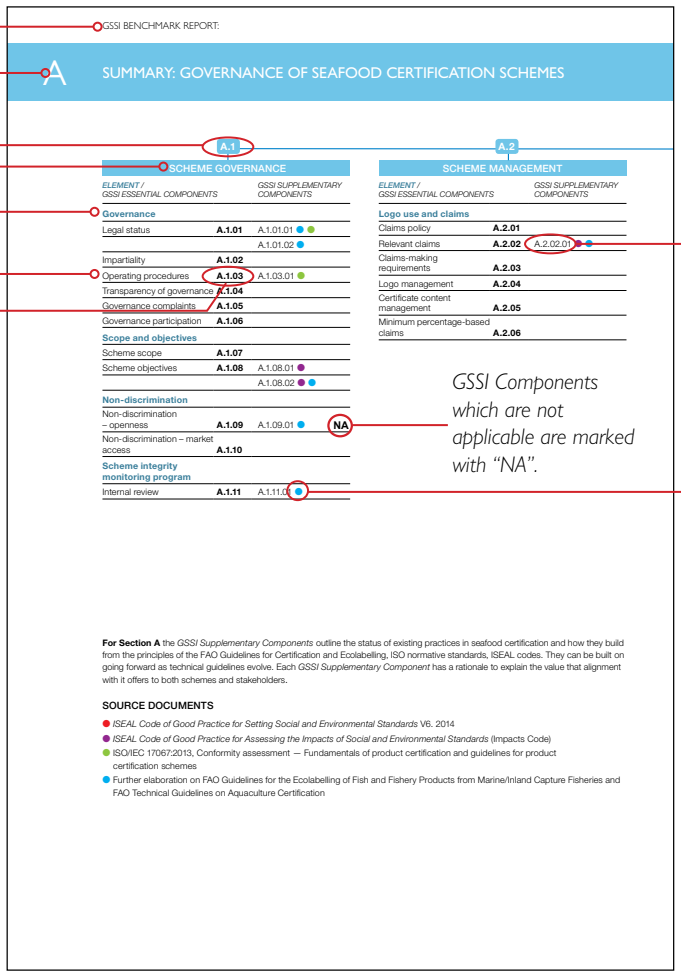
Section

Performance Area number
Performance Area

Topic

Element

GSSI Essential Component: *each Element includes one or more GSSI Essential Components which are numbered according to their respective Section and Performance Area. e.g., A.1.03 is the 3rd GSSI Essential Component of Performance Area 1 in section A.*



GSSI Components which are not applicable are marked with "NA".

GSSI Supplementary Component: *some GSSI Essential Components have one or more linked GSSI Supplementary Components, which are numbered according to their respective Section, Performance Area and Essential Component. e.g., A.2.02.01 is the first GSSI Supplementary Component linked to the 2nd GSSI EssentialComponent of Performance Area 2 in section A.*

Each GSSI Supplementary Component is grounded in a reference document, indicated by a color code.

A SUMMARY: GOVERNANCE OF SEAFOOD CERTIFICATION SCHEMES

A.1 SCHEME GOVERNANCE

ELEMENT / *GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS*		*GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENTS*
Governance		
Legal status	**A.1.01**	A.1.01.01 ● ●
		A.1.01.02 ●
Impartiality	**A.1.02**	
Operating procedures	**A.1.03**	
Transparency of governance	**A.1.04**	
Governance complaints	**A.1.05**	
Governance participation	**A.1.06**	
Scope and objectives		
Scheme scope	**A.1.07**	
Scheme objectives	**A.1.08**	
Non-discrimination		
Non-discrimination – openness	**A.1.09**	A.1.09.01 ●
Non-discrimination – market access	**A.1.10**	
Scheme integrity monitoring program		
Internal review	**A.1.11**	A.1.11.01 ●

A.2 SCHEME MANAGEMENT

ELEMENT / *GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS*		*GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENTS*
Logo use and claims		
Claims policy	**A.2.01**	
Relevant claims	**A.2.02**	
Claims-making requirements	**A.2.03**	
Logo management	**A.2.04**	
Certificate content management	**A.2.05**	
Minimum percentage-based claims	**A.2.06**	

A.2 STANDARD SETTING AND MAINTENANCE

ELEMENT / *GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS*		*GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENTS*
Standard setting body		
Standard setting body	**A.3.01**	
Central focal point	**A.3.02**	
Standard setting procedures		
Standards development and maintenance procedure	**A.3.03**	
Work program	**A.3.04**	
Terms of reference	**A.3.05**	
Decision making process	**A.3.06**	A.3.06.01 ● ●
		A.3.06.02 ● ●
		A.3.06.03 ● ●
		A.3.06.04 ● ● **NA**
Complaints	**A.3.07**	
Standards review and revision	**A.3.08**	
Proposals for revisions	**A.3.09**	
Record keeping	**A.3.10**	
Participation and consultation		
Public summary	**A.3.11**	
Balanced participation	**A.3.12**	
Public consultation	**A.3.13**	A.3.13.01 ●
Public announcement	**A.3.14**	
Stakeholder consultation	**A.3.15**	A.3.15.01 ●
		A.3.15.02 ● ●
Transparency comments received	**A.3.16**	
Taking comments into account	**A.3.17**	A.3.17.01 ●

ELEMENT / *GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS*	
Standards content	
Standards content	**A.3.18**
Relevance of standards content	**A.3.19**
	A.3.20
Local applicability	**A.3.21**
Standards accessability	
Standards availability	**A.3.22**
Translations	**A.3.23**
Transition period	
Informing enterprises of transition	**A.3.24**
Transition period for compliance	**A.3.25**
	A.3.26

For Section A the *GSSI Supplementary Components* outline the status of existing practices in seafood certification and how they build from the principles of the FAO Guidelines for Certification and Ecolabelling, ISO normative standards, ISEAL codes. They can be built on going forward as technical guidelines evolve. Each *GSSI Supplementary Component* has a rationale to explain the value that alignment with it offers to both schemes and stakeholders.

SOURCE DOCUMENTS

- ● *ISEAL Code of Good Practice for Setting Social and Environmental Standards* V6. 2014
- ● *ISEAL Code of Good Practice for Assessing the Impacts of Social and Environmental Standards* (Impacts Code)
- ● ISO/IEC 17065/2013, Conformity assessment — Fundamentals of product certification and guidelines for product certification schemes
- ● Further elaboration on FAO Guidelines for the Ecolabelling of Fish and Fishery Products from Marine/Inland Capture Fisheries and FAO Technical Guidelines on Aquaculture Certification

B SUMMARY: OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT OF SEAFOOD CERTIFICATION SCHEMES

B.1 ACCREDITATION

ELEMENT / *GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS*	
ISO-17011 compliance	**B.1.01**
Non-discrimination	**B.1.02**
Specified requirements	**B.1.03**
Transition period	**B.1.04**
Accreditation body – Competencies	**B.1.05**
External review	**B.1.06**
Organizational transparency	**B.1.07**
Office audit	**B.1.08**
Field audit	**B.1.09**

B.2 CERTIFICATION

ELEMENT / *GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS*		*GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENTS*	
Certification process			
ISO-17065 compliance	**B.2.01**		
Fee structure	**B.2.02**		
Certification cycle	**B.2.03**		
Surveillance	**B.2.04**		
Assessment methodology	**B.2.05**	B.2.05.02 🟢🔵🔴	
Termination, suspension, withdrawal	**B.2.06**		
Multi-site certification	**B.2.07**		
Audit reports	**B.2.08**		
Stakeholder input	**B.2.09**	B.2.09.01 🟢🔵	
Non-compliances	**B.2.10**		
Site audit	**B.2.11**	B.2.11.01 🟢🔵🔴	
Transparency on certified entities	**B.2.12**		
Transparency on audit reports	**B.2.13**		
	B.2.14	B.2.14.01 🔵	**NA**
		B.2.14.02 🔵	**NA**
Notification of changes	**B.2.15**		
Timeline for corrective action	**B.2.16**		
Auditor competence			
Requirements for technical knowledge	**B.2.17**		
Technical knowledge	**B.2.18**		
General auditing skills	**B.2.19**		
Scheme specific knowledge assessment	**B.2.20**		
Scheme specific knowledge maintenance	**B.2.21**		
Knowledge maintenance	**B.2.22**		

B.3 CHAIN OF CUSTODY

ELEMENT / *GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS*	
Segregation	**B.3.01**
Enterprises to be audited	**B.3.02**
Records for traceability	**B.3.03**
Sub-contractors	**B.3.04**
Auditing methods and frequency	**B.3.05**
Non-conformity/corrective actions	**B.3.06**
Audit report	**B.3.07**
	B.3.08
Record keeping	**B.3.09**
Multi-site Chain of Custody audit	**B.3.10**
Multi-site Chain of Custody internal verification	**B.3.11**

For Section B the *GSSI Supplementary Components* outline the status of existing practices in seafood certification and how they build from the principles of the FAO Guidelines for Certification and Ecolabelling, ISO normative standards, ISEAL codes and the GFSI Guidance Document. They can be built on going forward as technical guidelines evolve. Each *GSSI Supplementary Component* has a rationale to explain the value that alignment with it offers to both schemes and stakeholders.

SOURCE DOCUMENTS

- 🟢 *Assuring Compliance with Social and Environmental Standards, Code of Good Practice*, ISEAL Alliance, 2012
- 🔵 Further elaboration on FAO Guidelines for the Ecolabelling of Fish and Fishery Products from Marine/Inland Capture Fisheries and FAO Technical Guidelines on Aquaculture Certification
- 🔴 GFSI Guidance Document, Sixth Edition, Version 6.3, GFSI, October 2013

D SUMMARY: FISHERIES CERTIFICATION STANDARDS

D.1 GOVERNANCE AND FISHERY MANAGEMENT

ELEMENT / GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT		*GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT*	
Fishery management organization			
Management organization	**D.1.01**	D.1.01.01 ●	**NA**
		D.1.01.02 ●	
		D.1.01.04 ●	
Adaptive management	**D.1.02**	D.1.02.01 ●	**NA**
	D.1.03		
Transboundary stocks	**D.1.04**	D.1.04.01 ●	**NA**
Management system			
Participatory management	**D.1.05**	D.1.05.03 ●	**NA**
Small scale and/or data limited fisheries	**D.1.06**	D.1.06.01 ●	
Compliance of the management system	**D.1.07**	D.1.07.01 ●	
Legal framework			
Compliance of the fishery	**D.1.08**		
	D.1.09	D.1.09.01 ●	
		D.1.09.02 ●	
	D.1.10		

D.2 MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

ELEMENT / GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT		*GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT*	
Stock under consideration			
Management objectives	**D.2.01**		
Management system			
Best scientific evidence available	**D.2.02**		
Stock under consideration			
Reference points	**D.2.03**	D.2.03.01 ●	**NA**
		D.2.03.02 ●	**NA**
Enhanced fisheries	**D.2.04**		

ELEMENT / GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT		*GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT*	
Ecosystem effects of fishing			
Non-target catches	**D.2.05**		
Endangered species	**D.2.06**		
Habitat	**D.2.07**	D.2.07.01 ●	**NA**
Dependent predators	**D.2.08**		
Ecosystem structure, processes and function	**D.2.09**	D.2.09.01 ●	

D.3 MANAGEMENT APPROACHES, STRATEGIES AND PLANS

ELEMENT / GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT		*GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT*	
Management system			
Documented management approach	**D.3.01**	D.3.01.01 ●	
Best scientific evidence available	**D.3.02**		
Stock under consideration			
Fishing mortality	**D.3.03**		
Decision rules	**D.3.04**	D.3.04.01 ●	**NA**
Enhanced fisheries	**D.3.05**		
Ecosystem effects of fishing			
Non-target catches	**D.3.06**	D.3.06.01 ●	
		D.3.06.02 ●	
		D.3.06.03 ●	
		D.3.06.04 ●	
	D.3.07		
Endangered species	**D.3.08**	D.3.08.01 ●	
Habitat	**D.3.09**	D.3.09.01 ●	**NA**
Dependent predators	**D.3.10**		
Ecosystem structure, processes and function	**D.3.11**		
Management under uncertainty			
Precautionary approach	**D.3.12**		
Fishery management documentation			
Continuous review	**D.3.13**	D.3.13.01 ●	
		D.3.13.02 ●	
	D.3.14		

D.4 DATA AND INFORMATION

ELEMENT / GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT		*GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT*	
Stock under consideration			
Target stock status	**D.4.01**	D.4.01.01 ●	**NA**
Ecosystem effects of fishing			
Ecosystem structure, processes and function	**D.4.02**		
Non-target catches	**D.4.03**	D.4.03.01 ●	
		D.4.03.02 ●	
		D.4.03.03 ●	
Endangered species	**D.4.04**		
Habitat	**D.4.05**	D.4.05.01 ●	**NA**
		D.4.05.02 ●	**NA**
Dependent predators	**D.4.06**		
Traditional, fisher or community knowledge			
Traditional, fisher or community knowledge	**D.4.07**		

D.5 ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGIES

ELEMENT / GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT		*GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT*	
Stock under consideration			
Stock assessment	**D.5.01**	D.5.01.01 ●	**NA**
	D.5.02		
	D.5.03		
Enhanced fisheries	**D.5.04**		
	D.5.05		
Ecosystem effects of fishing			
Non-target catches	**D.5.06**	D.5.06.01 ●	
Ecosystem structure, processes and function	**D.5.07**		
Habitat	**D.5.08**		
Dependent predators	**D.5.09**		
Endangered species	**D.5.10**		

D.6 STOCK AND ECOSYSTEM STATUS AND OUTCOMES

ELEMENT / GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT		*GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT*	
Stock under consideration			
Target stock status	**D.6.01**		
	D.6.02		
Enhanced fisheries	**D.6.03**		
	D.6.04		
Ecosystem effects of fishing			
Non-target catches	**D.6.05**		
Endangered species	**D.6.06**		
Habitat	**D.6.07**	D.6.07.01 ●	**NA**
Dependent predators	**D.6.08**		
Ecosystem structure, processes and function	**D.6.09**		

For Section D the GSSI Supplementary Components outline the status of existing practices in seafood certification and how they relate to internationally agreed technical guidelines developed by FAO members since the Code of Conduct was agreed in 1995. They can be built on going forward as technical guidelines evolve. Each GSSI Supplementary Component has a rationale to explain the value that alignment with it offers to both schemes and stakeholders.

SOURCE DOCUMENTS

- ● *FAO Technical Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries.* 4. Fisheries management. 4.2. The ecosystem approach to fisheries (2003).
- ● *FAO Technical Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries*. No. 4. Fisheries management. Rome, FAO. 1997.
- ● *FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication* (2014)
- ● *FAO International Guidelines for the Management of Deep Sea Fisheries in the High Seas* (adopted 2008)
- ● *FAO International Guidelines on Bycatch Management and Reduction of Discards* (adopted in 2010)
- ● *FAO Technical Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries Responsible fish trade.* No. 11. Rome, FAO. 2009.009.

EVIDENCE OF ALIGNMENT

GSSI Essential Components and *GSSI Supplementary Components* for Governance of Seafood Certification Schemes

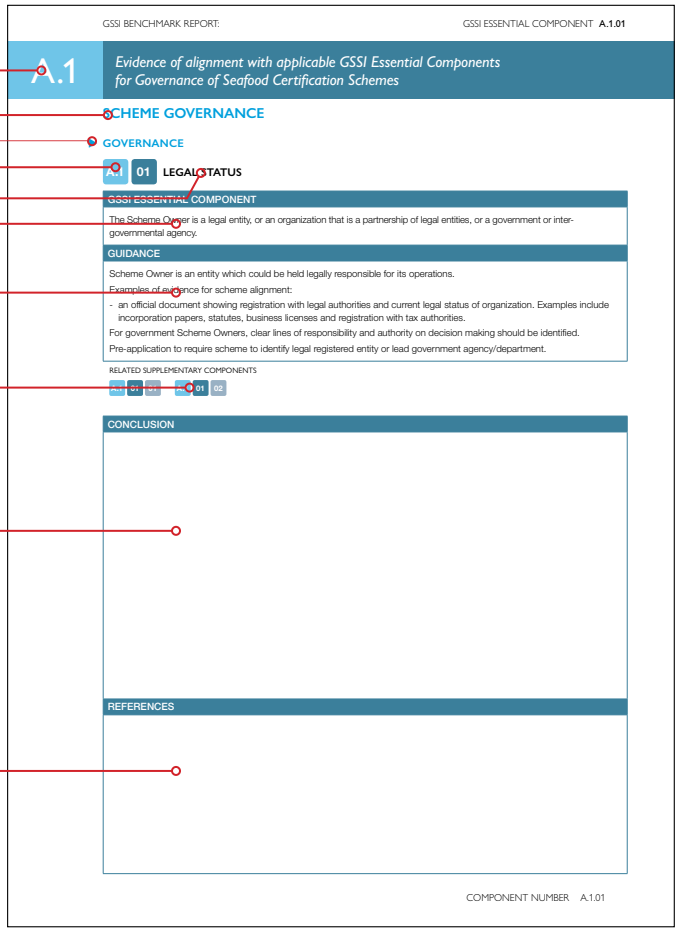
GSSI Essential Components and *GSSI Supplementary Components* for Operational Management of Seafood Certification Schemes

GSSI Essential Components and *GSSI Supplementary Components* for Fisheries Certification Standards

HOW TO READ THE EVIDENCE OF ALIGNMENT

The Evidence of Alignment consists of the conclusion of the Independent Expert, the rationale which led to this and the references supporting the conclusion which are listed below.

GSSI Essential Components



GSSI Benchmark Report identification number

Section number

Performance area

Topic

GSSI Component number

Element

GSSI Essential Component

Guidance for alignment

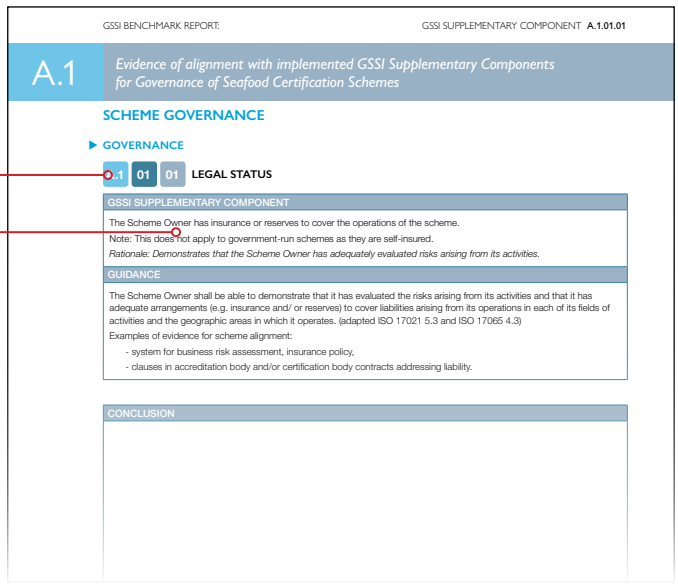
Number of related GSSI Supplementary Component(s)

Conclusion: *Summary of findings by the Independent Expert that confirms alignment of the Certification Scheme with the requirements of the Component*

References: *Evidence sighted by the Independent Expert that demonstrates alignment which could include policies, procedures, records, interviews, etc.*

Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components. These Components are grounded in the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) and the FAO Guidelines, which a seafood certification scheme must meet to be recognised by GSSI.

GSSI Supplementary Components



GSSI Supplementary Component number

GSSI Supplementary Component and rationale for inclusion

Evidence of alignment with implemented GSSI Supplementary Components. These Components are grounded in the CCRF and related FAO documents, ISO normative standards and ISEAL codes, which show a seafood certification scheme's diverse approach and help stakeholders understand where differences exist.

A

EVIDENCE OF ALIGNMENT WITH APPLICABLE **GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS** FOR GOVERNANCE OF SEAFOOD CERTIFICATION SCHEMES

A.1 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Governance of Seafood Certification Schemes*

SCHEME GOVERNANCE

▶ GOVERNANCE

A.1 01 LEGAL STATUS

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner is a legal entity, or an organization that is a partnership of legal entities, or a government or inter-governmental agency.

GUIDANCE

Scheme Owner is an entity which could be held legally responsible for its operations.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- an official document showing registration with legal authorities and current legal status of organization. Examples include incorporation papers, statutes, business licenses and registration with tax authorities.

For government Scheme Owners, clear lines of responsibility and authority on decision making should be identified.

Pre-application to require scheme to identify legal registered entity or lead government agency/department.

RELATED SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENTS

A.1 01 01 A.1 01 02

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because Audubon Nature Institute is the appointed operational scheme owner of the G.U.L.F. RFM Certification program through a public-private partnership with the State of Louisiana. Both the State of Louisiana and Audubon Nature Institute are legal entities. Audubon Nature Institute is a legal 501(c)3 not for profit organization registered in the State of Louisiana.

REFERENCESS

1) 'About Audubon' Audubon Nature Institute website. https://audubonnatureinstitute.org/about-audubon

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Scheme Operations Manual, Version 1.2, Section 2.2 (2018).

3) 503 (confidential)

4) Posted 990: https://audubonnatureinstitute.org/images/documents/about-section/990-audubon-nature-institute-2015.pdf

5) Audubon Conservation Report lists G.U.L.F. (page 7) lists G.U.L.F. https://audubonnatureinstitute.org/conservation-report

6) Audubon's full Annual Report https://audubonnatureinstitute.org/annual-report-2016

7) Financial Statements
https://audubonnatureinstitute.org/images/documents/about-section/audubon-commission-financial-statements-2015-2016.PDF

A.1 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Governance of Seafood Certification Schemes*

SCHEME GOVERNANCE

A.1 02 IMPARTIALITY

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner is not directly engaged in the operational affairs (auditing or certification) of the certification or accreditation program.

Note: This does not include complaint resolution or performance review.

GUIDANCE

Scheme Owner is not directly engaged in auditing, certification or accreditation activities in order to ensure freedom of commercial or financial pressure of assurance processes and decision making. This does not include complaint resolution or performance reviews.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- impartiality policy, impartiality clauses in certification body and accreditation body contracts, management control procedures

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the Audubon G.U.L.F. staff are not directly engaged in the operational affairs (auditing or certification) of the certification or accreditation programs. Certifications to the Audubon G.U.L.F. Fisheries Standard or Chain of Custody Standard are carried out by an independent Certification Body (CB) that is accredited to ISO/IEC Guide 17065:2012. The G.U.L.F. Certification Requirements documents provide details on the requirements for Certification Bodies carrying out certification activities to the Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standards, including the requirement that the CB can demonstrate its ability to operate impartially.

REFERENCES

1) G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements, v. 1.2 (2018)
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Certification-Requirements-v1.2-CLEAN.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. Chain of Custody Certification Requirements, version 1.1 (2017).
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/CoC-Certification-Requirements-v.1.1-FINAL-4.23.18-1.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual, version 1.2 (2018), page 8 and page 11.

4) signed G.U.L.F.-GT Service Agreement (confidential)

5) INAB Summary Report- GT accreditation audit (confidential)

A.1 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Governance of Seafood Certification Schemes*

SCHEME GOVERNANCE

A.1 03 OPERATING PROCEDURES

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner operates to a documented set of governance policies and procedures specifying at least the following:

- Board or governance body election or appointment process,
- Board or governance body representation and Terms of Reference,
- Member categories (where applicable),
- Income generation or funding processes,
- An organizational structure,
- The decision making processes of each governance body,
- Key personnel roles (responsibility and authority),
- Managing conflict of interest, and
- A conformity assessment program.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner has policies/procedures available covering all aspects in this *Essential Component* except Member categories if not applicable.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- statutes and by-laws, organizational chart, internal procedures, job descriptions, conflict of interest statements, quality assurance manuals

RELATED SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENTS

A.1 03 01

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the program is operated according to documented policies and procedures, which specify each of the areas listed in this GSSI component. The G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual contains the Program's organizational structure, description of roles, Responsibilities and Guiding Principles for all committees, and procedures for standard setting, operation and maintenance. The G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements and G.U.L.F. Chain of Custody (CoC) Certification Requirements documents further provide requirements for conformity assessment programs for the certification systems operated by CBs carrying out assessments for the G.U.L.F. RFM Program.

REFERENCES

1) 'RFM Framework' Audubon G.U.L.F. website. http://audubongulf.wpengine.com/advancing-our-fisheries/third-party-certification/framework/

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual, version 1.2 (2018).

3) G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements, v. 1.2 (2018)
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Certification-Requirements-v1.2-CLEAN.pdf

4) Audubon G.U.L.F. Chain of Custody Certification Requirements, version 1.1,
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/CoC-Certification-Requirements-v.1.1-FINAL-4.23.18-1.pdf

5) ToRs and Impartiality Declarations for all committees (confidential)

6) http://audubongulf.wpengine.com/certification/framework/

A.1 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Governance of Seafood Certification Schemes*

SCHEME GOVERNANCE

A.1 04 TRANSPARENCY OF GOVERNANCE

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner makes information freely and publicly available about the scheme's governance structure, Scheme Ownership, standards and standard-setting procedures, and the composition, operating procedures and responsibilities of its governance bodies.

GUIDANCE

All applicable listed governance documents are easily accessible online, free or at cost of any printing and handling costs.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- applicable documents posted on website, easy to find and free to download. If printed copies are offered - charges are reasonable to cover printing and handling.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the Audubon G.U.L.F. website provides information regarding the Program's governance structure, standards, standard-setting procedures, and the composition, operating procedures and responsibilities of its governance bodies. Additionally, Audubon Nature Institute's website provides publicly available information regarding the organization's structure, governance, mission and accountability.

REFERENCES

1) 'RFM Program Frameowrk' Audubon G.U.L.F. website. https://www.audubongulf.org/certification/framework/

2) 'Certification Documents' Audubon G.U.L.F. website. https://www.audubongulf.org/certification/g-u-l-f-standard/

3) 'About Audubon' Audubon Nature Institute website. https://audubonnatureinstitute.org/about-audubon

A.1 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Governance of Seafood Certification Schemes*

SCHEME GOVERNANCE

A.1 05 GOVERNANCE COMPLAINTS

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner has a transparent process to assess complaints based on a publicly available procedure for resolving complaints related to governance, scheme management and executive functions.

GUIDANCE

Complaints procedure is documented and clearly outlines steps, timelines and responsibilities to address and resolve complaints. The process for submitting a complaint - how and to whom - is public and easily understood. A process is in place to identify when and if the complaint is addressed and resolved.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- easily found complaint process and submission form online.
- documentation of existing complaints and their resolution.
- possibly request accreditation and certification bodies for previous submissions of complaints and resolution.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual contains policies and procedures for addressing complaints in Section 8. These procedure are also publicly available on the G.U.L.F. website.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual, version 1.2 (2018). Section 8. pages 31-33.

2) 'RFM Certification Documents' Audubon G.U.L.F. website https://www.audubongulf.org/certification/g-u-l-f-standard/

A.1 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Governance of Seafood Certification Schemes*

SCHEME GOVERNANCE

A.1 06 GOVERNANCE PARTICIPATION

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner requires that stakeholders have the opportunity to participate in or provide direct input to the top governance body.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner provides freely accessible public information outlining how stakeholders can participate in or provide direct input to the top governance body.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- online process document for submission of input, governance body selection process and stakeholder composition, review of previous stakeholder inputs and verify if/how this reached top governance.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the Audubon G.U.L.F. Operations Manual contains a set of policies and procedures for managing stakeholder input in Section 7 and this procedure is posted publicly on the Audubon G.U.L.F. website.
G.U.L.F. solicits pubic comment at regular intervals and accepts stakeholder comments at all times as is stated on the G.U.L.F. website with instructions on how to submit comment and contact information for additional information.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual, version 1.2 (2018), Section 7, pages 29-30.

2) 'Public Comment' Audubon G.U.L.F. website. https://www.audubongulf.org/certification/public-comment/

3) 'Procedures for Managing Stakeholder Input' Audubon G.U.L.F. website. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/7-Managing-Stakeholder-Input-Procedure-1.12.18.pdf

4) Stakeholder comment on G.U.L.F Guidance v 1.1

5) TAC conference call minutes

6) TAC conference call follow up (confidential)

7) Edited guidance document

8) Changes to v1.2 RFM standard

A.1 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Governance of Seafood Certification Schemes*

SCHEME GOVERNANCE

▶ SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

A.1 07 SCHEME SCOPE

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner has a defined scope for certification under its scheme.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner clearly defines scope that standard covers, for example which species, production systems/gear type, geographical locations, company structures (single units, groupings of sites/boats, smallholder groups/small-scale fisheries, subcontractors, product categories, certifiable units in the chain of custody etc.).

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- explicit scope definition in certification methodology/requirements, standards, objectives.
- contracts with accreditation bodies, certification bodies and/or certified operations

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the scope of the program is clearly stated in the G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual (Section 1.2: RFM Program Objectives and Scope) as 'fisheries within the U.S. Gulf States territorial waters and EEZ of the Gulf of Mexico'. This is also publicly posted on the 'About the G.U.L.F. RFM Certification' page on the G.U.L.F. website.

The scope is also documented in the certificate of accreditation of the CB.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual, version 1.2 (2018), Section 1.2, pages 5-6.

2) 'About G.U.L.F. RFM Certification' Audubon G.U.L.F. website.
https://www.audubongulf.org/certification/about-g-u-l-f-certification/

3) INAB. Accreditation Certificate for Global Trust
http://www.inab.ie/FileUpload/Product-Certification/Global-TRUST-Certification-Ltd-6002.pdf

4) Accreditation Certificate

5) Accreditation schedule (confidential)

A.1 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Governance of Seafood Certification Schemes*

SCHEME GOVERNANCE

A.1 08 SCHEME OBJECTIVES

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner has defined objectives for its scheme that aim for responsible use of the resource and has publicly available performance indicators related to scheme objectives.

GUIDANCE

Objectives for the scheme are defined and documented. The defined objectives cover all environmental resources covered in the standards; this would normally be for example fish populations, habitats and ecosystems, water, possibly energy, endangered species and biodiversity within the impact zone. Indirect use of resources for e.g. feed production may also be addressed. For each objective and associated resources, performance indicators are defined, documented and publically available.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- standard document with objectives and thresholds.

RELATED SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENTS

A.1 08 01 A.1 08 02

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the primary objective of the program is as follows:
'Provide U.S. Gulf of Mexico fisheries with an accredited "Certification of Responsible Fisheries Management" derived from internationally recognized guidelines and best management practices.'
The G.U.L.F. website provides public information on the goals of the program on the "About G.U.L.F. RFM page, including the following:

'This model was adopted at the request of the Gulf seafood industry to provide a choice in seafood certifications that demonstrate the responsible practices of Gulf fisheries.' This page also identifies the key features of the program and all Standards and requirements for certification are publicly posted on the website. The key performance indicators of the scheme are identified within the RFM Standard and Guidance to Assessment documents. Fishery certifications are posted on the website along with the full assessment report demonstrating how the fishery meets the requirements of the Standard. Assurance that products identified as G.U.L.F. RFM certification in the marketplace is demonstrated through Chain of Custody (CoC) certification of companies handling certified product and making the claim. CoC requirements are also publicly posted on the G.U.L.F. website and certified entities are posted on the site.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual, version 1.2 (2018), Section 1.2, pages 5-6.

2) 'About G.U.L.F. RFM Certification' Audubon G.U.L.F. website. https://www.audubongulf.org/certification/about-g-u-l-f-certification/

3) 'RFM Certification Documents" Audubon G.U.L.F. website. https://www.audubongulf.org/certification/g-u-l-f-standard/

4) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Chain of Custody Standard, v. 1.1
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/CoC-Standard-V1.1-FINAL-4.23.18.pdf

5) 'Chain of Custody' Audubon G.U.L.F. website. https://www.audubongulf.org/certification/chain-of-custody/

6) https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf
Section 1, p. 9 and 10

A.1 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Governance of Seafood Certification Schemes*

SCHEME GOVERNANCE

▶ NON-DISCRIMINATION

A.1 09 NON-DISCRIMINATION – OPENNESS

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner ensures that all types of fishery/aquaculture operations within the scope of its scheme can apply for certification, regardless of their scale, size or management arrangements, and has not set an upper limit on the number of operations that can be certified.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner application process ensures equal access within the defined standard scope whether directly, sub-contractors or outsourcing (i.e. to certification body).

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- application process selection criteria do not discriminate on factors such as size, scale, management, minimum number of operators.
- review declined applications are due to other non-discriminatory issues (i.e. incomplete, out of scope)

RELATED SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENTS

A.1 09 01

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the application is open to all fisheries and seafood entities that fall within the scope of the Program. The RFM Certification Requirements document, Section 5 (publicly posted) contains the application requirements that the Certification Body must follow and there are no restrictions with regard to the number, size, scale or management structure of the fisheries that would prevent a fishery within the scope from applying.

REFERENCESS

Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements, v. 1.2 (2018)
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Certification-Requirements-v1.2-CLEAN.pdf

A.1 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Governance of Seafood Certification Schemes*

SCHEME GOVERNANCE

A.1 10 NON-DISCRIMINATION – MARKET ACCESS

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner does not have mandatory requirements that require a fishery / aquaculture operation to be certified in order to access any markets.

GUIDANCE

Application selection process and certification methodology/requirements do not include mandatory requirements for access to markets.

Absence of such requirements indicates alignment.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because it is a voluntary program and there are no requirements made by the scheme for a fishery to be certified to gain market access. This is clearly stated on the "About G.U.L.F. RFM Certification" page on the G.U.L.F. website.

REFERENCESS

About the G.U.L.F. RFM Certification' Audubon G.U.L.F. website.
https://www.audubongulf.org/certification/about-g-u-l-f-certification/

A.1 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Governance of Seafood Certification Schemes*

SCHEME GOVERNANCE

▶ SCHEME INTEGRITY MONITORING PROGRAM

A.1 11 INTERNAL REVIEW

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner undertakes a fully documented annual management review of scheme performance, including its assurance program, and the performance of certification and accreditation bodies. The results of the review are used to revise its operating procedures and practices, where necessary.

GUIDANCE

System exists for an annual documented management review that covers scheme performance, assurance program, accreditation bodies and certification bodies as applicable. A documented system to use the results of the review to revise operating procedures and systems is available.

RELATED SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENTS

A.1 11 01

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because Section 9 of the G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual contains the Procedure for RFM Program Performance Monitoring and Internal Review (also posted on the G.U.L.F. website) defining the requirements for annual review of the program.

The G.U.L.F. RFM Schemes Manager reports annually, at a minimum, to the G.U.L.F. RFM Oversight Committee on all aspects of the Program including a review of all Standards development and revisions, changes and activities for all committees, certification activities including annual review of certification bodies and accreditation status, and any other G.U.L.F. program activities.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual, version 1.2, Section 9, page 34.

2) 'RFM Certification Documents" Audubon G.U.L.F. website. https://www.audubongulf.org/certification/g-u-l-f-standard/

3) Annual Reviews- OC meeting minutes (confidential)

A.2 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Governance of Seafood Certification Schemes*

SCHEME MANAGEMENT

▶ LOGO USE AND CLAIMS

A.2 01 CLAIMS POLICY

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner has a publicly available policy governing use of symbols, logos and claims.

GUIDANCE

Scheme Owner has a policy that covers use of symbols, logos and claims if applicable to its system. The policy is public, easily accessible and available in languages appropriate to geographic scope.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the G.U.L.F. website contains information under both the 'Fishery Certification Process' and 'Chain of Custody' sections on making a certification claim and the Claims Use Agreement containing the rules of use for Certification Claims is posted in each section.

The G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual, Section 12 'Scope of Certification Claim and Rules for Use' sets the procedure for use of certification claims.

REFERENCES

1) 'G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Claims Use Agreement' Audubon G.U.L.F. website. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/G.U.L.F.-RFM-Certification-Claim-Usage-Agreement-Dec2017.pdf

2) G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual, v 1.2 (2018), Section 12, pages 38-40.

A.2 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Governance of Seafood Certification Schemes*

SCHEME MANAGEMENT

A.2 02 RELEVANT CLAIMS

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

Through the claims policy, the Scheme Owner ensures copyright is protected and that symbols, logos and claims are only applied to activities that are within the scope of certification, do not overstate or mislead users relative to the defined scope, and are relevant to that scope.

GUIDANCE

Claims policy (see A.2.01), contracts and MoUs ensure that logo use and claims are copyright protected and are restricted to activities within the scope of certification. This includes symbols, logos and claims on and off product, such as marketing materials, consumer brochures and the internet.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- legal registration of logos and seals with applicable agents.
- claims policy covers clear scope for on and off product use, claims and statements including policy for misuse.
- contractual relationships specify explicitly adherence to claims policy.
- records of applications for use of claims, records of complaints or violations.

RELATED SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENTS

A.2 02 01

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because there is a clear policy for the rules of use to make a G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Claim as defined in the G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual, Section 12. Eligible entities must apply to the Scheme Owner for use of a Certification Claim and must sign the G.U.L.F. RFM Claims Use Agreement committing to the terms of use.

REFERENCES

1) 'G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Claims Use Agreement' Audubon G.U.L.F. website. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/G.U.L.F.-RFM-Certification-Claim-Usage-Agreement-Dec2017.pdf

2) G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual, v 1.2 (2018), Section 12, pages 38-40.

A.2 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Governance of Seafood Certification Schemes*

SCHEME MANAGEMENT

A.2 03 CLAIMS-MAKING REQUIREMENTS

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner requires that the certified organization does not make or permit any misleading statement or use regarding the status or scope of its certification.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner has a contract, MoU or other formal arrangement with certified entity.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- publically available Logo Use and Claim document which is explicitly referenced in formal arrangement with certified entity.
- other examples include direct logo agreements, licensing or membership agreements with the Scheme Owner or its commercial partner or indirect contracts/agreements through the certification body.
- in the latter case the requirements to include this in contracts/agreements should be outlined in certification requirements/methodologies or similar contract/agreement between the Scheme Owner and the certification body.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because there is a clear policy for the rules of use to make a G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Claim as defined in the G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual, Section 12. Eligible entities must apply to the Scheme Owner for use of a Certification Claim and must sign the G.U.L.F. RFM Claims Use Agreement committing to the terms of use. The Agreement includes the following requirements:

1. The G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Claim is only authorized for use in association with product originating from a certified Gulf fishery.

2. The Authorized User acknowledges and agrees that it may use the G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Claim only in connection with product originating from an RFM certified Gulf fishery.

4. The Authorized User acknowledges that no on-product claim shall be used in connection with the G.U.L.F. RFM Certification until such time as Audubon verifies that the Authorized User holds a current Chain of Custody certification and approves the on-product claim request submitted by the Authorized User.

6. Permission to use the G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Claim is non-exclusive, non-transferable and cannot be sublicensed. This permission will remain in effect for as long as the Authorized User fully complies with these terms and conditions, or future terms and conditions as defined by Audubon.

REFERENCES

1) 'G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Claims Use Agreement' Audubon G.U.L.F. website. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/G.U.L.F.-RFM-Certification-Claim-Usage-Agreement-Dec2017.pdf

2) G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual, v 1.2 (2018) Section 12, pages 38-40.

A.2 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Governance of Seafood Certification Schemes*

SCHEME MANAGEMENT

A.2 04 LOGO MANAGEMENT

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner or its delegated authority issues written and enforceable authorizations and/or licenses to use the scheme's mark/claim/logo only when the facility and/or product has been certified as being in conformity with the relevant standard.

GUIDANCE

Contracts or formal agreements with the certified entity specify legal responsibility for the use of the scheme's mark/claim/logo only when the facility and/or product are certified.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- direct logo agreements, licensing or membership agreements with the Scheme Owner or a delegated authority.
- indirect contracts/agreements through the certification body.
- in the latter case the requirements should be outlined in certification requirements/methodologies or similar contract/agreement between the Scheme Owner and the certification body to include this in contracts/agreements.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because there is a clear policy for the rules of use to make a G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Claim as defined in the G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual, Section 12. Eligible entities must apply to the Scheme Owner for use of a Certification Claim and must sign the G.U.L.F. RFM Claims Use Agreement committing to the terms of use. The Agreement includes the following:

2. The Authorized User acknowledges and agrees that it may use the G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Claim only in connection with product originating from a certified Gulf fishery.

4. The Authorized User acknowledges that no on-product claim shall be used in connection with the G.U.L.F. RFM Certification until such time as Audubon verifies that the Authorized User holds a current Chain of Custody certification and approves the on-product claim request submitted by the Authorized User.

REFERENCES

1) 'G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Claims Use Agreement' Audubon G.U.L.F. website. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/G.U.L.F.-RFM-Certification-Claim-Usage-Agreement-Dec2017.pdf

2) G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual, v 1.2 (2018) Section 12, pages 38-40.

3) signed Claim Use Agreement (Confidential)

A.2 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Governance of Seafood Certification Schemes*

SCHEME MANAGEMENT

A.2 05 CERTIFICATE CONTENT MANAGEMENT

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner requires certificates to include, at a minimum:

- the name and address of the accreditation body or Scheme Owner;
- the name and address of the certification body;
- the name and address of the certification holder;
- the effective date of issue of the certificate;
- the substance (scope of certification) of the certificate;
- the term for which the certification is valid;
- signature of the issuing officer.

GUIDANCE

The issuer of the certificate ensures that minimum information enables identification and contact information of assurance process parties (accreditation body, Scheme Owner and certification body), unique name and address of certified entity, date and validity, scope and signature of issuing officer.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- mandatory normative documents such as certification requirements/methodologies with certification bodies that cover all points listed.
- mandatory certificate template includes all points listed.
- review examples of certificates.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements, Section 7.6 defines the requirements that Certification Bodies must follow for Certificates issued. 7.6.1 specifically requires the following information on the certificate:

- Applicant(s) address
- Unit of Certification/Assessment Units
- Management Authority(ies)
- Issue Date (this is the certification decision date)
- Surveillance date (annual)
- Expiry Date (5 years less a day from the Issue Date)
- Certification Body name and address
- Accreditation status
- Name and signature of issuing officer
- Scheme Owner's name and address

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements, v. 1.2 (2018), Clause 7.6.1, page 25.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Certification-Requirements-v1.2-CLEAN.pdf

2) Louisiana Blue Crab certificate
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Form-17-RFM-GULF-Louisiana-Blue-Crab-Cert-2016-amended-18.1.18.pdf

A.2 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Governance of Seafood Certification Schemes*

SCHEME MANAGEMENT

A.2 06 MINIMUM PERCENTAGE-BASED CLAIMS

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

Where a seafood ingredient can be certified, the Scheme Owner requires that at least 95% of the total seafood ingredient within a product is of certified origin in order for the scheme's logo or certification mark to be used. Where there is less than 95%, the scheme requires that the percentage must be stated and the logo or certification mark cannot be used.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner specifies minimum percentages for use of logo and claims in mixed products. This states that at least 95% of the total seafood ingredient that can be certified, for unqualified claims and for lower percentages, a qualifying statement of the percentage must be used in conjunction with the logo or claim.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- normative documents such as scope definition, certification requirements/ methodologies or other agreements between the Scheme Owner and certification body that define these percentage claims.
- logo use and claims policy which is explicitly referenced in formal contracts and agreements with certification bodies and/or certified entities.
- review examples of issued certificates where these are public or product information in online databases of certified products where these are available.
- if the Scheme Owner does not allow mixed product, then this *Essential Component* is aligned.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the G.U.L.F. Chain of Custody Standard, Clause 2.3 requires the following:

2.3 Products are not eligible to carry the official certification mark/claim if certified and non-certified seafood of the same species is mixed.

2.4 Compound products (e.g. ready meals with multiple seafood products): these may contain non-certified seafood ingredients where the certified seafood ingredients shall be 95% or more by weight of the total seafood ingredients in the final product.

REFERENCES

Audubon G.U.L.F. Chain of Custody Standard, v. 1.1 (2017)
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/CoC-Standard-V1.1-FINAL-4.23.18.pdf

A.3 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Governance of Seafood Certification Schemes*

STANDARD SETTING AND MAINTENANCE

▶ STANDARD SETTING BODY

A.3 01 STANDARD SETTING BODY

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

A Scheme Owner or other suitable arrangement (e.g. technical committee of independent experts, delegated standard-setting body) is assigned with the tasks of setting, reviewing, revising, assessing, verifying and approving standards.

GUIDANCE

The organizational chart clearly identifies the responsible person for assigning the management of the standard setting process. In addition, the organizational chart or related TORs/contracts with external bodies identifies where each of the tasks (setting, reviewing, revising, assessing, verifying and approving standards) are assigned to.

This documentation clearly indicates where the overall responsibility for the standard setting process lies.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because there is an appointed Fisheries Technical Advisory Committee (F-TAC) for the development, review, revision and assessment of the RFM Fisheries Standard, a Chain of Custody Technical Advisory Committee (CoC-TAC) for the development, review, revision and assessment of the CoC Standard, and an Oversight Committee that reviews and approves the Standards based on recommendations by the TACs.

An organizational chart along with membership and Terms of Reference for each committee are posted on the G.U.L.F. website and contained in the G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual, version 1.2 (2018).

2) 'RFM Framework' Audubon G.U.L.F. website. http://audubongulf.wpengine.com/certification/framework/

A.3 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Governance of Seafood Certification Schemes*

STANDARD SETTING AND MAINTENANCE

A.3 02 CENTRAL FOCAL POINT

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner identifies a central point of contact for standards-related enquiries and for submission of comments. The Scheme Owner makes contact information for this contact point readily available including on the internet.

GUIDANCE

Contact details for standard related enquiries and comments are easily available for the public, including online. This can be the same as a general contact point, but should explicitly identify standard related scope.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- review website and verify that point of contact responds to enquiries.
- review past enquiries and submitted comments

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because there is an appointed Schemes Manager for the G.U.L.F. RFM Program as defined in the G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual and contact information is publicly available on the G.U.L.F. website and on all G.U.L.F. RFM Certification communications. There is also a Public Comment Process page on the G.U.L.F. website that provides additional information on providing comment regarding standards-related inquiries.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual, version 1.2 (2018).

2) 'Public Comment Process' Audubon G.U.L.F. website. https://www.audubongulf.org/certification/public-comment/

A.3 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Governance of Seafood Certification Schemes*

STANDARD SETTING AND MAINTENANCE

▶ STANDARD SETTING PROCEDURES

A.3 03 STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE PROCEDURE

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner has publicly available procedures for the process under which each standard is developed and revised.

GUIDANCE

Procedures defining the process of standard development and revision are easily available for the public, such as online, in appropriate languages.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the Standard Setting and Maintenance Procedure (Section 6 of the G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual) is publicly posted on the G.U.L.F. website.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual, v. 1.2, Section 6, pages 26-28.

2) 'Standard Setting and Maintenance Procedure' Audubon G.U.L.F. website. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/6-Standard-Setting-Procedure-1.12.18.pdf

A.3 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Governance of Seafood Certification Schemes*

STANDARD SETTING AND MAINTENANCE

A.3 04 WORK PROGRAM

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

A work program is prepared and made publicly available at least every six months, including:

- Scheme Owner's name and address
- the list of standards currently under preparation;
- the list of standards currently under reviewing or revision;
- the list of standards which were adopted in the preceding period.

GUIDANCE

A work program for standard setting and revision is easily available for the public, such as online. The program is updated at a minimum every 6 months. The work program contains all listed items.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the RFM Program Work Plan is posted on the G.U.L.F. website and is updated every six months. Previous work plans are also archived and posted on the site.

REFERENCES

RFM Program Work Plan' Audubon G.U.L.F. website. https://www.audubongulf.org/certification/rfm-scheme-work-plan/

A.3 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Governance of Seafood Certification Schemes*

STANDARD SETTING AND MAINTENANCE

A.3 05 TERMS OF REFERENCE

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

At the outset of a new standard development or revision process, the Scheme Owner develops or updates terms of reference (ToRs), which includes at least the following elements:

- Proposed scope of the standard and intended geographic application;
- Clear objectives that the standard seeks to achieve and how those are linked to the organization's intended change.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner has mechanism in place to develop or update ToR at the outset of standard development or revision process that includes: proposed scope, geographical application and objectives.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- outlined in an internal procedure and part of the quality handbook for standard setting.

For Scheme Owners that have standard development or a revision process going on, check online availability of this information.

RELATED SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENTS

A.3 05 01

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because all Terms of Reference (ToRs), Standards Setting and Maintenance Procedures and the G.U.L.F. RFM Work Plan are publicly available on the G.U.L.F. website and updated as necessary.

Clause 6.3.9 of the G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual requires the following:
'On each occasion, the scope, objectives of the review, guidance on comment process, timelines and decision making procedure will be provided to stakeholders in the announcement.'

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual, version 1.2 (2018).

2) 'Standard Setting and Maintenance Procedure' Audubon G.U.L.F. website. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/6-Standard-Setting-Procedure-1.12.18.pdf

3) 'RFM Framework' Audubon G.U.L.F. website. http://audubongulf.org/certification/framework/

4) 'RFM Program Work Plan' Audubon G.U.L.F. website. https://www.audubongulf.org/certification/rfm-scheme-work-plan/

A.3 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Governance of Seafood Certification Schemes*

STANDARD SETTING AND MAINTENANCE

A.3 06 DECISION MAKING PROCESS

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner strives for consensus decisions on the content of the standard. Where consensus cannot be achieved, the Scheme Owner defines criteria in advance to determine when alternative decision-making procedures should come into effect and what the decision-making thresholds will be.

GUIDANCE

A mechanism is in place to assure a consensus decision is found where possible. In addition, the mechanism describes how decisions shall be made when a consensus is not possible. The mechanism assures that stakeholders are informed about this mechanism.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- internal procedures and/or quality handbook for standard setting and maintenance outlines decision making.
- meeting minutes/email correspondence.

Standard setting archives and draft standards and meeting minutes could verify that this mechanism was implemented during previous decision-making.

RELATED SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENTS

A.3 06 01 A.3 06 02 A.3 06 03 A.3 06 04 A.3 06 05

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because each of the three committees (OC, F-TAC, CoC TAC) have Terms of Reference that include language regarding decision-making procedures. All committees shall strive to meet a consensus in decision making, however, will operate on a majority vote when consensus cannot be reached.
Each Committee's ToR states the following procedure:

'Each member shall have one vote, the Chair or person presiding shall, in the event of an equal division, have a second casting vote'

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual, version 1.2 (2018).

2) ToRs for each committee are posted on the RFM Framework page on the G.U.L.F. website http://audubongulf.wpengine.com/certification/framework/

A.3 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Governance of Seafood Certification Schemes*

STANDARD SETTING AND MAINTENANCE

A.3 07 COMPLAINTS

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner, or delegated authority makes impartial and documented efforts to resolve procedural complaints related to standard-setting, based on a publicly documented complaints resolution mechanism. Decisions taken on complaints are disclosed at least to the affected parties.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner or delegated authority has a publicly available complaint resolution mechanism related to standard setting. A general contact may be used, but must explicitly note standard setting complaints. Resolutions are documented and free of bias. Decisions on complaints are disclosed, at a minimum, to affected parties.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- internal quality assurance manual.
- previous complaints have been resolved according to this policy.
- decisions taken on previous complaints have been disclosed to the affected party.

Possibly request and cross-check with any previous procedural complaints from stakeholders.

RELATED SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENTS

A.3 07 01

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because there is a Complaints and Appeals Procedure defined in Section 8 of the G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual and posted publicly on the G.U.L.F. website. This procedure establishes a method to resolve complaints including the appointment of an ad-hoc committee, if necessary, to ensure impartiality.

This procedure also requires that the Schemes Manager act as the point person for all complaints and appeals and requires that a report be provided to the compliant upon completion of the investigation including the outcome and any further actions, if any, that will be taken for its resolution.

REFERENCES

1) 'Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual, version 1.2 (2018) Section 8, pages 31-33.

2) 'Complaints and Appeals Procedure' Audubon G.U.L.F. Website. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/8-Complaints-and-Appeals-Procedure-1.12.18.pdf

A.3 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Governance of Seafood Certification Schemes*

STANDARD SETTING AND MAINTENANCE

A.3 08 STANDARDS REVIEW AND REVISION

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner reviews standards at least every five years for continued relevance and for effectiveness in meeting their stated objectives and, if necessary, revises them in a timely manner.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner has a process in place for reviewing all standards to ensure continued relevance and meeting stated objectives. Relevance can include market uptake, stakeholder scope and support. Outcome and assessment reports can identify progress towards objectives. Review should be at least every five years.

Example of evidence of alignment:

- internal procedure, quality handbook, public work program.
- monitoring and evaluation system.
- public comments and consideration of reports for standard revisions.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the Standard Setting and Maintenance Procedure (Section 6 of the G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual), clause 6.3.2 requires that a major review of the Standards and related documents shall be conducted in accordance with G.U.L.F. RFM Work Plans and undertaken at least every five years.

Additionally, clause 6.3.4 requires that each TAC meet at least once per year to confirm whether review and amendment of the Standards and related documents is required more frequently to maintain consistency with program objectives and normative documents.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual, version 1.2 (2018), Section 6, pages 26-28.

2) 'Standard Setting and maintenance Procedure' Audubon G.U.L.F. website. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/6-Standard-Setting-Procedure-1.12.18.pdf

3) Fisheries TAC Meeting minutes (confidential)

A.3 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Governance of Seafood Certification Schemes*

STANDARD SETTING AND MAINTENANCE

A.3 09 PROPOSALS FOR REVISIONS

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner allows for comments on the standard to be submitted by any interested party at any time and considers them during the subsequent standards revision process.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner has a permanent publicly available point of contact defined online for the submission of comments on the standard. This is not just during the development or revision process. A general point of contact online is acceptable for small schemes, as long as it explicitly states that all stakeholders can submit comments on the standard at any time. All comments on standards are considered in subsequent revision process.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- scheme's website with form for submitting comments on standards.
- internal procedure, quality handbook describing the receiving, filing and incorporation of submissions during the subsequent revision process.

Review ongoing submissions by interested parties on file.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because because there is a central point of contact for standards-related comments identified on the G.U.L.F. website and the Public Comment Process page of the website states: 'Stakeholders are welcome to submit comments/concerns to G.U.L.F. at any time.

Information submitted outside the official Public Comment periods will be reviewed and forwarded to the appropriate committee(s) for consideration. All stakeholder comments received by G.U.L.F. will be made public in a non-attributable way on the G.U.L.F. website per the Managing Stakeholder Input Procedure (Section 7 of the G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual).

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual, version 1.2 (2018), Section 7, pages 29-30.

2) 'Public Comment' Audubon G.U.L.F. website. https://www.audubongulf.org/certification/public-comment/

3) Fisheries TAC Meeting minutes (incl. Review of public comments) (confidential)

A.3 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Governance of Seafood Certification Schemes*

STANDARD SETTING AND MAINTENANCE

A.3 10 RECORD KEEPING

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner keeps on file for a period of at least one full standards revision the following records related to each standard development or revision process:

– policies and procedures guiding the standard-setting activity;

– lists of stakeholders contacted;

– interested parties involved at each stage of the process;

– comments received and a synopsis of how those comments were taken into account; and

– all drafts and final versions of the standard.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner has a mechanism is in place to assure all records outlined remain on file for at least one full standards revision period.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- internal procedure, quality handbook describing records to be kept, document and retention policy.

Review the full range of records for the most previous standard development and revision process.

RELATED SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENTS

A.3 10 01

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because all records are retained on file. The ToRs for each committee require that a correct record of the proceedings of each meeting is taken and all Committee meeting minutes are kept on file. All public comments and revisions to Standards occur through the TACs and are recorded in meetings minutes for each committee. The G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual also contains a Document Control Procedure (Section 11) with the following clause:

11.3.4
On re-authorization of a document, one copy of the outgoing document shall be retained and denoted with the term 'superseded' inserted across the table.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual, version 1.2 (2018).

2) 'Document Control Procedure' Audubon G.U.L.F. website.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/11-Document-Control-Procedures-1.12.18.pdf

3) ToRs for each committee are posted on the RFM Framework page on the G.U.L.F. website
http://audubongulf.wpengine.com/certification/framework/

4) Fisheries TAC Meeting minutes (incl. Review of public comments) (confidential)

5) 12.18.17 Standard V1.2 TRACKED CHANGES-OPTIONS (confidential)

A.3 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Governance of Seafood Certification Schemes*

STANDARD SETTING AND MAINTENANCE

▶ PARTICIPATION AND CONSULTATION

A.3 11 PUBLIC SUMMARY

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

At the outset of a standard development or revision process, the Scheme Owner makes publicly available a summary of the process that includes:

- contact information and information on how to contribute to the consultation;
- summary of the terms of reference for the standard, including the 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; and
- decision-making procedures, including how decisions are made and who makes them.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner has a mechanism in place assuring that a summary of the process is made easily available for the public online at the outset of the process. This includes Who and How to contribute, timeline, summary ToR (A.3.05) and decision making (who and how).

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- internal procedure/quality handbook describing elements and process of public summary.
- examples of availability of past or current information.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the required information is made available on the Audubon G.U.L.F. website at the start of the standard development or revision process as defined in the Standard Setting and Maintenance Procedure, Section 6 of the G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual. Clauses 6.3.7-6.3.9 of the Operations Manual require that the development or review of standards be publicly announced and that the scope, objectives, comment process, timelines and decision-making procedure are provided in the announcement.

These requirements are reiterated in the Managing Stakeholder Input Procedure (Section 7, G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual), clauses7.4.1-7.4.3.

These Procedures are publicly posted on the G.U.L.F. website and there is a Public Comment page containing the details of each public comment period. This information is also distributed to stakeholders through an e-newsletter.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual, version 1.2 (2018), Section 6, pages 26-28.

2) 'Public Comment' Audubon G.U.L.F. website. https://www.audubongulf.org/certification/public-comment/

3) 'Standard Setting and Maintenance Procedure' Audubon G.U.L.F. website. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/6-Standard-Setting-Procedure-1.12.18.pdf

4) 'Managing Stakeholder Input Procedure' Audubon G.U.L.F. website. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/7-Managing-Stakeholder-Input-Procedure-1.12.18.pdf

A.3 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Governance of Seafood Certification Schemes*

STANDARD SETTING AND MAINTENANCE

A.3 12 BALANCED PARTICIPATION

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner or delegated authority ensures participation by independent technical experts and encourages balanced participation by stakeholders in the standard development, revision and approval process.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner, or delegated authority, has mechanism to ensure participation of necessary technical experts and balance of different stakeholder perspectives in standard development and maintenance. A balanced participation of stakeholders would include: fisheries/aquaculture management authorities, the fishing/aquaculture industry, fish workers organizations, fishing/aquaculture communities, the scientific community, environmental interest groups, fish processors/ traders/retailers, aquaculture input providers such as feed providers, hatcheries/nurseries and possibly treatment providers, as well as consumer associations.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- internal procedure/quality handbook for standard development
- revision and approval processes that describe how balance is achieved, such as through stakeholder mapping, announcements and invitation.

Draft documents and meeting minutes/email correspondence indicate that during standard development, revision and approval processes of the past, independent technical experts participated, and a balanced participation by stakeholders was encouraged.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because there is a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) appointed for each standard (Fisheries and Chain of Custody) and each TAC contains a cross-section of stakeholders and experts representing fisheries science, environmental science, fishery management, non-governmental organizations, academia and industry and supply chain representatives.

The ToRs for each TAC require sufficient representation of the broad policy, management, fishery and environmental sciences, traceability, supply chains and operational aspects of U.S. Gulf fisheries. The membership of each TAC is posted on the G.U.L.F. website and will be adapted from time to time to ensure it continues to represent the interests of the region and areas of broader certification interest. Members are also required to sign an Impartiality Declaration to ensure that there are no conflicts of interest.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual, version 1.2 (2018).

2) TAC memberships and Terms of Reference are located on the 'RFM Framework' page of the G.U.L.F. website. http://audubongulf.wpengine.com/certification/framework/

3) Meeting documents for both the F-TAC and the Fisheries TAC (confidential)

4) Signed impartialiity agreements for all TAC members (confidential)

A.3 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Governance of Seafood Certification Schemes*

STANDARD SETTING AND MAINTENANCE

A.3 13 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner allows a period of at least 60 days for the submission of comments on the draft standard.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner has a mechanism is in place to assure a minimum of 60 days for comments on the draft standard.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- internal procedure/quality handbook defining public comment period.
- ToR

Review previous comments and dates for submission on draft standards.

RELATED SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENTS

A.3 13 01

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the Standard Setting and Maintenance Procedure requires a 60-day public comment period:

6.3.7- '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.'

A summary of the Public Comment periods held to date are posted on the G.U.L.F. website.

The initial public comment period for the development of the G.U.L.F. RFM Standard was opened on December 15, 2014 and ran through February 15, 2016.

The initial public comment period for the Chain of Custody Standard was opened on June 1, 2017 and ran through August 1, 2017

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual, version 1.2 (2018), Section 6, pages 26-28.

2) 'Standard Setting and Maintenance Procedure' Audubon G.U.L.F. website. http://audubongulf.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/6-Standard-Setting-Procedure-12.9.16.pdf

3) 'Public Comment' Audubon G.U.L.F. website. https://www.audubongulf.org/certification/public-comment/

A.3 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Governance of Seafood Certification Schemes*

STANDARD SETTING AND MAINTENANCE

A.3 14 PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

No later than the start of the comment period, the Scheme Owner publishes a notice announcing the period for commenting in a national or, as may be, regional or international publication of standardization activities and/or on the internet.

GUIDANCE

Timely announcements are made regarding the public comment period in appropriate channels so that they are easily available to relevant stakeholders. This can be online or in an appropriate publication. Dates should be clearly stated.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- internal procedure defining process.
- previous announcements are dated and were published before the beginning of the comment period.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the Standard Setting and Maintenance Procedure requires the following:

6.3.7- '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.'

This is also reiterated in the Managing Stakeholder Input Procedure (Section 7, G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual):

7.4.1- New standards development and standards reviews are posted on the G.U.L.F. website (see Public Comment page) and are distributed through a technical newsletter and social media outlets.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual, version 1.2 (2018) Section 6, pages 26-28 and Section 7, pages 29-30.

2) 'Standard Setting and Maintenance Procedure' Audubon G.U.L.F. website. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/6-Standard-Setting-Procedure-1.12.18.pdf

3) 'Public Comment' Audubon G.U.L.F. website. https://www.audubongulf.org/certification/public-comment/

A.3 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Governance of Seafood Certification Schemes*

STANDARD SETTING AND MAINTENANCE

A.3 15 STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner ensures that interested parties can participate in the standard-setting process through a consultation forum or are made aware of alternative mechanisms by which they can participate.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner has a mechanism is in place to ensure all interested stakeholders can participate in standard setting process through a forum or alternative mechanisms or tools.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- internal procedure/quality handbook defining public consultation process.
- ToR.

Review participation, communication and mechanisms/tools of past or current consultation.

RELATED SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENTS

A.3 15 01 A.3 15 02

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the Standard Setting and Maintenance Procedure requires the following:

6.3.7 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.

This is also reiterated in the Managing Stakeholder Input Procedure (Section 7, G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual)-

7.4.1 New standards development and standards reviews are posted on the G.U.L.F. website (see Public Comment page) and are distributed through a technical newsletter and social media outlets to inform interested parties.

Additionally, as noted on the 'Public Comment' page of the G.U.L.F. website- 'Stakeholders are welcome to submit comments/concerns regarding the G.U.L.F. RFM Scheme to G.U.L.F. at any time.

Information submitted outside the official Public Comment periods will be reviewed and forwarded to the appropriate committee(s) for consideration.'

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual, version 1.2 (2018) Section 6, pages 26-28 and Section 7, pages 29-30.

2) 'Standard Setting and Maintenance Procedure' Audubon G.U.L.F. website. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/6-Standard-Setting-Procedure-1.12.18.pdf

3) 'Public Comment' Audubon G.U.L.F. website. https://www.audubongulf.org/certification/public-comment/

A.3 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Governance of Seafood Certification Schemes*

STANDARD SETTING AND MAINTENANCE

A.3 16 TRANSPARENCY ON COMMENTS RECEIVED

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner makes publicly available all comments received in the consultation in a non-attributable way.

GUIDANCE

All comments received during the public comment period are made publically available without attribution or identifier.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- internal procedure/quality handbook describing policy, current or past public comment comments posted online.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the Managing Public Input Procedure (Section 7) in the G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual and posted on the G.U.L.F. website contains the following clause:

7.5.5 All stakeholder comments will be made publicly available in a non-attributable way.

The G.U.L.F. website contains a chart of public comments received in previous public comment periods.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual, version 1.2 (2018) Section 7, pages 29-30.

2) 'Public Comment' Audubon G.U.L.F. website. https://www.audubongulf.org/certification/public-comment/

A.3 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Governance of Seafood Certification Schemes*

STANDARD SETTING AND MAINTENANCE

A.3 17 TAKING COMMENTS INTO ACCOUNT

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner takes into account in further processing of the standard, comments received during the period for commenting.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner has a process for considering all comments received during the public consultation on the standard. Comments which are integrated into the standard should be clearly identified.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- some sort of system (e.g. excel) for organizing, categorizing and responding to comments.
- review past consultation system, comments and response taken.

RELATED SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENTS

A.3 17 01

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the Standard Setting and Maintenance Procedure (Section 6) in the G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual contains the following requirement:

6.3.10 The TAC will review stakeholder comments in accordance with procedure and determine any amendments, additions, omissions on the document(s) under review.

Additionally, the Managing Public Input Procedure (Section 7) in the G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual and posted on the G.U.L.F. website contains the following clauses:

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.

7.5.6 Outcome of Committee(s) decisions on stakeholder comments will be documented and a summary of how eligible comments are addressed shall be made publicly available in a non-attributable way.

Public Comment from previous comment periods held have been presented to the appropriate TACs for review and discussion of comments are recorded in TAC meeting minutes.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual, version 1.2 (2018) Section 6, pages 26-28 and Section 7, pages 29-30.

2) 'Standard Setting and Maintenance Procedure' Audubon G.U.L.F. website. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/6-Standard-Setting-Procedure-1.12.18.pdf

3) 'Public Comment' Audubon G.U.L.F. website. https://www.audubongulf.org/certification/public-comment/

4) Fisheries TAC meeting minutes (confidential)

5) CoC TAC meeting minute (confidential)

A.3 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Governance of Seafood Certification Schemes*

STANDARD SETTING AND MAINTENANCE

▶ STANDARDS CONTENT

A.3 18 STANDARDS CONTENT

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner ensures that the standard is consistent with the following requirements:

- only includes language that is clear, specific, objective and verifiable;
- is expressed in terms of process, management and / or performance criteria, rather than design or descriptive characteristics; (ISO 59)
- does not favor a particular technology, patented item or service provider; and (ISO 59)
- attributes or cites all original intellectual sources of content.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner has a mechanism in place to review standards in respect to the listed requirements.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- internal procedure/quality handbook defining all list requirements. Some standards state these in their preamble as principles or references.
- review that this list was checked for the current standards
- review standards and if available mandatory checklists/audit manuals in respect to the listed requirements.
- review any available complaints relating to this requirement.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the G.U.L.F. RFM and Chain of Custody Standards are based on ISO/IEC 17065:2012 Conformity Assessment 'Requirements for certifying products processes and services', confirmed by formal accreditation and utilize IS/IEC Guide 59 'Code of Good Practice for Standardization' to ensure that these requirements are met.

The standard setting processes are presided over by technical advisory committees who have received instruction and guidance on standard setting procedures that conform to ISO Standards. Terms of Reference are in place for appointment and standards setting and the G.U.L.F. RFM Operational Manual, Section 6 describes the Standard Setting and Maintenance Procedure.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard, v. 1.2 (2018)
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. Chain of Custody Standard, v. 1.1 (2017)
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/CoC-Standard-V1.1-FINAL-4.23.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual, version 1.2 (2018) Section 6, pages 26-28.

4) 'Standard Setting and Maintenance Procedure' Audubon G.U.L.F. website.
http://audubongulf.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/6-Standard-Setting-Procedure-12.9.16.pdf

5) All F-TAC and CoC-TAC meeting documents (confidential)

A.3 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Governance of Seafood Certification Schemes*

STANDARD SETTING AND MAINTENANCE

A.3 19 RELEVANCE OF STANDARDS CONTENT

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

As part of the standard development process, the Scheme Owner assesses the feasibility and auditability of requirements in the draft standard.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner has a mechanism in place to test the feasibility (cost, time) and auditability (interpretation, consistency) of requirements prior to finalization of the standards.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- internal procedure, quality handbook, standard setting work plan.
- review assessment outcomes of past processes including revisions based on findings.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because testing of the Standards has been carried out by an accredited CB on the contents of the Standards and associated documents as well as through accreditation reviews.

At the start of the G.U.L.F. RFM Program, feasibility testing of an FAO Based Standard occurred through a number of validation assessments performed to earlier iterations of the Standard on several Gulf fisheries as part of the early Standards development process. Testing of new components continues for new aspects of both RFM and CoC Standard's development.

This component asks for evidence that the scheme owner "Scheme Owner assesses the feasibility (cost, time) and auditability (interpretation, consistency) of requirements in the draft standard" and, written in guidance asks for evidence of a "mechanism" to do so.

The TACs for each Standard (Fisheries, CoC) are responsible for the initial review of feasibility/auditability of the standards. Since the TAC memberships consist of a wide range of stakeholders including industry, resource managers, scientists and NGOs- this allows for thorough discussion on interpretation and feasibility with relation to the requirements for each Standard. Each draft standard is also submitted to our certification body (CB) for review and input on potential challenges from an audit/certification/accreditation standpoint and feedback from the CB is reviewed by the TAC. The TACs have the ability to request pilot Validation Reports, assessments or audits, to provide robust evidence for decision-making in development processes where a significant change of scope would require such testing.

The draft standard also goes through public comment for additional feedback, which reviewed by the TAC, then a final draft is submitted to the Oversight Committee for additional review and approval. Once a final version has been approved by the TAC, the Standard is submitted, through the CB, to our Accreditation Body (AB) and goes through an additional layer of technical review by the AB for any feasibility/auditability before accreditation is awarded.
Evidence of this mechanism is demonstrated through the initial development of both Standards. While there is no official "procedure" in place, there is clearly a mechanism that has been well documented and is part of the responsibility of the TACs (as noted in the 'key activities' section of their ToRs).

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard, v. 1.2 (2018) https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf
2) Audubon G.U.L.F. Chain of Custody Standard, v. 1.1 (2017) https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/CoC-Standard-V1.1-FINAL-4.23.18.pdf
3) G.U.L.F. RFM Feasability Testing Reports (confidential)
Fisheries Standard:
version 1.1: (see TAC mtg minutes from 9.5.14-12.12.15 and validation reports in evidence folder)
- initial draft review and revision by the F-TAC
- validation reports (3) of fisheries assessments produced by CB
- CB feedback provided to the F-TAC
- INAB feedback and dialog between F-TAC and CB
version 1.2: (see TAC mtg minutes from 5.22.17-12.8.17 and recent email from INAB)
- initial draft review and revision by the F-TAC
- no validation assessments were deemed necessary by G.U.L.F. staff or F-TAC since this is a minor revision, not requiring significant development or change of scope
- CB feedback provided to the F-TAC
- INAB feedback provided to G.U.L.F. (7.6.18 email from CB)
CoC Standard, v.1.1 development (see CoC-TAC mtg minutes from 5.25.17-4.12.18)
- initial draft review and revision by the F-TAC
- pilot audit conducted by CB representative and G.U.L.F. staff on 9.19.17 and presented to TAC for discussion on 9.20.18)
- CB feedback provided to the F-TAC
- INAB feedback and dialog between F-TAC and CB (see 4.12.18 meeting documents)

A.3 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Governance of Seafood Certification Schemes*

STANDARD SETTING AND MAINTENANCE

A.3 20 RELEVANCE OF STANDARDS CONTENT

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner demonstrates that all criteria in the standard contribute to the standard's defined objectives.

GUIDANCE

Criteria are related to how the Scheme Owner's objectives are met by identifying the acceptable performance. Often they are logically grouped around principles and objectives.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- comparison of the Scheme Owner performance indicators with the standard's criteria.
- monitoring and evaluation system of the performance indicators.
- criteria that are not monitored and not evaluated may be surplus to the objective of the standards.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the primary objective of the program, as stated in the G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual, is 'to provide U.S. Gulf of Mexico fisheries with an accredited "Certification of Responsible Fisheries Management" derived from internationally recognized guidelines and best management practices'.

The G.U.L.F. RFM Standard is based on the Minimum Substantive Criteria described in the FAO Guidelines for the Ecolabelling of Fish and Fishery Products for Marine Capture Fisheries and relevant articles of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and requires ISO 17065 accreditation for certification bodies to provide assurance of robust, independent, third-party evaluation.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual, v. 1.2 (2018).

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard, v. 1.2 (2018)
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements, v. 1.2 (2018)
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Certification-Requirements-v1.2-CLEAN.pdf

4) http://www.fao.org/fishery/publications/technical-guidelines/en

A.3 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Governance of Seafood Certification Schemes*

STANDARD SETTING AND MAINTENANCE

A.3 21 LOCAL APPLICABILITY

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner ensures that the standard is locally applicable. Where the Scheme Owner adapts the standard for direct application at the national or regional level, the Scheme Owner develops interpretive guidance or related policies and procedures for how to take into account local environmental and regulatory conditions.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner has mechanisms in place to ensure local applicability and relevance. For national or regional standards, the Scheme Owner has a process to take into account local environmental and regulatory conditions through guidance and policies.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- policies, internal procedures and quality handbook documenting process to consider environmental and regulatory aspects.
- compare geographical scope of standard and implementation (certificates) with available documented nterpretation guidance.
- assessment or monitoring reporting indicating where locally specific guidance is required.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the scope of the program is ' fisheries within the U.S. Gulf States territorial waters and EEZ of the Gulf of Mexico.' The Technical Advisory Committees (F-TAC and CoC-TAC) are specifically formed with regional expertise to ensure that the G.U.L.F. RFM program is directly applicable at the regional level taking into account local environmental and regulatory conditions. As is evidenced by the Standards and Guidance to Assessment documents and through TAC discussions and decision-making.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard, v. 1.2 (2018)
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment, v. 1.2 (2018)
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual, v. 1.2 (2018)

4) TAC memberships and Terms of Reference are located on the 'RFM Framework' page of the G.U.L.F. website.
https://www.audubongulf.org/certification/framework/

A.3 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Governance of Seafood Certification Schemes*

STANDARD SETTING AND MAINTENANCE

▶ STANDARDS ACCESSIBILITY

A.3 22 STANDARDS AVAILABILITY

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner promptly publishes adopted standards, and makes them available for free on the internet, and on request, to any interested party.

GUIDANCE

Standards are published in a timely fashion and are freely available online and on request. Validity dates coincide with publication dates of standards (taking transition periods into account) and the public work program on standard setting and maintenance.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because adopted versions of the Standard are published on the G.U.L.F. website.

REFERENCES

Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard, v. 1.2 (2018)
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

A.3 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Governance of Seafood Certification Schemes*

STANDARD SETTING AND MAINTENANCE

A.3 23 TRANSLATIONS

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

Where a scheme is globally applicable, the Scheme Owner makes translations of the standard into English, French or Spanish freely available and authorizes translations into other languages where necessary for credible implementation of the standard.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner has a mechanism in place to identify the applicability and need for translations based on geographical scope of certification, as well as the geographical range of certified entities and products. For global schemes, the Scheme Owner should translate and make available the standard in English, French and Spanish and authorize into other languages to positively affect transparency and effective implementation.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- internal procedure, quality handbook, current language availability, work plan of translations

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is not applicable because the scope of the program is 'fisheries within the U.S. Gulf States territorial waters and EEZ of the Gulf of Mexico'; therefore, an English version of the Standard and supporting documents is sufficient.

The Gulf of Mexico seafood supply chain is predominantly domestic; therefore, an English version is also sufficient for the Chain of Custody Standard at this time. No interest has been expressed for international use of the Chain of Custody Standard that would necessitate a translation.

REFERENCES

Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard, v. 1.2 (2018)
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

A.3 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Governance of Seafood Certification Schemes*

STANDARD SETTING AND MAINTENANCE

▶ TRANSITION PERIOD

A.3 24 INFORMING ENTERPRISES OF TRANSITION

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner ensures that certified enterprises are informed of the revised standard and transition period, either directly or through their certification bodies.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner has a mechanism in place assuring that certified entities are informed of standard revision and transition periods. This can be done directly or through other assurance bodies.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- internal procedures, quality handbook, contracts/agreements or formal arrangements with certification bodies.
- review process of previous revisions if applicable.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements include the following clauses:

9.1. The CB shall, after a notification from Audubon, inform their Accreditation Body and Clients of any revision of G.U.L.F. RFM Standard and transition period.

9.2. Certified fisheries should be given a transition period, as specified by the Scheme Owner, to come into compliance with the revised Standard.

REFERENCES

Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements, v. 1.2 (2018)
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Certification-Requirements-v1.2-CLEAN.pdf

A.3 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Governance of Seafood Certification Schemes*

STANDARD SETTING AND MAINTENANCE

A.3 25 TRANSITION PERIOD FOR COMPLIANCE

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner requires that the unit of certification is given a period of at least three years to come into compliance with revised fishery standards and at least one year for revised aquaculture standards.

GUIDANCE

Certified entities are given sufficient time to come into compliance with revised standards, for fisheries – minimum 3 years and at least one year for revised aquaculture standards.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- standards, certification requirements/methodologies which state minimum transition period for revised standards

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the Standard Setting and Maintenance Procedure (Section 6, G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual) sets requirements for effective dates in Clauses 6.4.1-6.4.3:

6.4.1 A revision to the RFM Program's Standard(s) and/or related documents shall be authorised with a date of when they will come into effect. The date will correspond to the effective date when the new revision(s) shall be adopted by applicant, certified clients and certification bodies.

6.4.2 Applicants and certified clients may choose to adopt revision(s) earlier than the effective date but regardless, all applicants and clients shall be required to adopt the revision(s) by the effective date.

6.4.3 For revision(s) that are deemed to be relatively minor, the effective date will be 6-12 months from authorization date. For revision(s) that are deemed to be more substantial, the effective date will be 36 months from authorization date.

Minor reviews consist of clarifications and corrections to the standard within the current scope and revision number will reflect a minor revision (1.0 to 1.1), whereas a major revision wold involve a change of scope due to additional requirement(s) (clauses) and will be reflected by a new primary revision number (1.0 to 2.0).

This is consistent with ISO terminology and procedure.

For example, the recent revisions to the Fisheries Standard involved minor clarifications to existing requirements and was revised to v.1.2; however, the Fisheries TAC is currently considering adding FAO's Guidelines for Inland Capture Fisheries and this will become v.2.0 and will allow for a full 3 years for fisheries to comply.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual, version 1.2 (2018), Section 6, pages 26-28.

2) 'Standard Setting and Maintenance Procedure' Audubon G.U.L.F. website. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/6-Standard-Setting-Procedure-1.12.18.pdf

A.3 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Governance of Seafood Certification Schemes*

STANDARD SETTING AND MAINTENANCE

A.3 26 TRANSITION PERIOD FOR COMPLIANCE

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner notes in the standard the date of a revision or reaffirmation of the standard along with a transition period after which the revised standard will come into effect.

GUIDANCE

Standards include date of version and any transition period for the certified entity to come into compliance. If there are normative documents other than the standard and certification requirements/methodologies which affect compliance of fisheries/aquaculture, these similarly should contain the described validity dates.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the Standard Setting and Maintenance Procedure (Section 6) and the Document Control Procedure (Section 11) of the G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual define requirements for setting effective dates and requiring the issue and effective dates be printed in the Standards documents. Each G.U.L.F. RFM document contains a table at the front of the document with the Issue Date, Effective Date, Issue Number, and the Authorizing Officer name and signature.

Timeline for CoC Standard accreditation and initial certificate awarded:

-CoC Standard, v.1.1 was approved by the CoC-TAC and the Oversight Committee in December 2017.

- An initial applicant went through audit and was awarded an unaccredited certificate on February 28, 2018.

- Accreditation application was submitted to INAB including the initial audit conducted.

- INAB requested clarification from the Scheme Owner on two clauses in April 2018

- CoC-TAC reviewed and submitted response and updated Standard to INAB in April 2018.

- The CB an the current certificate holder were both informed of the minor revision made to version 1.1 and submitted to INAB.

- No "transition period" was necessary for this update because the minor adjustment to the Standard will not impact the overall outcome of the one certification and an updated, accredited certificate will be issued to the client upon final INAB approval.

- INAB is scheduled to issue final accreditation approval and extension of scope for GT's accreditation at next meeting- July 10, 2018.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual, version 1.2 (2018), Section 6, pages 26-28 and Section 11, pages 36-37.

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard, v. 1.2 (2018) https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. Chain of Custody Standard, v. 1.1 (2017)
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/CoC-Standard-V1.1-FINAL-4.23.18.pdf

4) 'Standard Setting and Maintenance Procedure' Audubon G.U.L.F. website.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/6-Standard-Setting-Procedure-1.12.18.pdf

5) 'Document Control Procedure' Audubon G.U.L.F. website.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/11-Document-Control-Procedures-1.12.18.pdf

6) E mail dialogue between INAB, GT Cert and G.U.L.F on 6th July 2018 (confidential)

A

EVIDENCE OF ALIGNMENT WITH IMPLEMENTED **GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENTS** FOR GOVERNANCE OF SEAFOOD CERTIFICATION SCHEMES

A.1 *Evidence of alignment with implemented GSSI Supplementary Components for Governance of Seafood Certification Schemes*

SCHEME GOVERNANCE

▶ GOVERNANCE

A.1 01 01 LEGAL STATUS

GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner has insurance or reserves to cover the operations of the scheme.

Note: This does not apply to government-run schemes as they are self-insured.

Rationale: Demonstrates that the Scheme Owner has adequately evaluated risks arising from its activities.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner shall be able to demonstrate that it has evaluated the risks arising from its activities and that it has adequate arrangements (e.g. insurance and/ or reserves) to cover liabilities arising from its operations in each of its fields of activities and the geographic areas in which it operates. (adapted ISO 17021 5.3 and ISO 17065 4.3)

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- system for business risk assessment, insurance policy,
- clauses in accreditation body and/or certification body contracts addressing liability.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the Audubon nature Institute had publically posted documentation showing reasonable assessment and planning for material risks including general liability of the institute in the Audubon Commission Handbook and the Audubon nature Institute Board Manual located on the Audubon Nature Institute website. Both documents provide details on Audubon's insurance requirements and Risk Management Plan.

Insurance requirements are mandatory for CBs carrying out assessments to the G.U.L.F. RFM Program. This is stipulated in the service agreement between Audubon and the CB and is also supported by the required accreditation. ISO 17065 clause 4.3 requires CBs to have the necessary financial stability and resources required for their operations and be able to cover liabilities arising from their operations. This is verified by the accreditation process and each CB is required to maintain accreditation by an IAF member.

REFERENCES

1) 'About Audubon nature Institute' Audubon Nature Institute website. https://audubonnatureinstitute.org/about-audubon

2) Audubon Commission Handbook, Article 9: Insurance, p. 29 and Risk Management Plan, p. 74. https://audubonnatureinstitute.org/images/documents/about-section/manuals/audubon-commission-manual.pdf

3) Audubon Nature Institute Board Manual, Article 9: Insurance, p. 31 and Risk Management Plan, p. 95. https://audubonnatureinstitute.org/images/documents/about-section/manuals/audubon-board-manual.pdf

4) G.U.L.F - Global Trust- CB Service Agreement

5) Certificate of liability Insurance (confidential)

A.1 *Evidence of alignment with implemented GSSI Supplementary Components for Governance of Seafood Certification Schemes*

SCHEME GOVERNANCE

A.1 01 02 LEGAL STATUS

GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner provides, within its means, translations into appropriate languages of its standard-setting procedures, most recent work program, and draft and final versions of its standards.

Rationale: Strengthens transparency and accessibility to stakeholders based on scope of activities and geographic regions.

GUIDANCE

Scheme owner has a process for determining the need for translation and publication of documents in appropriate language to ensure access and transparency based on scope of activities and geographies. The procedure includes an assessment in order to ensure accurate translation.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment :

- relevant policy and procedure document control system,
- work plans covering language needs assessment,
- process for ensuring accuracy of translations.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the Scheme operates only within the United States, and no request has been made for a translation of documents into additional languages. All fisheries management, regulation and policy are conducted and written in English within the area applicable to the scheme (U.S.).

REFERENCES

Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Scheme Operations Manual, Version 1.2 (2018).

A.1 *Evidence of alignment with implemented GSSI Supplementary Components for Governance of Seafood Certification Schemes*

SCHEME GOVERNANCE

▶ NON-DISCRIMINATION

A.1 09 01 NON-DISCRIMINATION - OPENNESS

GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner has procedures for taking into account the special circumstances of data deficient and/ or small-scale fishery/ aquaculture operations.

Rationale: Avoids discrimination against operations on the basis of scale or level of development.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner processes and policies reduce barriers or promote access of small scale enterprises. This may include specific small scale standards or exemptions that do not lower the requirements of the standards themselves.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- separate specific standard for small scale enterprises or programs such as capacity building and access to finance targeted to small scale enterprises. Policies may include sliding scale fees or simplified reporting templates.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the scope of the program includes all fisheries within the U.S. Gulf of Mexico region.

The Fisheries Technical Advisory Committee (F-TAC) contains representatives from a variety of fishery stakeholders including small-scale fisheries and small business owners to ensure that fishery requirements allow consideration of all types of fisheries within the region which is evidenced in the clauses of the G.U.L.F. RFM Fisheries Standard and Guidance to Assessment.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual, version 1.2 (2018), Section 1.2, pages 5-6.

2) TAC memberships and Terms of Reference are located on the 'RFM Framework' page of the G.U.L.F. website. https://www.audubongulf.org/certification/framework/

3) G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (March 2018): Clauses A1, 1.1 and 1.4, page 8. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

4) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 1.1, p. 17; and Clause 4.1, p. 49. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

A.1 *Evidence of alignment with implemented GSSI Supplementary Components for Governance of Seafood Certification Schemes*

SCHEME GOVERNANCE

▶ SCHEME INTEGRITY MONITORING PROGRAM

A.1 11 01 INTERNAL REVIEW

GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner ensures the management review is, is carried out with the involvement of directly affected stakeholders and addresses any issues of concern raised by stakeholders.

Rationale: Ensures stakeholder accountability in the management review.

GUIDANCE

Directly affected stakeholders are defined by the Scheme Owner. A system exists to ensure sufficient time and opportunity for all directly affected stakeholders to provide input. Submissions are reviewed and addressed transparently.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- documented stakeholder identification,
- examples of invite and information system to inform stakeholders how to submit issues of concern or general input,
- documented process for handling, reviewing and responding to issues raised.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because it ensures that review is carried out with the involvement of interested parties and directly affected stakeholders, addresses comments received by stakeholders, and is fully documented. The G.U.L.F. RFM Program provides opportunities for public comment on procedures and supporting documents in addition to Standards through open Public Comment periods and also provides opportunity on the G.U.L.F. website for stakeholders to submit comment at any time outside formal public comment periods.

Public Comment periods have included Scheme policies and procedures (see public comment round held from June 1- August 1, 2017 which included Scheme Procedures for review). All comments received are reviewed by the relevant and appropriate committees.

The Oversight Committee conducts an annual review, which includes review of all management activities for the scheme, all activities of the Technical Advisory Committees, and all public comments received.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual, version 1.2, Section 9, page 34.

2) 'Public Comment' Audubon G.U.L.F. website. https://www.audubongulf.org/certification/public-comment/

3) 'Managing Stakeholder Input' Audubon G.U.L.F. website https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/7-Managing-Stakeholder-Input-Procedure-1.12.18.pdf

4) Stakeholder comments of OC meeting

5) RFM annual review agendas

A.3 *Evidence of alignment with implemented GSSI Supplementary Components for Governance of Seafood Certification Schemes*

STANDARD SETTING AND MAINTENANCE

A.3 06 01 DECISION MAKING PROCESS

GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner ensures participation in standards decision-making bodies is open to all stakeholders.

Rationale: Supports openness in decision-making. Not all stakeholders can participate but all should be given the opportunity to put their name forward.

GUIDANCE

Standard owner process and procedures for participation in standard's decision-making bodies ensures open participation of all stakeholders.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual includes a policy for managing Stakeholder Input (Section 7) which includes details on eligible stakeholders and how stakeholder input is incorporated. As noted on the G.U.L.F. Website, stakeholders may also submit comment outside the formal public comment periods. All comments are reviewed by the appropriate committee during the decision-making process.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual, version 1.2 (2018), Sectiion 7, pages 29-30.

2) 'Public Comment' Audubon G.U.L.F. website. https://www.audubongulf.org/certification/public-comment/

3) Managing Stakeholder Input policy is posted on the G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Documents webpage at https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/7-Managing-Stakeholder-Input-Procedure-1.12.18.pdf

A.3 *Evidence of alignment with implemented GSSI Supplementary Components for Governance of Seafood Certification Schemes*

STANDARD SETTING AND MAINTENANCE

A.3 06 02 DECISION MAKING PROCESS

GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner's decision-making process for standards development or revision ensures that no category of stakeholders has a majority vote in decision-making.

Rationale: Ensures that no one stakeholder group is able to dominate decision-making – a key tenet of a multi-stakeholder process.

GUIDANCE

Standard owner voting procedure process ensures balance in decision making where no single category of stakeholder has a majority in decision making.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- internal procedures and/or quality handbook,
- previous voting from minutes if available.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the Technical Advisory Committees are composed a wide range of stakeholders including fishing industry, management, academia, and NGO representatives as noted in the Terms of Reference for each committee and evidenced in the committee membership and the voting rules that are in place.

The F-TAC ToR states- 'The Fisheries TAC is an objective-based group, representing fisheries science,
environmental science, fisheries management and industry in U.S. Gulf of Mexico. Representation is sought from both fishery-specific and wider fishery management and stakeholder interests.'

The CoC-TAC ToR states- '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.'

REFERENCES

Membership and ToRs for each committee are posted on the RFM Framework page on the G.U.L.F. website https://www.audubongulf.org/certification/framework/

A.3 *Evidence of alignment with implemented GSSI Supplementary Components for Governance of Seafood Certification Schemes*

STANDARD SETTING AND MAINTENANCE

A.3 06 03 DECISION MAKING PROCESS

GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner has procedures in place to ensure that directly affected stakeholders have the opportunity to be represented in decision-making.

Rationale: Directly affected stakeholders are the ones that will be impacted by implementation of the standard and need to have a voice in decision-making

GUIDANCE

The standard owner defines directly affected stakeholders, including certified entities and any active technical and/or stakeholder working groups.

A procedure is in place, assuring and describing how directly affected stakeholders can be represented in decision-making. A mechanism is in place to inform directly affected stakeholders of this opportunity.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- stakeholder mapping, meeting minutes and email correspondence to verify if stakeholders have been informed.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because directly affected stakeholders are included as members of the Fisheries and Chain of Custody Technical Advisory Committees (TACs). The TACs are composed of a wide range of stakeholders including fishing industry, management, academia, and NGO representatives as noted in the Terms of Reference for each committee and evidenced in the committee membership and the voting rules that are in place.

Additionally, all stakeholders are eligible to submit comment during public consultation periods and all public comments are considered during decision-making by the TACs. G.U.L.F. maintains a technical e-newsletter system which is utilized to inform interested stakeholders of all developments of the G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Program and opportunities to participate and provide comment during public consultation rounds.

REFERENCES

1) Membership and ToRs for each committee are posted on the RFM Framework page on the G.U.L.F. website https://www.audubongulf.org/certification/framework/

2) 'Public Comment' Audubon G.U.L.F. website. https://www.audubongulf.org/certification/public-comment/

3) ToR Fisheries TAC https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Fisheries-TAC-ToR-v.2-5.23.17-FINAL.pdf

4) CoC TAC ToR issue 1 https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/CoC-TAC-ToR-v.1-FINAL.pdf

A.3 *Evidence of alignment with implemented GSSI Supplementary Components for Governance of Seafood Certification Schemes*

STANDARD SETTING AND MAINTENANCE

A.3 06 04 DECISION MAKING PROCESS

GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT

Where the Scheme Owner limits decision-making to members, it ensures that membership criteria and application procedures are transparent and non-discriminatory.

Rationale: Supports transparency and non-discrimination over who can participate.

GUIDANCE

For membership organization where decision making is limited to members, the application process and selection criteria are easily available and ensure balanced participation of stakeholders. These criteria could be “Not Applicable” if the Scheme Owner is not a member based organization.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- application procedure, forms, completed applications and any reasons for declining.

CONCLUSION

This GSSI Supplementary Component is not applicable to the Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Program because it is not a membership organization. Decision making bodies (Oversight Committee and Technical Advisory Committees) are comprised of representative stakeholders.

REFERENCES

Membership and ToRs for each committee are posted on the RFM Framework page on the G.U.L.F. website https://www.audubongulf.org/certification/framework/

A.3 *Evidence of alignment with implemented GSSI Supplementary Components for Governance of Seafood Certification Schemes*

STANDARD SETTING AND MAINTENANCE

▶ PARTICIPATION AND CONSULTATION

A.3 13 01 **PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner requires at least two rounds for comment submissions on the draft standard by interested parties, with one round of at least 60 days and the other of at least 30 days.

Rationale: Strengthens stakeholder engagement and transparency on how comments were taken into account.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner has a mechanism in place to ensure comment periods as per *Supplementary Component*.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- internal procedure/quality handbook defining public comment periods in line with *Supplementary Component*.
- terms of reference review previous comments and dates for submission on draft standards.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the Standard Setting and Maintenance Procedure requires a second 30-day public comment period:
6.3.8 '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.'

A summary of the Public Comment periods held to date are posted on the G.U.L.F. website.

A 60-day public comment period for the revision of the G.U.L.F. RFM Standard, v.1.1 and the G.U.L.F. Chain of Custody Standard, v.1.1 was opened on June 1, 2017 and ran through August 1, 2017.

This was followed by a 30-day public comment period for the revised Chain of Custody Standard, v.1.1 opened on October 8, 2017, which ran through November 9, 2017 and a 30-day public comment period on the RFM Standard, v.1.2 which opened on January 18, 2018 and ran through February 19, 2018.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual, version 1.2 (2018), Section 6, pages 26-28.

2) 'Standard Setting and Maintenance Procedure' Audubon G.U.L.F. website.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/6-Standard-Setting-Procedure-1.12.18.pdf

3) 'Public Comment' Audubon G.U.L.F. website.
https://www.audubongulf.org/certification/public-comment/

A.3 *Evidence of alignment with implemented GSSI Supplementary Components for Governance of Seafood Certification Schemes*

STANDARD SETTING AND MAINTENANCE

A.3 15 01 STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner identifies stakeholders who will be directly affected by the standard and those that are not well-represented in consultations and proactively seeks their contributions.

Rationale: Puts the onus on the Scheme Owner to take steps to strengthen the balance and participation of key stakeholders.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner documents directly affected stakeholders and identifies those not as represented in past consultations or have potential barriers to participate to proactively seek their input through alternative mechanisms and tools that are that are accessible and culturally appropriate for the stakeholder groups in question such online or in in-person workshops.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- stakeholder mapping including participation in past consultations
- meeting minutes, announcements, publications and or email communication indicate that the Scheme Owner is proactively seeking the input of specific stakeholder groups.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because directly affected stakeholders are represented on all G.U.L.F. RFM Technical Advisory Committees. The G.U.L.F. technical newsletter is distributed to industry associations and interested stakeholders and updates on program activities and public comment opportunities are also posted through social media outlets for wider distribution.

Additionally, G.U.L.F. staff attend regular industry and resource management meetings to update stakeholders on all program activities and provide engagement opportunities. Direct stakeholders are contacted through the technical newsletter. There is a list of stakeholders and interested parties.

REFERENCES

1) TAC memberships and Terms of Reference are located on the 'RFM Framework' page of the G.U.L.F. website. https://www.audubongulf.org/certification/framework/

2) 'Public Comment' Audubon G.U.L.F. website. https://www.audubongulf.org/certification/public-comment/

A.3 *Evidence of alignment with implemented GSSI Supplementary Components for Governance of Seafood Certification Schemes*

STANDARD SETTING AND MAINTENANCE

A.3 15 02 STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner makes efforts to address constraints to participation in standard-setting faced by disadvantaged stakeholders such as small-scale operations and vulnerable groups.

Rationale: Supports participation by stakeholders who may face constraints to active engagement.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner defines disadvantaged stakeholders and addresses potential barriers to participation such as language, culture, access to internet, costs, technical accessibility, etc. through alternative mechanisms and tools that are that are accessible and culturally appropriate for the stakeholder groups in question.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because directly affected stakeholders are represented on all G.U.L.F. RFM Technical Advisory Committees. This includes members of small-scale operations and fisheries on both the Fisheries TAC and CoC TAC.

The G.U.L.F. technical newsletter is distributed to industry associations and interested stakeholders and updates on program activities and public comment opportunities are also posted through social media outlets for wider distribution.

Additionally, G.U.L.F. staff attend regular industry and resource management meetings to update stakeholders on all program activities and provide engagement opportunities. Direct stakeholders are contacted through the technical newsletter. There is a list of stakeholders and interested parties.

REFERENCES

1) TAC memberships and Terms of Reference are located on the 'RFM Framework' page of the G.U.L.F. website. https://www.audubongulf.org/certification/framework/

2) 'Public Comment' Audubon G.U.L.F. website. https://www.audubongulf.org/certification/public-comment/

A.3 *Evidence of alignment with implemented GSSI Supplementary Components for Governance of Seafood Certification Schemes*

STANDARD SETTING AND MAINTENANCE

A.3 17 01 TAKING COMMENTS INTO ACCOUNT

GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner makes publicly available a synopsis of how these comments were addressed and sends the synopsis to all parties that submitted comments.

Rationale: Ensures stakeholders can see how their input was addressed in standards revisions.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner develops a summary of how comments were addressed, makes publicly available as well as sends to everyone who submitted comments.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- system, internal procedure/quality handbook that describes how comments are summarized and made available publicly and to commenters,
- review of current and past standard public consultation information flow including synopsis.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the Managing Public Input Procedure (Section 7) in the G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual and posted on the G.U.L.F. website contains the following clauses:

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 publicly available in a non-attributable way.

Information on all current and previous public comment periods is available publicly on the G.U.L.F. website including a synopsis of how submitted comments are being/have been addressed.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual, version 1.2 (2018) Section 7, pages 29-30.

2) 'Public Comment' Audubon G.U.L.F. website.
https://www.audubongulf.org/certification/public-comment/

3) Procedure for Managing Stakeholder Input (Section 7, G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual). Audubon G.U.L.F. website.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/7-Managing-Stakeholder-Input-Procedure-1.12.18.pdf

B

EVIDENCE OF ALIGNMENT WITH APPLICABLE **GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS** FOR OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT OF SEAFOOD CERTIFICATION SCHEMES

B.1 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Operational Management of Seafood Certification Schemes*

ACCREDITATION

B.1 01 ISO-17011 COMPLIANCE

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner has a contractual, enforceable arrangement or formal understanding that requires accreditation bodies to be compliant with the requirements
of ISO/IEC 17011:2004.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner has a contract, memorandum of understanding or enforceable arrangement with a certification body or accreditation body that require the accreditation bodies to be accredited to ISO/IEC 17011:2004.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- contracts,
- memorandums of understanding and/or memorandum of agreements between scheme and accreditation bodies or certification bodies that specify accreditation bodies to be compliant with ISO/IEC 17011:2004.
- accreditation bodies' certificate of accreditation (on website).

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because Certification Bodies (CB's) are required to have a contract with an Accreditation Body that is a member of International Accreditation Forum (IAF). The G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements document sets out the accreditation requirements for CBs and specifies that they must use formal ISO Accreditation from an IAF member.

There is currently only one CB carrying out assessments for the G.U.L.F. RFM Program, Global Trust, Ltd. (GT) GT is accredited through the Irish National Accreditation Board (INAB) and INAB is a current IAF member and MLA signatory. Accreditation Bodies are peer reviewed to ensure that they meet standards for recognition as an IAF Multilateral Recognition Arrangements (MLA), which requires that they operate in accordance with ISO 17011.

Current GT accreditation schedule currently lists version 1.1 of the RFM Standard. The scope extension for RFM Standard, version 1.2 is in process (see GT e-mail with communication from INAB as evidence).
timeline:
-The CB was informed of the issue of RFM v.1.2 in January 2018 and provided updated documents.
- A scope extension was submitted by GT to INAB for RFM, v.1.2
- On July 5, 2018, INAB submitted a request for clarification on two items to the Scheme Owner via GT (see e-mail from GT to G.U.L.F. received on July 6, 2018)

This evidence verifies that the accreditation process is underway and GT, the Scheme Owners and INAB are moving through the appropriate steps of accreditation in compliance with ISO requirements.

GT remains in compliance with ISO 17011 based on existing accreditation schedule and the current scope extension application for v.1.2. NOTE- the requirement here is that the scheme owner have a contact with the CB to maintain compliance with ISO 17011, G.U.L.F. has a service contract with GT that requires GT to maintain accreditation (already in evidence- GT service contract), and has provided evidence that they are following necessary procedure to update their accreditation certificate.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements, v. 1.2 (2018), Section 3, pages 7-8.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Certification-Requirements-v1.2-CLEAN.pdf

2) Global Trust Ltd Accreditation Certificate (issued by INAB)
http://www.inab.ie/FileUpload/Product-Certification/Global-TRUST-Certification-Ltd-6002.pdf

3) G.U.L.F. - Global Trust- CB Service Agreement (confidential)

4) E-mail dialogue between INAB, GT Cert and G.U.L.F on 6th July 2018 (confidential)

B.1 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Operational Management of Seafood Certification Schemes*

ACCREDITATION

B.1 02 NON-DISCRIMINATION

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner ensures that accreditation services are available to certifying bodies irrespective of their country of residence, size, and of the existing number of already accredited bodies, within the scope of the scheme.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner ensures that access to accreditation is open to qualified certification bodies without consideration of size, country or number of existing accredited certification bodies. This could be through contracts/agreements, in referenced policies or certification requirements/methodologies.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- application process/forms,
- review list of accredited certification bodies

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements document sets out the requirements for CBs for the operation of an ISO accredited third-party certification scheme to the G.U.L.F. RFM Program.

These requirements include CBs to be accredited to ISO 17065 by an Accreditation Body (AB) that is an IAF member. There are no restrictions to applicant CBs based on size, number of CBs already accredited or country of residence. Therefore, CBs can be accredited through any AB within the global network of ABs which are current members of IAF.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements, v. 1.2 (2018), Section 3, pages 7-8. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Certification-Requirements-v1.2-CLEAN.pdf

2) IAF Members and Signatories http://www.iaf.nu/articles/IAF_MEM_Ireland/80

B.1 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Operational Management of Seafood Certification Schemes*

ACCREDITATION

B.1 03 SPECIFIED REQUIREMENTS

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner specifies the requirements for certification bodies that the accreditation body is required to verify.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner defines requirements for certification bodies to ensure accurate and consistent implementation. These are verified as part of the accreditation process by the accreditation body.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- requirements are specified in certification requirements/methodologies or a separate certification body and/or accreditation manual.
- reference to requirements in contracts or formal agreements with certification bodies or accreditation bodies.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because CB requirements are set out in G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements, including the requirement to maintain accreditation to ISO 17065. The contractual agreement between G.U.L.F. and the CB also includes the requirement to maintain accreditation.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements, v. 1.2 (2018), Section 3, pages 7-8.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Certification-Requirements-v1.2-CLEAN.pdf

2) Global Trust Ltd Accreditation Certificate (issued by INAB)
http://www.inab.ie/FileUpload/Product-Certification/Global-TRUST-Certification-Ltd-6002.pdf

3) G.U.L.F. - Global Trust- CB Service Agreement

B.1 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Operational Management of Seafood Certification Schemes*

ACCREDITATION

B.1 04 TRANSITION PERIOD

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

Subsequent to any changes in the requirements for assessing certification bodies, the Scheme Owner ensures certification bodies are given a defined time period within which to conform to the changes.

Special considerations should be given to accredited bodies in developing countries and countries in transition.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner specifies transition periods for any changes to certification requirements (B.1.03) for certification bodies to come into compliance with changes. For certification bodies in developing countries consideration is given that may include a longer transition period, capacity building or other measures.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- see B.1.03 reference to transition period and/or special consideration for developing country certification bodies.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual includes the following clause:

6.5.2 Certification Bodies shall be notified of all newly authorized Standard(s) and related documents at least 6 months in advance of them coming into effect in order that they may be formally adopted within the accredited certification system(s) that they operate.

The CB was informed of the revision in January 2018 and provided a transition period (6 months) for the CB to come into compliance. Neither the CB (nor the scheme owner) have control over the timeline for accreditation through the AB. G.U.L.F. has confirmed that GT has taken the appropriate steps to come into compliance with RFM, version 1.2 and is awaiting accreditation result.

Evidence of the ongoing accreditation process has been provided. While version 1.2 is scheduled to come into effect July 10, 2018, the next fishery assessment activity is scheduled for October/November (Blue Crab surveillance audit), allowing for additional time to resolve the final accreditation issue prior to certification activity under the new version.

REFERENCES

1) G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual, v. 1.2 (2018), Section 6, pages 26-28.

2) 'Standards Setting and Maintenance Procedure' Audubon G.U.L.F. Website. http://audubongulf.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/6-Standard-Setting-Procedure-12.9.16.pdf

3) E-mail dialogue between INAB, GT Cert and G.U.L.F on 6th July 2018 (confidential)

B.1 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Operational Management of Seafood Certification Schemes*

ACCREDITATION

B.1 05 ACCREDITATION BODY COMPETENCIES

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner only works with accreditation bodies that have personnel with the necessary education, training, technical knowledge and experience for performing accreditation functions in fisheries and aquaculture operations.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner ensures personnel competency through contracts or enforceable arrangements with accreditation bodies. Personnel competency incudes education, training on the standard, technical knowledge and experience and can be defined by the Scheme Owner.

Examples of objective evidence:

- agreement/contract between the Scheme Owner and certification body to use national accreditation bodies which are IAF members and signatories to the Multilateral Recognition Arrangement for ISO 17065.
- contract/agreement between the Scheme Owner and the accreditation body if applicable, certification/accreditation manuals.
- review of CVs of accreditation body staff.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements specify formal accreditation by an IAF member to ISO 17065. Only CB's with the ISO 17065 accreditation from an Audubon G.U.L.F. recognized Accreditation Body will be eligible for approval.

The current AB providing accreditation services to G.U.L.F. approved CB, INAB, is a member of IAF MLA.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements, v. 1.2 (2018), Section 3, pages 7-8. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Certification-Requirements-v1.2-CLEAN.pdf

2) Global Trust Ltd Accreditation Certificate (issued by INAB) http://www.inab.ie/FileUpload/Product-Certification/Global-TRUST-Certification-Ltd-6002.pdf

3) G.U.L.F. - Global Trust- CB Service Agreement (confidential)

4) IAF Members and Signatories http://www.iaf.nu/articles/IAF_MEM_Ireland/80

B.1 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Operational Management of Seafood Certification Schemes*

ACCREDITATION

B.1 06 EXTERNAL REVIEW

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner ensures that external audits are carried out on the accreditation body to assess performance.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner ensures accreditation bodies undergo external/independent performance assessments.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- assessment process and requirements of IAF, ISEAL or other membership organization.
- Scheme Owner accreditation manual or requirements, contracts or agreements, assessment reports.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because external/independent performance assessment is a standard component of IAF membership. IAF members undergo peer review by other IAF members to ensure quality and consistency of approach across their whole membership. The current AB performing accreditation services for the G.U.L.F. RFM Program, INAB, is an IAF MLA member, therefore, subject to such reviews. The G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements requires that CBs hold accreditation from an IAF member to ensure that this component is fulfilled.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements, v. 1.2 (2018), Section 3, pages 7-8. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Certification-Requirements-v1.2-CLEAN.pdf

2) Global Trust Ltd Accreditation Certificate (issued by INAB) http://www.inab.ie/FileUpload/Product-Certification/Global-TRUST-Certification-Ltd-6002.pdf

3) G.U.L.F. - Global Trust- CB Service Agreement (confidential)

4) IAF Members and Signatories http://www.iaf.nu/articles/IAF_MEM_Ireland/80

B.1 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Operational Management of Seafood Certification Schemes*

ACCREDITATION

B.1 07 ORGANIZATIONAL TRANSPARENCY

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner ensures that the accreditation body is transparent about its organizational structure and the financial and other kinds of support it receives from public or private entities.

GUIDANCE

Scheme owner ensures accreditation body transparency
regarding organizational structure and financial support.
The Scheme Owner requires disclosure of this information directly from the accreditation body.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- accreditation body website with information, certification/accreditation manuals, contracts and/or agreements.
- agreement/contract between the Scheme Owner and certification body to use national accreditation bodies which are IAF members and signatories to the Multilateral Recognition Arrangement for ISO 17065;
- annual or periodic reports.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements requires that CBs hold accreditation from an IAF member to ensure that this component is fulfilled. IAF members undergo peer review by other IAF members and IAF requires ABs 'to have the technical and financial capacity to undertake accreditation tasks, and perform these tasks in a neutral, nondiscriminatory and independent manner'. The current AB performing accreditation services for the G.U.L.F. RFM Program, INAB, is an IAF MLA member, therefore, subject to such reviews.
The Organizational structure is on the INAB website.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements, v. 1.2 (2018), Section 3, pages 7-8.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Certification-Requirements-v1.2-CLEAN.pdf

2) Global Trust Ltd Accreditation Certificate (issued by INAB)
http://www.inab.ie/FileUpload/Product-Certification/Global-TRUST-Certification-Ltd-6002.pdf

3) G.U.L.F. - Global Trust- CB Service Agreement (confidential)

4) IAF Members and Signatories http://www.iaf.nu/articles/IAF_MEM_Ireland/80

5) Irish National Accreditation Board website. http://www.inab.ie/About-Us/Organisation/

B.1 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Operational Management of Seafood Certification Schemes*

ACCREDITATION

B.1 08 OFFICE AUDIT

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner ensures that the accreditation process includes an on-site audit of the certification body.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner specifies that accreditation includes an on-site audit of the certification body.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- accreditation/certification requirements/methodologies, accreditation body office audit reports, audit schedule.
- specified in accreditation body or certification body contracts/agreements.
- agreement/contract between the Scheme Owner and certification body to use national accreditation bodies which are IAF members and signatories to the Multilateral Recognition Arrangement for ISO 17065.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements requires that CBs hold ISO 17065 accreditation from an IAF member to ensure that this component is met. ISO 17065 accreditation requires CB's to accept regular accreditation audits at their offices. The current CB, Global Trust, is accredited to ISO 17065 by INAB and undergoes annual office audits.

INAB conducts an annual site review of GT in accordance with ISO 17065. The most recent audit occurred in November 2017 (see INAB summary report in evidence folder) and will be reviewed under the new RFM version 1.2 in the upcoming site audit for 2018 per continued compliance with ISO 17065.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements, v. 1.2 (2018), Section 3, pages 7-8.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Certification-Requirements-v1.2-CLEAN.pdf

2) Global Trust Ltd Accreditation Certificate (issued by INAB)
http://www.inab.ie/FileUpload/Product-Certification/Global-TRUST-Certification-Ltd-6002.pdf

3) G.U.L.F. - Global Trust- CB Service Agreement (confidential)

4) E mail dialogue between INAB, GT Cert and G.U.L.F on 6th July 2018 (confidential)

B.1 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Operational Management of Seafood Certification Schemes*

ACCREDITATION

B.1 09 FIELD AUDIT

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner ensures that the accreditation process includes a review of the performance of certification bodies and auditors in the field.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner specifies that accreditation includes a performance review of certification bodies and auditors.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- accreditation/certification requirements/methodologies, accreditation body audit reports, audit schedule, specified in accreditation body or certification body contracts/agreements.
- agreement/contract between the Scheme Owner and certification body to use national accreditation bodies which are IAF members and signatories to the Multilateral Recognition Arrangement for ISO 17065.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements mandates that CBs hold ISO 17065 accreditation from an IAF member, which requires a review of CB performance in the field.

The current CB, Global Trust, is accredited to ISO 17065 by INAB, an IAF member.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements, v. 1.2 (2018), Section 3, pages 7-8.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Certification-Requirements-v1.2-CLEAN.pdf

2) Global Trust Ltd Accreditation Certificate (issued by INAB)
http://www.inab.ie/FileUpload/Product-Certification/Global-TRUST-Certification-Ltd-6002.pdf

3) G.U.L.F. - Global Trust- CB Service Agreement (confidential)

B.2 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Operational Management of Seafood Certification Schemes*

CERTIFICATION

▶ CERTIFICATION PROCESS

B.2 01 ISO-17065 COMPLIANCE

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner requires that certification bodies operating in the scheme are accredited to ISO/IEC 17065:2012 for the scope of the respective standard of the scheme.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner has a contract, memorandum of understanding or enforceable arrangement with certification body that require ISO/IEC 17065:2012 for the scope of the respective standard of the scheme.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- contracts, memorandums of understanding and/or memorandum of agreements between Scheme and accreditation bodies or certification bodies that specify certification bodies be accredited with ISO 17065:2012;
- accreditation manual or certification requirements/methodologies; certification bodies certificate of accreditation.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because CB requirements are set out in G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements, including the requirement to maintain accreditation to ISO 17065. The contractual agreement between G.U.L.F. and the CB also includes the requirement to maintain accreditation.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements, v. 1.2 (2018), Section 3, pages 7-8.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Certification-Requirements-v1.2-CLEAN.pdf

2) Global Trust Ltd Accreditation Certificate (issued by INAB)
http://www.inab.ie/FileUpload/Product-Certification/Global-TRUST-Certification-Ltd-6002.pdf

3) G.U.L.F. - Global Trust- CB Service Agreement (confidential)

B.2 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Operational Management of Seafood Certification Schemes*

CERTIFICATION

B.2 02 FEE STRUCTURE

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner requires certification bodies to maintain a written fee structure that is available on request and is adequate to support accurate and truthful assessments commensurate with the scale, size and complexity of the fishery, fish farm or chain of custody. The fee structure is non-discriminatory and takes into account the special circumstances and requirements of developing countries and countries in transition.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner defines this requirement in the contract, memorandum of understanding or enforceable agreement with the accreditation body and/or certification body.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- accreditation manual/certification requirements/methodologies.
- possibly also review accreditation body audit reports that this requirement is verified, and for compliance of certification bodies on this requirement.
- policy or procedure which outlines how fee structures of certification bodies could address special requirements of developing and in transition countries in a non-discriminatory manner; certification body fee structure and policy (online or request).

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements includes the following clause:

4.1.8 Certification Bodies to maintain a written fee structure that is available on request and is adequate to support accurate and truthful assessments.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements, v. 1.2 (2018). https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Certification-Requirements-v1.2-CLEAN.pdf

2) SAI Global-GTC Schedule of Fishery and CoC Fees 2018.

B.2 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Operational Management of Seafood Certification Schemes*

CERTIFICATION

B.2 03 CERTIFICATION CYCLE

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner requires that the validity of a certification cycle does not exceed 5 years in the case of fishery or 3 years in the case of aquaculture certification and 3 years in the case of chain of custody certification.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner defines this requirement in the contract, memorandum of understanding or enforceable agreement with the accreditation body and/or certification body.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- accreditation manual/certification requirements/methodologies. Issued certificates with validity (online database or on request)

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements and the G.U.L.F. Chain of Custody Certification Requirements specify the period of validity for each certificate.

G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements-

7.6.2: Certificates shall be valid for a period of five years at which point full re-assessment must be completed within the period of validity of the first Certificate if the Certified Fishery wishes to maintain uninterrupted certification.

G.U.L.F. Chain of Custody Certification Requirements-

5.8.1: CBs shall implement a certification validity of three years.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements, v. 1.2 (2018). https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Certification-Requirements-v1.2-CLEAN.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. Chain of Custody Certification Requirements, v. 1.1 (2018) https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/CoC-Certification-Requirements-v.1.1-FINAL-4.23.18-1.pdf

B.2 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Operational Management of Seafood Certification Schemes*

CERTIFICATION

B.2 04 SURVEILLANCE

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner requires that certification bodies carry out periodic surveillance and monitoring at sufficiently close intervals to verify that certified operations continue to comply with the certification requirements. For aquaculture operations, this should be on an annual basis.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner defines this requirement in the contract, memorandum of understanding or enforceable agreement with accreditation body and/or certification body. Scheme owner risk assessment system should identify "*sufficient close intervals*".

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- accreditation manual/certification requirements/methodologies.
- Scheme Owner internal risk assessment system with assessment reports.
- Audit reports, schedules and issued certificates.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements and the G.U.L.F. Chain of Custody Certification Requirements specify the requirements for surveillance audits for each certificate.

G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements-

8.1.2 The CB shall arrange Surveillance audits with the certified fishery at least annually and more frequently if deemed necessary, including short notice audits.

8.2.1 Surveillance audits shall be planned to take place and be completed within a specified time frame not greater than ten weeks from the anniversary of the date of initial certification (as specified on the certificate).

G.U.L.F. Chain of Custody Certification Requirements-

5.9.1 The client's conformity shall be checked by surveillance audits that are conducted at an audit frequency which is based upon the inherent product/process risk and the result of the initial audit.

5.9.2 Surveillance audits are typically scheduled during the 12-month period occurring directly after the initial audit. An audit window either side of this date by up to three (3) calendar months can be used to ensure that product is being processed/packed/handled.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements, v. 1.2 (2018).
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Certification-Requirements-v1.2-CLEAN.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. Chain of Custody Certification Requirements, v. 1.1 (2018)
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/CoC-Certification-Requirements-v.1.1-FINAL-4.23.18-1.pdf

B.2 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Operational Management of Seafood Certification Schemes*

CERTIFICATION

B.2 05 ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner ensures that certification bodies apply a consistent methodology to assess compliance with the standard.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner defines the methodology to assess compliance with the standard. An internal assessment (updated regularly) with clear outcomes, identifies if the methodology is consistent between certification bodies or if the methodology needs revising.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- certification requirements/methodologies,
- contracts and agreements with the certification body,
- guidance interpretation documents,
- Scheme Owner internal assessment system with assessment reports,
- training and calibration records.

RELATED SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENTS

B.2 05 01 B.2 05 02

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Requirements details the methodology to be used to assess compliance with the Standard. Section 6 provides details on Full Assessment Requirements including:
6.1 Service Agreement;
6.2 Appointment of Full Assessment Team;
6.3 Assessment Team Training;
6.4 Assessment Plan and Schedule;
6.5 On -Site Assessment;
6.6 Full Assessment Report Development;
6.7 Evaluating Fishery Performance against the Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard;
6.8 Overview of Confidence Ratings and Assignment of Non Conformances;
6.9 Corrective Action Plans;
6.10 Assessment Report Configuration;
6.11 Peer Review.

Section 8 also defines requirements for conducting Surveillance Audits. Standard forms are used for different types of assessment to ensure consistency in reporting. Similar requirements are defined in the G.U.L.F. Chain of Custody Certification Requirements to ensure consistent methodology to assess compliance to the Chain of Custody Standard.

There is currently only one approved CB conducting assessments and G.U.L.F. conducts periodic performance reviews of the CB to ensure that CBs are operating in compliance with current Certification Requirements.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements, v. 1.2 (2018), Section 6, pages 15-21 and Section 8, pages 26-27. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Certification-Requirements-v1.2-CLEAN.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. Chain of Custody Certification Requirements, v. 1.1 (2018) https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/CoC-Certification-Requirements-v.1.1-FINAL-4.23.18-1.pdf

3) Global Trust site visit December 2016 meeting agenda/notes (confidential)

4) Training records for assessors (confidential)

B.2 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Operational Management of Seafood Certification Schemes*

CERTIFICATION

B.2 06 TERMINATION, SUSPENSION, WITHDRAWAL

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner ensures that accredited certification bodies have consistent documented procedure(s) that specify the conditions under which certification may be suspended or withdrawn, partially or in total, for all or part of the scope of certification.

GUIDANCE

For accurate and consistent implementation of the standard, the Scheme Owner ensures that certification bodies have documented procedures that specify the conditions under which certification may be suspended or withdrawn, partially or in total, for all or part of the scope of certification.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- contract, memorandum of understanding or enforceable agreement between the Scheme Owner and the certification body; accreditation manual, certification requirements/methodologies,
- audit reports,
- guidance documents specifying the conditions under which certification may be suspended or withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements set the conditions under which certification may be suspended or withdrawn in Section 8.5 Suspension or Withdrawal of Certificate in the following clauses:

8.5.1 The CB shall have documented procedures that define suspension and withdrawal of a Certified Fishery Certificate.

8.5.2 Where a Certified Fishery refuses to undertake additional re-assessment or fails to provide sufficient access for surveillance or re-assessment purposes or fails to provide sufficient evidence to meet the requirements of Corrective Action Plans, the CB shall implement a procedure for suspension pending withdrawal of the certification based on the outcome of a documented review by the CB.

8.5.3 CB's shall inform the Certified Fishery in writing of its intention to suspend or withdraw the certificate with a written rationale for its decision

8.5.4 CBs shall provide the Certified Fishery with an opportunity during the suspension period to appeal a CBs decision to withdraw a certificate.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements, v. 1.2 (2018), Section 8.5, page 28. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Certification-Requirements-v1.2-CLEAN.pdf

2) G.U.L.F.- GT Service Agreement (confidential)

3) INAB accreditation audit for GT (confidential)

4) GT's procedures (confidential)

B.2 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Operational Management of Seafood Certification Schemes*

CERTIFICATION

B.2 07 MULTI-SITE CERTIFICATION

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner requires that accredited certification bodies have certification procedures and guidance for multi-site certifications, if allowed under the scheme.

GUIDANCE

If the Scheme Owner explicitly does not allow multi-site certification (prohibits, not that it is not yet developed or exists) requirement is "*Not applicable*". Otherwise, the Scheme Owner requires certification body to have documented certification procedures and guidance for multi-site certification.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- memorandum of understanding or enforceable agreement between the Scheme Owner and the certification body;
- certification requirements/methodologies specifying multi-site procedures;
- guidance specifying certification procedures for multi-site certifications, in order to support consistency between certification bodies;
- audit reports.

CONCLUSION

This GSSI Component is not applicable to the G.U.L.F. RFM Program because multi-site certification is not applicable to fishery certification and the program does not include aquaculture sites.

REFERENCES

Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard, v. 1.2 (2018)
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

B.2 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Operational Management of Seafood Certification Schemes*

CERTIFICATION

B.2 08 AUDIT REPORTS

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner requires CBs to ensure consistency in audit report formats and in how the reports are completed.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner defines this requirement for certification bodies and has some system for quality control.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- contract/agreement between the Scheme Owner and the certification body, certification requirements/methodologies;
- guidance specifying formats for audit reports and reporting, mandatory audit templates;
- review online audit reports for consistency of report format and reporting, Scheme Owner quality management system for review of audit reports.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements sets the procedure for assessment reports in Section 6.10 'Assessment Report Configuration' and in Section 8.3 for surveillance Audits in the following relevant clauses:

6.10.2 The Full Assessment Report shall be produced to a defined and consistent template in accordance with the Certification Requirements.

6.10.3 The Full Assessment Report shall contain the following items at a minimum:
- Identification of the Unit of Certification/Assessment Units it considers
- The recommendation for certification of the Assessment Team
- The background, history of the status and management of the fishery
- A summary of the conformance of the fishery to the Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard
- The detailed rationales and evidence ratings assigned by the Assessment Team against each clause
- Non-conformances raised and corrective action/and or corrective action plans
- When completed - Peer review reports and responses to peer review comments from the Assessment Team
- Determination of final certification decision by the CB
- All references for evidence

8.3.9 The CB shall implement a template for reporting of Surveillance Audits.

8.3.10 Surveillance Audit reports, at a minimum, must contain the following information:
- Client contact details, Unit of Certification/Assessment Units and confirmation that there are no changes to the scope of the certificate.
- Surveillance Report Number (1, 2, 3 or 4) and date of report.
- A record of the Surveillance Team members.
- A record of the site visit or remote audit.
- An up-date on the key features of the management of the fishery and any new fishery developments (i.e. new stock assessment results and/or reports, changes in exploitation rates, effort, or related aspects, management responses to changes to stock abundance or environmental effects of the fishery) during the period from certification to the surveillance date.
- A summary of findings and recommendation for continued certification or suspension or certificate withdrawal, depending on the outcome of the Audit.
- An up-date of compliance to and progress of the agreed corrective action plans against non-conformances raised in the initial certification or subsequent surveillance reports.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements, v. 1.2 (2018), Section 6.10, page 21 and Section 8.3, page 27. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Certification-Requirements-v1.2-CLEAN.pdf

2) Assessment/Audit Templates:
Form 10D CoC checklist
Form 11 Full RFM assessment template
Form 11B RFM survaillance template
(confidential)

B.2 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Operational Management of Seafood Certification Schemes*

CERTIFICATION

B.2 09 STAKEHOLDER INPUT

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner requires that certification bodies have in place consistent procedures for stakeholders to provide input during the certification process.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner defines this requirement for certification bodies to have a documented procedure to enable input from all stakeholders during the certification process.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- contract/agreement between the Scheme Owner and the certification body, certification requirements/methodologies specifying requirements for mechanism for stakeholder input during certification process.
- guidance specifying procedures.
- review certification body process for input:
- publicly available information for stakeholder input, public announcements, audit work plans, requests for input.
- audit reports with stakeholder input.

RELATED SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENTS

B.2 09 01 B.2 09 02

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because this is specified in Certification Requirements 6.5.2: 'Engagement with client, fishery management organisations and fishery participants can take place throughout the assessment period, by direct meeting, by e-mail correspondence and or by telephone. A record log of all engagement meetings (e-mails etc.) with the applicant, fishery participants and stakeholders should be maintained'.

Stakeholder input is directly included in the site visit for fishery assessment. Notification of dates and locations of the site visit are posted and distributed through an electronic newsletter to interested stakeholders at least 30 days prior to the site visit. This announcement contains contact information for stakeholders to schedule an opportunity to meet with the assessment team during the site visit to provide comment.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements, v. 1.2 (2018). https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Certification-Requirements-v1.2-CLEAN.pdf

2) 'Louisiana Blue Crab Site Visit Announcement' Audubon G.U.L.F. website. http://audubongulf.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Notification-for-a-blue-crab-site-visit.pdf

B.2 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Operational Management of Seafood Certification Schemes*

CERTIFICATION

B.2 10 NON-COMPLIANCES

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner requires that certification bodies use a consistent procedure for determining non-compliances, verifying corrective actions arising from non-compliances and allowing for appeals of non-compliances.

GUIDANCE

For accurate and consistent implementation of the standard, the Scheme Owner ensures that certification bodies have documented procedures determining all of the following: non-compliances, verifying corrective actions arising from non-compliances, and allowing for appeals of non-compliances.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- contract, memorandum of understanding or enforceable agreement between the Scheme Owner and the certification body.
- accreditation manual, certification requirements/methodologies.
- guidance documents, determining non-compliances, verifying corrective actions arising from non-compliances and allowing for appeals of non-compliances, in order to support consistency between certification bodies.
- audit reports.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because there are consistent procedures for determining non-compliances, verifying corrective actions and allowing for appeals of non-compliances as determined in the G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements and the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment documents.

The G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Documents set requirements for CBs in Section 6.7 'Evaluating Fishery Performance Against the Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard' sets out the process for evaluation; Section 6.8 'Confidence Rating and Assignment of Non-conformances' defines the levels of conformance; Section 6.9 'Corrective Action Plans'; and Section 7.5 'Appeals and Complaints' sets the requirements for CBs to maintain a procedure for handling appeals and complaints that is compliant with SO 17065.

The G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment provides guidance to assessment teams when carrying out a fishery assessment and Section 1 'Guidance to Performance Evaluation' provides details on Confidence Ratings, Non-conformances, Thresholds and Corrective Actions.

The G.U.L.F. Chain of Custody Certification Requirements similarly contains requirements for non-conformance (5.5), corrective actions (5.4.3), and appeals and complaints (5.6.6-5.6.8).

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements, v. 1.2 (2018)
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Certification-Requirements-v1.2-CLEAN.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment, v. 1.2 (2018)
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) G.U.L.F. Chain of Custody Certification Requirements, v. 1.1 (2018)
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/CoC-Certification-Requirements-v.1.1-FINAL-4.23.18-1.pdf

4) G.U.L.F.- GT Service Agreement (confidential)

5) INAB accreditation audit for GT (confidential)

6) GT's procedures (confidential)

B.2 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Operational Management of Seafood Certification Schemes*

CERTIFICATION

B.2 11 SITE AUDIT

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner requires that the scope of the (re-)certification audit includes a visit to locations pertinent to the scope of the certification.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner requires that the scope of the audit (initial, annual or re-assessment) includes on-site assessment of premises covered by the scope of the standards and which one or more key activities are performed

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- contract, memorandum of understanding or enforceable agreement between the Scheme Owner and the certification body,
- accreditation manual, certification requirements/methodologies,
- guidance documents specifying procedures for determining site visits including sampling,
- review audit reports.

B.2 11 01 LEMENTARY COMPONENTS

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements, Section 6.5 'On-Site Assessment' sets the requirement for a formal site visit to the fishery location (s).

6.5.1 Full assessment evaluations shall require a formal site visit to the fishery location(s) by the entire or a justifiable compliment of the assessment team.

Similarly, The Chain of Custody Certification Requirements also contains requirements for audits including-
5.3.4 The key components of the CoC audit shall include:
- a physical inspection of premises, processes, products, packaging and labels.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements, v. 1.2 (2018)
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Certification-Requirements-v1.2-CLEAN.pdf

2) G.U.L.F. Chain of Custody Certification Requirements, v. 1.1 (2018)
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/CoC-Certification-Requirements-v.1.1-FINAL-4.23.18-1.pdf

B.2 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Operational Management of Seafood Certification Schemes*

CERTIFICATION

B.2 12 TRANSPARENCY ON CERTIFIED ENTITIES

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner requires that a list of certified enterprises is made publicly available.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner makes publically available a list of certified entities either directly or requires of certification bodies/ accreditation bodies.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- system to show the certification status of enterprises is publicly available online (e.g. database or online certificate list). If this system is outsourced to the accreditation bodies or certification bodies, this is required and the system described in the contract/agreement between the Scheme Owner and the accreditation body/certification body, in a separate accreditation manual or certification requirements/methodologies.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the G.U.L.F website contains information on all certified fisheries under 'Fisheries in the Program and a list of companies with Chain of Custody certification under 'Certified Suppliers'.

REFERENCES

1) 'Fisheries in the Program' Audubon G.U.L.F. website
https://www.audubongulf.org/certification/fisheries-in-the-program/

2) 'Certified Suppliers' Audubon G.U.L.F. website
https://www.audubongulf.org/certification/certified-suppliers/

B.2 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Operational Management of Seafood Certification Schemes*

CERTIFICATION

B.2 13 TRANSPARENCY ON AUDIT REPORTS

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

For fisheries, the Scheme Owner requires certification bodies to make full audit reports available on request after certification has been granted, while excluding commercially sensitive information.

GUIDANCE

Applicable only to fisheries, for Aquaculture "*Not Applicable*". The Scheme Owner defines this requirement for certification bodies to make full audit reports, after certification has been granted, available online or upon request. Commercially sensitive information is excluded. Contracts with certified entities should clearly give notice of this requirement.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- contract/agreement between the Scheme Owner and the certification body, contract with certification body and certified entity with this requirement,
- certification requirements/methodologies specifying requirement,
- guidance specifying that making reports available to stakeholders happens in a timely manner,
- review certification body website for posted reports or process for responding to requests.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because full assessment reports are available on the G.U.L.F. website for all certified fisheries.

REFERENCES

1) 'Fisheries in the Program' Audubon G.U.L.F. website
https://www.audubongulf.org/certification/fisheries-in-the-program/

2) INAB accreditation audit summary report (confidential)

B.2 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Operational Management of Seafood Certification Schemes*

CERTIFICATION

B.2 14 TRANSPARENCY ON AUDIT REPORTS

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

For aquaculture, the Scheme Owner requires certification bodies to make summary audit reports publicly available (excluding commercially sensitive material) after certification has been granted.

GUIDANCE

Applicable only to Aquaculture. For Fisheries "*Not Applicable*".
The Scheme Owner defines this requirement for certification bodies to make summary audit reports, after certification has been granted, publicly available. Commercially sensitive information is excluded. Contracts with certified entities should clearly give notice of this requirement.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- contract/agreement between the Scheme Owner and the certification body, contract with certification body and certified entity with this requirement.
- certification requirements/methodologies specifying requirement.
- guidance specifying that making reports available to stakeholders happens in a timely manner.
- certification body website for posted reports.

RELATED SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENTS

B.2 14 01 B.2 14 02

CONCLUSION

This GSSI Essential Component is not applicable to the G.U.L.F RFM Program because it does not include aquaculture.

REFERENCES

N/A

B.2 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Operational Management of Seafood Certification Schemes*

CERTIFICATION

B.2 15 NOTIFICATION OF CHANGES

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner notifies accreditation bodies, certification bodies and certified enterprises of any change in management procedures which affects scheme rules and procedures for accreditation or certification.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner has a system to ensure that accreditation bodies, certification bodies and certified entities are notified in a timely manner of any substantive change in management procedures. This is defined as changes which affect scheme rules and procedures for accreditation and/or certification. Where the scheme outsources responsibility of notification to accreditation bodies or certification bodies, there is a requirement for certification bodies to have a procedure for this notification and guidance on how this should take place (timeframe, manner, channel, etc.).

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- contracts/agreements with accreditation bodies and certification bodies regarding notification of changes, internal procedure/quality handbook for change management, ring information flow.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual includes the following requirement:

6.5.2 Certification Bodies shall be notified of all newly authorized Standard(s), Certification Requirements, and related documents at least 6 months in advance of them coming into effect in order that they may be formally adopted within the accredited certification system(s) that they operate.

And the G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements include the following clauses:

9.1 The CB shall, after a notification from Audubon, inform their Accreditation Body and Clients of any revision of G.U.L.F. RFM Standard and transition period.

9.2 Certified fisheries should be given a transition period, as specified by the Scheme Owner, to come into compliance with the revised Standard.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Operations Manual, v. 1.2 (2018) Section 6, pages 26-28.

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements, v. 1.2 (2018), Section 9, page 29. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Certification-Requirements-v1.2-CLEAN.pdf

B.2 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Operational Management of Seafood Certification Schemes*

CERTIFICATION

B.2 16 TIMELINE FOR CORRECTIVE ACTION

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner clearly defines the criteria relating to the classification of non-conformities. Where the Scheme Owner allows for certification of an entity with non-compliances, the Scheme Owner requires that:

- only non-conformities on minor, non-critical issues are allowed;
- a timeline for closing out corrective actions must be defined;
- a system to verify that corrective actions have been closed out is in place.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner defines the criteria related to rating the severity of non-conformities for certification bodies. If Scheme allows for certified entities with non-compliances, these can only be (All must be met): minor/non-critical, with a defined timeline for closing out and a mechanism defined to verify resolution.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- contract/agreement between the Scheme Owner and the certification body, certification requirements/methodologies specifying classifications of non-conformities and conditions for allowing certification with non-compliances.
- guidance specifying procedures and process for classifying non-conformities and conditions for issuing certification, audit reports.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the criteria and rules for non-conformances are defined in both the G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements and G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment. The following Sections/Clauses from the G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements address each of the elements required in this component:

Section 6.8 of the Certification Requirements mandates that CBs adopt the definitions of Confidence Ratings (and associated non-conformance levels) provided in this section.
Clause 6.8.1 'Low Confidence Rating (Critical Non-conformance) states 'a critical non-conformance will trigger the conclusion of the assessment, not allowing for certification, unless the applicant is able to provide information/evidence that demonstrates a higher level of conformance of the fishery than previously assessed'.
6.8.3 and 6.8.4 both state that a CB shall not certify a Unit of Certification with outstanding major/Minor Non-conformances applying to one or more Assessment Units, which have not been addressed by an accepted Corrective Action Plan.
6.8.7 A period of 28 days shall be provided from the date of formal notice of a request for clarification for the applicant to provide initial, but substantive, response.
6.9.1 Where non-conformances arise the CB shall provide the applicant a period of 28 days to submit a corrective Action Plan which details the commitments and activities within specified time frames that shall be implemented to close out the non-conformance.
6.9.4 Corrective Action Plans shall be based on activities that can be verified and measured with respect to close out of a particular non-conformance.
8.2.5 Surveillance audits shall focus on:
- Compliance and progress of the Certified Fishery, specific to agreed corrective action plans against non-conformances raised in the initial certification or subsequent surveillance reports.

The G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment also provide specific guidance to assessment teams on assigning non-conformances, thresholds, and corrective actions in Section 1: Guidance to Performance Evaluation.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements, v. 1.2 (2018), Section 6, pages 15-21.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Certification-Requirements-v1.2-CLEAN.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment, v. 1.2 (2018), Section 1, pages 8-11.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

B.2 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Operational Management of Seafood Certification Schemes*

CERTIFICATION

▶ AUDITOR COMPETENCE

B.2 17 REQUIREMENTS FOR TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner has defined the qualifications and competence criteria required by auditors and audit teams, employed by certification bodies, and it makes this information publicly available.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner defines the requirement for certification body auditor and audit teams qualifications and competency and these requirements are publically available. Competencies and qualifications include knowledge in the standard, education, experience and personal attributes.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- contract/agreement between the Scheme Owner and the accreditation body/certification body, accreditation/ certification requirements/methodologies specifying criteria for each function,
- auditor assessment and training records,
- auditor CVs.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the qualifications and competence criteria required for auditors and audit teams is set out in the G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements (RFM CR) for fisheries assessments and the G.U.L.F. Chain of Custody Certification Requirements (CoC CR) for CoC assessments, which are publicly available on the G.U.L.F. website.

The relevant sections in RFM CR are:
4.3 Competency of Personnel and Assessors
4.4 Assessor Qualification Criteria
4.5 Additional Lead Assessor Training
4.6 Assessor Fishery Competency Criteria
4.7 Continued Training and Competency Monitoring

The relevant sections in the CoC CR are:
4.3 Competency of Personnel and Assessors
4.4 Auditor Qualification Criteria

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements, v. 1.2 (2018)
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Certification-Requirements-v1.2-CLEAN.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. Chain of Custody Certification Requirements, v. 1.1 (2018)
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/CoC-Certification-Requirements-v.1.1-FINAL-4.23.18-1.pdf

3) Auditor CVs and training records (confidential)

B.2 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Operational Management of Seafood Certification Schemes*

CERTIFICATION

B.2 18 TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner requires certification body auditors to have successfully completed training in the scheme to the satisfaction of the Scheme Owner.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner defines the requirement for certification body auditor training in the standard including initial and ongoing development.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- contract/agreement between the Scheme Owner and the accreditation body/certification body, accreditation/ certification requirements/methodologies specifying criteria for each function.
- auditor assessment and training records.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the training requirements for auditors are set out in the G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements (RFM CR) for fisheries assessments and the G.U.L.F. Chain of Custody Certification Requirements (CoC CR) for CoC assessments.

The relevant clauses of the RFM CR are:

4.4.4 Assessors shall have undertaken training covering the Standard, assessment, procedural requirements and reporting requirements.

4.4.5 CBs shall require assessors to demonstrate competency in the application of the Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard using associated guidance documents and CB procedures.

The relevant clauses of the CoC CR are:

4.3.1 The CB shall implement a system for selection, initial training, ongoing training and performance assessment for all relevant personnel involved in the management and administration of the CoC Scheme and Certification System.

4.4.4 Auditors shall have undertaken training covering the CoC Standard, audit procedural requirements and reporting requirements.

4.4.5 CBs shall require auditors to demonstrate competency in the application of the Audubon G.U.L.F. CoC Standard and using any associated guidance and audit checklists.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements, v. 1.2 (2018)
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Certification-Requirements-v1.2-CLEAN.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. Chain of Custody Certification Requirements, v. 1.1 (2018)
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/CoC-Certification-Requirements-v.1.1-FINAL-4.23.18-1.pdf

3) Auditor CVs and training records (confidential)

B.2 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Operational Management of Seafood Certification Schemes*

CERTIFICATION

B.2 19 GENERAL AUDITING SKILLS

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner requires that certification body auditors successfully complete auditor training based on ISO 19011. This does not include technical experts seconded to audit teams.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner defines the requirement for certification body auditors to have successfully completed (passed) training based on ISO 19011 (Guidelines for auditing management systems) and that the audit team includes at least one auditor. Technical experts supplement auditor expertise, but are not formally auditors and do not count as an auditor.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- contract/agreement between the Scheme Owner and the accreditation body/certification body, accreditation/ certification requirements/methodologies specifying criteria for each function.
- auditor assessment and training records.
- auditor CVs.
- audit Reports.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements includes the following clause:

4.5.1 Lead assessors shall have completed either an internal or external auditor training course equivalent to ISO Lead Auditor status for objective assessment, impartiality and conduct in third party auditing.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements, v. 1.2 (2018)
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Certification-Requirements-v1.2-CLEAN.pdf

2) Auditor CVs and training records (confidential)

B.2 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Operational Management of Seafood Certification Schemes*

CERTIFICATION

B.2 20 SCHEME SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE ASSESSMENT

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner requires that certification bodies include the following in their competence assessment of auditors:

- an assessment of knowledge and skills for each fundamental area the auditor will be expected to be working,
- an assessment of knowledge of pertinent fishery and /or aquaculture Programs and the ability to access and be able to apply relevant laws and regulations,
- an assessment of the personal attributes of the auditor, to ensure they conduct themselves in a professional manner,
- a period of supervision to cover the assessment fishery and/or aquaculture principles, specific audit techniques and specific category knowledge,
- a documented sign off by the certification body of the satisfactory completion of assessment requirements.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner defines the requirement for certification bodies to include in the management of personnel competence (ISO 17065 clause 6.1.2) all of the elements in the *Essential Component*.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- contract/agreement between the Scheme Owner and the certification body, accreditation/certification requirements/ methodologies specifying requirement,
- guidance outlining the system and criteria for competencies, training, etc. (see B.2.17-B.2.19, 21-22),
- auditor assessment and training records,
- auditor CVs,
- accreditation body reports.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements include the following:
4.4.1 Assessors shall be proficient in spoken and written English.
4.4.2 Assessors shall hold a higher education qualification or equivalent professional qualification/experience in a fishery related technical application.
4.4.3 CBs shall ensure that contracted assessors can act in an impartial, ethical and objective manner for each fishery assignment they are assigned to.
4.4.4 Assessors shall have undertaken training covering the Standard, assessment, procedural requirements and reporting requirements.
4.4.5 CBs shall require assessors to demonstrate competency in the application of the Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard using associated guidance documents and CB procedures.
4.6.1 CBs shall ensure that the appointed Assessment Team for each applicant fishery exhibits the combined competence of the following requirements:

(i) Fish stock assessment techniques- The team must have demonstrable experience in the production or review of stock assessment techniques and methods relevant for the stock assessment methods used by the fishery or species groups under evaluation. A minimum of 5 years collective experience is the accepted qualification but this may be reduced where the assessor experience is based on the same or very similar species in other fisheries.
(ii) Fish stock biology/ecology/population dynamics- The team must have demonstrable knowledge, through experience and/or suitable qualifications, of the species or of a species with similar biology/ecology/ population dynamics of the fishery under evaluation.
(iii) Fishery interactions with non-target stocks, other non-commercial species, habitat and ecosystem- The team must have demonstrable competence, through experience and/or suitable qualification, to allow understanding and evaluation of the fishery interactions with non-target stocks, other non-commercial species, sensitive habitats and the wider ecosystem.
(iv) U.S. fishery management and operations- The team must have demonstrable competence, through experience and/or suitable qualifications, of fishery management processes and systems applied in the region, sufficient to evaluate the effectiveness of measures and strategies in use for the fisheries under evaluation.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements, v. 1.2 (2018)
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Certification-Requirements-v1.2-CLEAN.pdf

2) Auditor CVs and training records (confidential)

B.2 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Operational Management of Seafood Certification Schemes*

CERTIFICATION

B.2 21 SCHEME SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE MAINTENANCE

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner requires that certification body lead auditors maintain category and scheme knowledge.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner defines the requirement for certification body lead auditors to have and maintain the necessary training, technical knowledge and experience to ensure consistent and accurate audits.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- contract/agreement between the Scheme Owner and the certification body, accreditation/certification requirements/ methodologies specifying requirement,
- guidance outlining the system and criteria for lead auditors,
- lead auditor assessment and training records,
- lead auditor CVs,
- accreditation body reports.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements state that all assessors are required to have sector and scheme knowledge. The relevant sections of the RFM CR include:

4.3 Competency of Personnel and Assessors

4.4 Assessor Qualification Criteria

4.5 Additional Lead Assessor Training

4.6 Assessor Fishery Competency Criteria

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements, v. 1.2 (2018)
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Certification-Requirements-v1.2-CLEAN.pdf

2) Auditor CVs and training records (confidential)

B.2 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Operational Management of Seafood Certification Schemes*

CERTIFICATION

B.2 22 KNOWLEDGE MAINTENANCE

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner requires that certification bodies have a continuing professional development program in place that provides auditors with current best practice for fishery and/or aquaculture.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner defines the requirement for certification body auditor ongoing professional development to maintain current best practice in sector.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- contract/agreement between the Scheme Owner and the accreditation body/certification body, accreditation/ certification requirements/methodologies specifying criteria for continuous professional development,
- auditor training, assessment and training records.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements include the following clauses:

4.7.1 CBs shall ensure that assessors are kept up to date with and understand any revisions to the Standard, guidance documents, assessment and reporting requirements that come into effect.

4.7.2 The CB shall maintain written records of all relevant training and training evaluation undertaken by contracted and full time assessors.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements, v. 1.2 (2018)
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Certification-Requirements-v1.2-CLEAN.pdf

2) Auditor CVs and training records (confidential)

B.3 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Operational Management of Seafood Certification Schemes*

CHAIN OF CUSTODY

B.3 01 SEGREGATION

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner requires that all certified products are identified and segregated from non-certified products at all stages of the supply chain.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner requires clear identification and separation of certified from non-certified product at all stages of the supply chain.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- Chain of Custody standards, audit checklists, certification requirements/methodologies specifying requirement.
- Chain of Custody audit reports.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the following clauses of the G.U.L.F. CoC Standard require that all certified products are identified and segregated from non-certified products in the following clauses-

2.2 Throughout handling, processing, distribution and marketing, certified products that intend to carry the official certification mark/claim shall be kept identifiable from non-certified products. This may be achieved by:
• Physical separation;
• Temporal separation;
• A system that clearly prevents loss in identification and traceability such as mixing with non-certified products.

1.3 certified product shall be kept separate from non-certified product for a certification claim to be made.

1.6 For all contract services that do not take ownership of product, a written contract or other documentation of equivalence shall be provided that demonstrates a commitment to maintaining certified products separate and identifiable.

REFERENCES

Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Chain of Custody Standard, v. 1.1 (2018)
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/CoC-Standard-V1.1-FINAL-4.23.18.pdf

B.3 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Operational Management of Seafood Certification Schemes*

CHAIN OF CUSTODY

B.3 02 ENTERPRISES TO BE AUDITED

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner requires all enterprises that are physically handling the certified product to undergo a Chain of Custody audit by an accredited certification body if the product can be destined for retail sale as a certified, labelled product.

Exceptions: No audit is required for storage and distribution of tamper-proof, packaged products.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner requires all entities in a supply chain that physically handle the product and where there is the possibility of mixing undergo a Chain of Custody audit if the product will be claimed as certified or carry a label. Entities in the supply chain which do not take physical control or only handle storage and distribution in tamper proof packaging need to be identified, but do not require a Chain of Custody audit.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- contract/agreement between the Scheme Owner and the accreditation body/certification body, certified entity, certification requirements/methodologies defining types of operations and activities that require auditing according to these requirements,
- Chain of Custody reports.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because there is a Claims Use agreement required to make a G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Claim and the Claims Use Agreement contains the following requirement:
'Claims intended for use on packaging must be approved in advance by Audubon G.U.L.F. and applicant must provide proof of Chain of Custody certification for all products intended to carry the approved certification claim.'

The G.U.L.F. CoC Standard also contains the following clauses:
1.4 The applicant shall use a coding system to enable the identification and separation of batches of certified products throughout each stage of the process from delivery to dispatch and identification of products distributed in the supply chain intended for further chains of custody and for making a certification claim.

1.6 For all contract services that do not take ownership of product, a written contract or other documentation of equivalence shall be provided that demonstrates a commitment to maintaining certified products separate and identifiable.

2.1 The following minimum information (from records and documentation) shall be available for each product included in the scope of the G.U.L.F. CoC certification and shall be traceable from intake to dispatch and back to the certified fishery:
• Acceptable market name
• Name and address of supplier
• Supplier G.U.L.F. CoC registration number (or G.U.L.F. RFM Fishery certificate number)
• Production records

4.2 The Applicant must only use a certification mark/claim when it has documented evidence demonstrating that it has been granted approval to do so by the standard owner.

REFERENCES

1) G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Claim User Agreement
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/G.U.L.F.-RFM-Certification-Claim-Usage-Agreement-Dec2017.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Chain of Custody Standard, v. 1.1 (2018)
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/CoC-Standard-V1.1-FINAL-4.23.18.pdf

3) Claims Use agreement (confidential)

4) CoC audit report (confidential)

B.3 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Operational Management of Seafood Certification Schemes*

CHAIN OF CUSTODY

B.3 03 RECORDS FOR TRACEABILITY

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner requires certification bodies to verify that all enterprises within the chain maintain accurate and accessible records that allow any certified product or batch of products to be traceable from the point of sale to the buyer.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner defines the requirement for certification bodies that all entities within the supply chain, including those which may not undergo a Chain of Custody audit (see B.3.02), maintain up to date, complete and accessible records that allow for full traceability of the product along the entire supply chain.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- Chain of Custody standard.
- contract/agreement between the Scheme Owner and the certification body, accreditation/certification requirements/ methodologies specifying criteria for document control and maintenance.
- auditor checklists.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the following clauses are included in the G.U.L.F. CoC Standard:
1.4 The applicant shall use a coding system to enable the identification and separation of batches of certified products throughout each stage of the process from delivery to dispatch and identification of products distributed in the supply chain intended for further chains of custody and for making a certification claim.

2.1 The following minimum information (from records and documentation) shall be available for each product included in the scope of the G.U.L.F. CoC certification and shall be traceable from intake to dispatch and back to the certified fishery:
• Acceptable market name
• Name and address of supplier
• Supplier G.U.L.F. CoC registration number (or G.U.L.F. RFM Fishery certificate number)
• Production records

2.5 The applicant shall ensure that traceability records are accurate, legible and unadulterated and be kept for a period to correspond with the shelf life of the product, with a minimum of 1 year.

REFERENCES

Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Chain of Custody Standard, v. 1.1 (2018)
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/CoC-Standard-V1.1-FINAL-4.23.18.pdf

B.3 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Operational Management of Seafood Certification Schemes*

CHAIN OF CUSTODY

B.3 04 SUB-CONTRACTORS

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner requires that enterprises are able to demonstrate that these Chain of Custody requirements are met by the enterprise's subcontractors.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner ensures that certified entity takes full responsibility that all subcontractors fully meet Chain of Custody requirements and has a system to demonstrate this.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- sub-contract agreements, internal audits. If the Scheme Owner does not allow sub-contracting then this is aligned (as opposed to Not Applicable)

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the following clauses are included in the G.U.L.F. CoC Standard:

1.5 Contract processing, packing or labelling activities utilized by the Applicant shall be separately audited to the G.U.L.F. CoC Standard.

1.6 For all contract services that do not take ownership of product, a written contract or other documentation of equivalence shall be provided that demonstrates a commitment to maintaining certified products separate and identifiable.

REFERENCES

Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Chain of Custody Standard, v. 1.1 (2018)
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/CoC-Standard-V1.1-FINAL-4.23.18.pdf

B.3 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Operational Management of Seafood Certification Schemes*

CHAIN OF CUSTODY

B.3 05 AUDITING METHODS AND FREQUENCY

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner has or requires certification bodies to have documented procedures for auditing methods and frequency of audits that meet the following requirements:

- certificate validity does not exceed 3 years;
- periodicity depends on risk factors
- changes to an enterprise's traceability system that are deemed to affect the integrity of the Chain of Custody result in a re-audit (onsite).

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner has or ensures certification bodies have documented Chain of Custody audit methodologies including: validity of certificate cannot exceed 3 years, frequency of audits takes into consideration risk factors and an onsite audit is required when substantive changes to the certified entities traceability system take place. These are instances where the integrity of the Chain of Custody could be affected such as company mergers, major new markets.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- requirements in the contract/agreement between the Scheme Owner and the certification body, in a separate accreditation manual or for example in certification requirements/methodologies.
- guidance interpretation specifying frequency, auditing methods and risk factors, in order to support consistency between certification bodies.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the G.U.L.F. CoC Certification Requirements includes the following clauses:

5.8.1 CB's shall implement a certification validity of three years.
5.8.2 In the event there are substantial changes to the premises or products, these must be notified in writing to the certification body. The CB implement a procedure to evaluate the requirements for further evidence submission and physical audit.
5.8.3 Where certified entities request extension of scope to include new products from the existing certified fishery or a new certified fishery for the same or different species; the CB shall implement procedures to assess the requirements for further evidence submission and physical audit.
5.8.4 Where substantial changes to the original scope of the application become known that may impact the conformity of the client to the Scheme, the CB shall evaluate the need for short notice audits and suspension/withdrawal of the Certificate may be withdrawn in the event changes occur which will affect the company's certification status.
5.9.1 The client's conformity shall be checked by surveillance audits that are conducted at an audit frequency which is based upon the inherent product/process risk and the result of the initial audit.
5.9.2 Surveillance audits are typically scheduled during the 12-month period occurring directly after the initial audit. An audit window either side of this date by up to three (3) calendar months can be used to ensure that product is being processed/packed/handled.

REFERENCES

Audubon G.U.L.F. Chain of Custody Certification Requirements, v. 1.1 (2018)
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/CoC-Certification-Requirements-v.1.1-FINAL-4.23.18-1.pdf

B.3 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Operational Management of Seafood Certification Schemes*

CHAIN OF CUSTODY

B.3 06 NON-CONFORMITY/CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner requires the certification body to record all identified breaches of the chain of custody, including:

- an explanation of the factors that allowed the breach to occur;
- an explanation of the corrective actions required to ensure that a similar breach does not re-occur;
- the time frames for the corrective actions to be completed; and
- the date of closing out of the corrective actions and how the problem was solved.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner requires of certification bodies to document all breaches of Chain of Custody with explanation of contextual factors, corrective actions, and timeframes for corrective actions, date of closing and resolution.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- certification requirements/methodologies defining requirements of reports, contract or agreement specifying requirements, mandatory template reports.
- Chain of Custody audit report.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the G.U.L.F. CoC Standard requires the following:
3.3 In the event of a non-conforming product being released into the supply chain, the product withdrawal system or corrective action procedure shall be activated, the event fully documented, and the Certification Body notified.

3.4 A documented procedure shall be implemented for handling non-conformities raised during audits (external and internal) to this Standard. Records of non-conformities shall include:

- Clearly documented details of the non-conformity;

- Identification of the person responsible for addressing non-conformity;

- Clearly documented corrective action;

- Documented time-scale for correction;

- Documented verification that the corrective action(s) have been implemented and the non-conformity(ies) closed.

The G.U.L.F. CoC Certification Requirements, Section 10 'Records' mandates that the CB is responsible for maintaining a controlled document and record system and maintain comprehensive records of audit and certification activity, including corrective actions and close out of non-conformances.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Chain of Custody Standard, v. 1.1 (2018)
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/CoC-Standard-V1.1-FINAL-4.23.18.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. Chain of Custody Certification Requirements, v. 1.1 (2018)
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/CoC-Certification-Requirements-v.1.1-FINAL-4.23.18-1.pdf

B.3 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Operational Management of Seafood Certification Schemes*

CHAIN OF CUSTODY

B.3 07 AUDIT REPORT

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner requires that certification body audit reports include:

- the date of the inspection/audit;
- the name(s) of the person(s) responsible for the audit and report;
- the names and addresses of the sites inspected/audited;
- the scope of the inspection/audit;
- the non-conformities identified;
- the result of at least one mass balance assessment for each product covered by the Chain of Custody audit; and
- a conclusion on the conformity of the client with the Chain of Custody requirements.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner requires of certification bodies that all Chain of Custody audit reports include all of the elements in the *Essential Component*.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- certification requirements/methodologies defining requirements of reports, mandatory template reports.
- Chain of Custody audit report.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the CB audit reports includes all of the elements of of this component.

REFERENCES

G.U.L.F. RFM Audit Report Template

B.3 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Operational Management of Seafood Certification Schemes*

CHAIN OF CUSTODY

B.3 08 AUDIT REPORT

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner requires certification bodies to file reports at their office and to make these reports available to relevant parties upon request.

GUIDANCE

Certification bodies are required to maintain files of Chain of Custody audit reports (paper or electronic) and make these available upon request to relevant parties, within contractual arrangements with certified entities.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- contracts, agreements, certification requirements specify Chain of Custody reports are filed and process for making them available.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the G.U.L.F. CoC Certification Requirements includes the following clauses:

5.4.4 CB's shall ensure that Audit Reports are maintained confidentially and only circulated to other parties outside of the CoC Certification Scheme Personnel with the consent of the Applicant.

5.4.5 CB's shall ensure that consent for the provision of Audit Reports to the Standard Owner, Audubon, is itemized in the Application or Contractual Agreement between Applicant and CB.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. Chain of Custody Certification Requirements, v. 1.1 (2018)
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/CoC-Certification-Requirements-v.1.1-FINAL-4.23.18-1.pdf

2) G.U.L.F.- GT Service Agreement (confidential)

B.3 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Operational Management of Seafood Certification Schemes*

CHAIN OF CUSTODY

B.3 09 RECORD KEEPING

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner requires that an enterprise keeps records that demonstrate conformity with the Chain of Custody requirements for a period that:

- exceeds the shelf life of the certified product; and
- exceeds the periodicity between audits

GUIDANCE

Certified entity must keep records documenting compliance with Chain of Custody standard requirements at a minimum time that is longer than a. the shelf life of the product and b. time between audits.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- Chain of Custody standard, guidance interpretation and audit checklist that specify document retention policy.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the G.U.L.F. CoC Standard requires the following-

2.5 The applicant shall ensure that traceability records are accurate, legible and unadulterated and be kept for a period to correspond with the shelf life of the product, with a minimum of 1 year.

REFERENCES

Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Chain of Custody Standard, v. 1.1 (2018)
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/CoC-Standard-V1.1-FINAL-4.23.18.pdf

B.3 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Operational Management of Seafood Certification Schemes*

CHAIN OF CUSTODY

B.3 10 MULTI-SITE CHAIN OF CUSTODY AUDIT

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

Where a scheme allows for Chain of Custody certification of multiple sites managed under the control of a single entity, the Scheme Owner defines specific audit procedures that ensure all sites comply with the Chain of Custody certification requirements.

Control can include direct ownership, franchises, or where the entity has a signed agreement or contract with each site.

GUIDANCE

If the Scheme Owner does not allow Chain of Custody of multi-sites (prohibits not that it is not yet developed or exists)- requirement is “Not applicable”. Otherwise, the Scheme Owner defines audit procedure for multi-sites (under control of one entity) and requirements for internal control management system.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- Chain of Custody standard, guidance or checklist specifying procedure and internal control system.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the G.U.L.F. CoC Certification Requirements include the following clauses:

5.2.3 For applicants with multiple locations under a single entity, all audits (initial, surveillance, and recertification) will require audit at each physical location.

REFERENCES

Audubon G.U.L.F. Chain of Custody Certification Requirements, v. 1.1 (2018)
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/CoC-Certification-Requirements-v.1.1-FINAL-4.23.18-1.pdf

B.3 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Operational Management of Seafood Certification Schemes*

CHAIN OF CUSTODY

B.3 11 MULTI-SITE CHAIN OF INTERNAL VERIFICATION

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

Where the Scheme Owner allows for multi-site certification, they require that all sites are assessed as part of the internal audit during the period of validity of the certificate.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner does not allow Chain of Custody of multi-site-requirement is “Not applicable”. Otherwise, the Chain of custody standard requires all sites are assessed as part of the internal audit during the validity period of the certificate.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- standard, guidance interpretation and audit checklist.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the G.U.L.F. CoC Certification Requirements include the following clauses:

5.2.3 For applicants with multiple locations under a single entity, all audits (initial, surveillance, and recertification) will require audit at each physical location.

For multi-site certification for the G.U.L.F CoC standards, all sites must have a third party audit for certification, recertification and surveillance, so there is no sampling or requirement for internal audit.

REFERENCES

Audubon G.U.L.F. Chain of Custody Certification Requirements, v. 1.1 (2018)
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/CoC-Certification-Requirements-v.1.1-FINAL-4.23.18-1.pdf

B

EVIDENCE OF ALIGNMENT WITH IMPLEMENTED **GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENTS** FOR OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT OF SEAFOOD CERTIFICATION SCHEMES

B.2 *Evidence of alignment with implemented GSSI Supplementary Components for Operational Management of Seafood Certification Schemes*

CERTIFICATION

B.2 05 02 ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner has defined requirements for sampling methodology and frequency that certification bodies are required to follow during the audit.

Rationale: Provides guidance to certification bodies and auditors about what issues to focus on during the audit and how frequently to carry out audits.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner defines the requirements for certification bodies for sampling methodology and frequency of audits.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- contract, memorandum of understanding or enforceable agreement between the Scheme Owner and the certification body.
- accreditation manual, certification requirements/ methodologies
- audit reports
- guidance specifying sampling methodology (including what issues to focus on) and sampling frequency, in order to support consistency between certification bodies.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements set the requirements for CBs conducting assessments in accordance with ISO 17065 requirements for methodology and frequency of audits.

The CR contains requirements for Assessment Plans and Scheduling in Section 6.4, On-site Assessment activities in Section 6.5, Assessment Report requirements in sections 6.6 and 6.10, and Surveillance Audit activities in sections 8.1-8.3. Assessments to the G.U.L.F. RFM Standard include all relevant information and entities within the scope of the fishery; sampling does not occur.

As noted in clauses 6.6.3 and 6.6.4, assessment teams shall evaluate all relevant information and literature during the review, generally including: management authority legislation, governance procedures, reporting activities, surveillance and enforcement activities, scientific research and reports, cross-jurisdictional entities and activities, fishery participants and NGO activities.

The site visit includes meetings will all of the following relevant entities: The Fishery Applicant(s); Competent Management Authority(ies), Institutions and Agencies; Fishery Associations or representative groups; Fishery Vessel owners; Fish Processors.; Non-Government Organizations.

REFERENCES

Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements, v. 1.2 (2018)
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Certification-Requirements-v1.2-CLEAN.pdf

B.2 *Evidence of alignment with implemented GSSI Supplementary Components for Operational Management of Seafood Certification Schemes*

CERTIFICATION

B.2 09 01 STAKEHOLDER INPUT

GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner requires that the certification body solicits stakeholder input during the audit process.

Rationale: Proactive soliciting of stakeholder input encourages and increases scrutiny and transparency in the certification process, adding to the overall credibility.

GUIDANCE

The Scheme Owner defines this requirement for certification bodies to solicit input from all stakeholders during the certification process.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- contract/agreement between the Scheme Owner and the certification body, certification requirements/methodologies specifying requirement for mechanism for stakeholder input during certification process,
- guidance specifying procedures,
- review certification body process for input: publically available information for stakeholder input, public announcements, audit work plans, requests for input,
- audit reports with documented stakeholder input.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Program is in alignment because because while the requirement is not explicitly stated, there are no barriers to stakeholder input and announcements are made on the G.U.L.F. website and to an extensive list of stakeholders through the G.U.L.F. newsletter announcing fishery assessments, site visits and CB contact information to provide input.

The G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements 6.5.2 requires the following: 'Engagement with client, fishery management organisations and fishery participants can take place throughout the assessment period, by direct meeting, by e-mail correspondence and or by telephone. A record log of all engagement meetings (e-mails etc.) with the applicant, fishery participants and stakeholders should be maintained'.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements, v. 1.2 (2018). https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Certification-Requirements-v1.2-CLEAN.pdf

2) 'Louisiana Blue Crab Site Visit Announcement' Audubon G.U.L.F. website. http://audubongulf.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Notification-for-a-blue-crab-site-visit.pdf

B.2 *Evidence of alignment with implemented GSSI Supplementary Components for Operational Management of Seafood Certification Schemes*

CERTIFICATION

B.2 11 01 SITE AUDIT

GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT

The Scheme Owner requires that CBs conduct unscheduled audits.

Rationale: Provides a mechanism to assess enterprises without a lot of advance warning, to get a more truthful assessment of practices.

GUIDANCE

'Unscheduled' means without significant advance warning. The Scheme Owner defines this requirement for certification bodies to conduct unscheduled (without significant advance warning) or surprise audits. The Scheme Owner defines process for determining audits and methodologies to ensure consistent implementation.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- contract/agreement between the Scheme Owner and the certification body,
- certification requirements/methodologies specifying requirement and conditions for unscheduled audits (e.g. risk, context, complaints received),
- guidance specifying procedures and process to ensure consistency,
- audit reports.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Program is in alignment because the G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements, Section 8 requires the CB to develop Surveillance Audits to determine the continual conformance of the Certified Fishery to the Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard. The following clauses set requirements for frequency of surveillance and short-notice audits:

8.1.2 The CB shall arrange Surveillance Audits with the Certified Fishery, at least annually and more frequently if deemed necessary, including short notice audits.

8.1.3 Short notice audits shall be based on evidence of risk of serious non-conformity and credibility to the Scheme and substantiated by the CB and this information made available to the Scheme Manager.

This is done in accordance to ISO 17065 requirements and all CBs must hold accreditation to ISO 17065.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Requirements, v. 1.2 (2018)
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Certification-Requirements-v1.2-CLEAN.pdf

2) GT'S procedures (confidential)

B.2 *Evidence of alignment with implemented GSSI Supplementary Components for Operational Management of Seafood Certification Schemes*

CERTIFICATION

B.2 14 01 TRANSPARENCY ON AUDIT REPORTS

GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT

For aquaculture, the Scheme Owner requires Certification Bodies to make summary audit reports available on request after certification has been granted, that include the following information:

- the date of the inspection/audit;
- the name(s) of the person(s) responsible for the audit and report;
- the names and addresses of the sites inspected/audited;
- the scope of the inspection/audit;
- the non-conformities identified;
- the result of at least one mass balance assessment for each product covered by the Chain of Custody audit; and
- a conclusion on the conformity of the client with the chain of custody requirements.

Rationale: Supports transparency and empowers stakeholders to understand the performance of an enterprise

GUIDANCE

Applicable only to Aquaculture. For Fisheries "Not Applicable". The Scheme Owner defines this requirement for certification bodies to make summary audit reports, after certification has been granted, available upon request that include all of the information defined in the *Supplementary Component*. If the scheme does not allow mass balance, then that information requirement is considered aligned. Contracts with certified entities should clearly give notice of this requirement.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- contract/agreement between the Scheme Owner and the certification body, contract with the certification body and certified entity with this requirement,
- certification requirements/ methodologies specifying requirement
- guidance specifying the information to be included in summary audit reports
- certification body website for posted reports.

CONCLUSION

This GSSI Supplementary Component is not applicable to the G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Program because the G.U.L.F. RFM Program does not include aquaculture.

REFERENCES

B.2 *Evidence of alignment with implemented GSSI Supplementary Components for Operational Management of Seafood Certification Schemes*

CERTIFICATION

B.2 14 02 TRANSPARENCY ON AUDIT REPORTS

GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT

For aquaculture, the Scheme Owner requires certification bodies to make full audit reports on request after certification has been granted, while excluding commercially sensitive information

Rationale: Supports transparency and empowers stakeholders to understand the performance of an enterprise

GUIDANCE

Applicable only to Aquaculture. For Fisheries “Not Applicable”. The Scheme Owner defines this requirement for certification bodies to make full audit reports, certification has been granted, publically available or upon request. Commercially sensitive information is excluded. Contracts with certified entities should clearly give notice of this requirement.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- contract/agreement between the Scheme Owner and the certification body, contract with the certification body and certified entity with this requirement,
- certification requirements/ methodologies specifying requirement
- guidance specifying that making reports available to stakeholders happens in a timely manner
- certification body website for posted reports.

CONCLUSION

This GSSI Supplementary Component is not applicable to the G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Program because the G.U.L.F. RFM Program does not include aquaculture.

REFERENCES

D

EVIDENCE OF ALIGNMENT WITH APPLICABLE **GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS** FOR FISHERIES CERTIFICATION STANDARDS

D.1 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

GOVERNANCE AND FISHERY MANAGEMENT

▶ FISHERY MANAGEMENT

D.1 01 MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The standard requires the existence of a fishery management organization or arrangement that manages the fishery of which the Unit of Certification is a part.

GUIDANCE

A “fisheries management organization or arrangement” is defined by FAO (see Glossary). This term is used throughout the benchmarking framework and is intended to represent the “designated authority” mentioned in paragraphs 29.2 (36.2) and 29.4 (36.5) of the FAO Ecolabelling Guidelines. In this context it is essentially an entity holding the legal and generally recognised mandate for establishing fisheries management measures and taking management decisions such that those measures and decisions are legally enforceable. Where the stock under consideration is a transboundary fish stock, straddling fish stock, highly migratory fish stock or high seas fish stock it might also encompass a Regional Fisheries Management Organization (RFMO) - see Essential Component D.1.04. The fisheries management organization or arrangement may also be part of relevant traditional, fisher or community approaches to the management of the stock under consideration, provided their performance can be objectively verified (i.e. the knowledge has been collected and analysed though a systematic, objective and well-designed process, and is not just hearsay).

RELATED SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENTS

D.1 01 01 D.1 01 02 D.1 01 03 D.1 01 04

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because Section A of the G.U.L.F. RFM Standard focuses specifically on the Fisheries Management System and explicitly requires the existence of a legally mandated fishery management system.

Clause A1 There shall be a structured and legally mandated fishery management system, and an appropriate policy, legal, and institutional framework for fisheries management based upon and respecting international, national and local fisheries laws, including the requirements of any regional fisheries management organizations that manage fisheries on the stock(s) under consideration.
The assessment of this clause is broken down into 12 supporting clauses (1.1-1.12). The two supporting clauses that pertain directly to this component are 1.1 and 1.4

1.1 The fishery management system shall have a legal basis defining the powers of the authorities and laws, that identify by objectives or otherwise, allowing for responsible fisheries management as defined by this Standard.
1.4 (i) Institutions that make up the management system shall consult with other U.S. State, Federal, relevant regional/international fisheries management organizations, relevant to the stock(s) under consideration and; (ii) Where the applicant fishery is based on a shared, straddling, high seas, or highly migratory stock(s), its management shall be compatible with any requirements set out by applicable regional fisheries management organization(s).

The Guidance to Assessment provides further detail on the requirements to meet full conformance. Full conformance for Clause 1.1 requires 'Laws explicitly define the bodies and their functions and powers. The overall objectives of the fishery management system are defined and are consistent with responsible management of fishery resources'. Scoring for Supporting Clause 1.4 is broken down into two scoring evaluations, (i) and (ii). Full conformance for 1.4(i) requires 'There is effective and timely consultation with other U.S. State, Federal, relevant regional/international fisheries management organizations, relevant to the stock(s) under consideration'. Full conformance for 1.4 (ii) requires 'management of the applicant fishery is fully compatible with the requirements set out by regional/international fisheries management organizations, relevant to the stock(s) under consideration.

Example of these Supporting Clause in effect can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016), in the Background section (3.3- Fishery Management History and Organization) on pages 18-19 and in Supporting Clause 1.1 on pages 35-37, 1.4(i) on pages 42-43, and 1.4(ii) on pages 42-43.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

REFERENCES

1) G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (March 2018): Clauses A1, 1.1 and 1.4, page 8.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 1.1, p. 17; and Clause 4.1, p. 49.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Background Section 3.3, p. 18-19; Clause 1.1, p. 35-37; Clause 1.4, p. 42-43.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.1 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

GOVERNANCE AND FISHERY MANAGEMENT

D.1 02 ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The standard requires that the fishery management organization or arrangement receives and responds to in a timely manner the best scientific evidence available regarding the status of the stock under consideration and the likelihood and magnitude of adverse impacts of the unit of certification on the stock under consideration and the ecosystem.

GUIDANCE

Best scientific evidence available is described in the Glossary. For the stock under consideration it can derive from assessments of stock status outside of what is regarded as a traditional "stock assessment", accommodating techniques for data limited fisheries and including traditional knowledge, providing its validity can be objectively verified. The actions of the fishery management organization or arrangement in both receiving and responding to the best scientific evidence available must be in accordance with the Precautionary Approach (D.3.12). This Essential Component is also linked to those in D.4 that cover the collection and handling of data and information.

RELATED SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENTS

D.1 02 01 D.1 02 02

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the Standard requires that the fishery management organization receives and responds in a timely manner to the best scientific evidence available. This requirement is fulfilled through several clauses in the G.U.L.F. RFM Standard, including Clause 1.6 requiring the use of best scientific evidence in review and improvement of the management system, and in Sections B, C and E requiring collection and use of scientific data regarding the status of the stock and adverse impacts on the ecosystem.

In particular alignment was verified to:
1.6 The review process shall be clearly linked to improvement of the management system under clause 1.2 for the applicant fishery, and based on the use of best available scientific evidence, advice and/or objectively verified information by the management system from recognized institutions and other sources, including fisheries and external bodies and shall respond in a timely manner.
3.1 Data shall be collected from both fishery dependent and independent sources, as relevant, in a routine and consistent manner to allow for scientifically robust assessment
3.9 The nominated scientific institutions shall use best available scientific evidence, advice, and/or objectively verified information as a basis to inform stock assessment and provide advice on the objectives of fisheries management
4.2 In the event of overfishing, there shall be objectives for the management system and actions taken to reduce fishing mortality to levels that have been identified as appropriate for high productivity and long term conservation and implemented in a timely manner.
4.3 In the event that evidence shows biomass falling to levels where recruitment is impaired, there shall be objectives for the management system to allow for restoration of the stock(s) within reasonable time frames, relevant to the life history characteristics of the species under consideration to levels that allow for high productivity.
5.1 The mechanism for controlling harvest shall be identifiable, formally established and implemented in accordance with the best available scientific information.
5.2 Measures, harvest control mechanisms and associated actions shall be designed for when overfished conditions are approached and these shall be sufficiently formalized so that management can effectively respond and take action to situations of impaired recruitment, overfishing or increasing risk of exceeding these or other negative outcomes, in a timely manner.
7.1 The most probable adverse impacts of the fishery on the ecosystem shall be considered, evaluated and effectively addressed. Evaluation shall be based on best available scientific evidence, advice and/or objectively verified information; including traditional, fisher and community knowledge.
6.5 The absence of adequate scientific information shall not be used to postpone or fail to take conservation and management actions for the stock(s) under consideration and the environment where there is objective evidence of impaired stock recruitment ability and/or long term ecosystem impacts.

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for the above clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 1.6- p. 24, Clause 3.1- pages 34-35, Clause 3.9- pages 43-48, Clause 4.2- page 50, Clause 4.3- page 51, Clause 5.1- page 61, Clause 5.2- p. 62-63, Clause 7.1- page 69-70, and Clause 6.5- page 68.Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 1.6- p. 47-48, Clause 3.1- p. 65-69, Clause 3.9- p. 88-93, Clause 4.2- p. 97, Clause 4.3- p. 98-99, Clause 5.1- p. 107-109, Clause 5.2- p. 110-111, Clause 7.1- p. 122-135, and Clause 6.5- p.121.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 1.6- p. 9, Clause 3.1- p. 11, Clause 3.9- p. 12, Clause 4.2- p. 13, Clause 4.3- p. 13, Clause 5.1- p. 14, Clause 5.2- p. 14, Clause 7.1- p. 16, and Clause 6.5- p.15.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 1.6- p. 24, Clause 3.1- pages 34-35, Clause 3.9- pages 43-48, Clause 4.2- page 50, Clause 4.3- page 51, Clause 5.1- page 61, Clause 5.2- p. 62-63, Clause 7.1- page 69-70, and Clause 6.5- page 68.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 1.6- p. 47-48, Clause 3.1- p. 65-69, Clause 3.9- p. 88-93, Clause 4.2- p. 97, Clause 4.3- p. 98-99, Clause 5.1- p. 107-109, Clause 5.2- p. 110-111, Clause 7.1- p. 122-135, and Clause 6.5- p.121.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wpcontent/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.1 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

GOVERNANCE AND FISHERY MANAGEMENT

D.1 03 ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The standard requires that in order for the fishery management organization or arrangement to receive and respond to in a timely manner the best scientific evidence available (D.1.02) the fishery management organization or arrangement convenes regularly, as needed, to manage the integrated process of information collection, stock assessment, planning, formulation of the management objectives and targets, establishing management measures and enforcement of fishery rules and regulations.

GUIDANCE

The FAO Ecolabelling Guidelines do not specify a requirement for any specific frequency of meetings of the fishery management organisation or arrangement. Paragraph 29.3 refers to the requirement for timely scientific advice on the likelihood and magnitude of identified impacts of the fishery on the ecosystem. Principle 2.10 of the Guidelines requires that schemes be based on the best scientific evidence available. Best scientific evidence available is defined in the Glossary as a process by which scientific advice is commissioned and solicited by the management system. The wording of this Essential Component is intended to ensure that the Standard requires that this is done in a timely and organised way that is properly documented.

The CCRF also uses the word “timely” in many places in describing requirements for responsible fisheries management, e.g. Article 6.13 “timely solutions to urgent matters”; Article 7.4.4: “timely, complete and reliable statistics on catch and fishing effort are collected and maintained in accordance with applicable international standards and practices and in sufficient detail to allow sound statistical analysis. Such data should be updated regularly and verified through an appropriate system.”; Article 6.15 refers to the need for disputes relating to fishing activities and practices to be resolved in a timely, peaceful and cooperative manner; and Article 12.3 requires that States should ensure that data generated by research are analysed, that the results of such analyses are published, respecting confidentiality where appropriate, and distributed in a timely and readily understood fashion, in order that the best scientific evidence is made available as a contribution to fisheries conservation, management and development.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because, although there is no explicit requirement for the management system to convene regularly, multiple causes require timely action, best available science, monitoring, review and effectiveness of the management system and its various functions, which could only be accomplished by an active management system that convenes regularly and responds in a timely manner. Including the following clauses 1.5 and 1.6 (Section A), clauses 4.2, 4.3 and 5.2 (Section C) and clause 7.1 (Section E).
1.5 The management system, its institutional arrangements and their legal basis, regulations and other instruments, and management measures and outputs shall be subject to periodic review through identifiable review procedures and mechanisms.
1.6 The review process shall be clearly linked to improvement of the management system under clause 1.2 for the applicant fishery, and based on the use of best available scientific evidence, advice and/or objectively verified information by the management system from recognized institutions and other sources, including fisheries and external bodies and shall respond in a timely manner.
4.2 In the event of overfishing, there shall be objectives for the management system and actions taken to reduce fishing mortality to levels that have been identified as appropriate for high productivity and long term conservation and implemented in a timely manner.
4.3 In the event that evidence shows biomass falling to levels where recruitment is impaired, there shall be objectives for the management system to allow for restoration of the stock(s) within reasonable time frames, relevant to the life history characteristics of the species under consideration, to levels that allow for high productivity.
5.2 Measures, harvest control mechanisms and associated actions shall be designed for when overfished conditions are approached and these shall be sufficiently formalized so that management can effectively respond and take action to situations of impaired recruitment, overfishing or increasing risk of exceeding these or other negative outcomes, in a timely manner.
Clause 2.1 further requires effective mechanisms for monitoring, surveillance, control and enforcement, which would also necessitate ongoing, regular action by the management system.
2.1 Effective mechanisms shall be established for fisheries monitoring, surveillance, control and enforcement measures including, where appropriate, observer programs, inspection schemes and vessel monitoring systems, to ensure compliance with the conservation and management measures for the fishery in question.
Clause 3.1 requires 'routine and consistent' data collection to be used for robust assessment of stock status, fishery performance and management measures.
3.1 Data shall be collected from both fishery dependent and independent sources, as relevant, in a routine and consistent manner to allow for scientifically robust assessment of; 1) state of stocks(s) relative to management-elected reference points, 2) performance of fishery with respect to utilization of the resource, 3) performance of management measures, harvest controls and associated rules.

Section E includes similar requirements regarding ecosystem impacts, including clause:
7.1 The most probable adverse impacts of the fishery on the ecosystem shall be considered, evaluated and effectively addressed. Evaluation shall be based on best available scientific evidence, advice and/or objectively verified information; including traditional, fisher and community knowledge.

Further requirements for monitoring, evaluation and response regarding ecosystem impacts is broken down in clauses 7.4, 7.5 and 7.6 for non-target stocks, habitats, and ETP species. Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for the above clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 1.5- p. 23, Clause 1.6- p. 24, Clause 4.2- p. 50, Clause 4.3- p. 51, Clause 5.2- p. 62-63, Clause 2.1- p. 31, Clause 3.1- p. 34-35, Clause 7.1- p. 69-70, Clause 7.4- p. 73-75, Clause 7.5- p. 76-78, and Clause 7.6- p. 79-82. Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 1.5- p. 44-46, Clause 1.6- p. 47-48, Clause 4.2- p. 97, Clause 4.3- p. 98-99, Clause 5.2- p. 110-111, Clause 2.1- p. 60-61, Clause 3.1- p. 65-69, Clause 7.1- p. 122-135, Clause 7.4- p. 138-141, Clause 7.5- p. 142-145, and Clause 7.6- p. 146-147.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 1.5- p. 8, Clause 1.6- p. 9, Clause 4.2- p. 13, Clause 4.3- p. 13, Clause 5.2- p. 14, Clause 2.1- p. 10, Clause 3.1- p. 11, Clause 7.1- p. 16, Clause 7.4- p. 16, Clause 7.5- p. 17, and Clause 7.6- p. 17.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 1.5- p. 23, Clause 1.6- p. 24, Clause 4.2- p. 50, Clause 4.3- p. 51, Clause 5.2- p. 62-63, Clause 2.1- p. 31, Clause 3.1- p. 34-35, Clause 7.1- p. 69-70, Clause 7.4- p. 73-75, Clause 7.5- p. 76-78, and Clause 7.6- p. 79-82.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 1.5- p. 44-46, Clause 1.6- p. 47-48, Clause 4.2- p. 97, Clause 4.3- p. 98-99, Clause 5.2- p. 110-111, Clause 2.1- p. 60-61, Clause 3.1- p. 65-69, Clause 7.1- p. 122-135, Clause 7.4- p. 138-141, Clause 7.5- p. 142-145, and Clause 7.6- p. 146-147.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wpcontent/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.1 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

GOVERNANCE AND FISHERY MANAGEMENT

D.1 04 TRANSBOUNDARY STOCKS

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

Where the stock under consideration is a transboundary fish stock, straddling fish stock, highly migratory fish stock or high seas fish stock, the standard requires the existence of a bilateral, subregional or regional fisheries organization or arrangement, as appropriate that is concerned with the management of the whole stock unit over its entire area of distribution.

GUIDANCE

This Essential Component is intended to build on D.1.01 to provide greater specificity in the event that the stock under consideration is a transboundary fish stock, straddling fish stock, highly migratory fish stock or high seas fish stock. In this case, as well as the national authority with the legal and generally recognised mandate for establishing fisheries management measures and taking management decisions, there is expected to be an international institution or arrangement established (usually between two or more States) to be responsible for coordination of activities related to fisheries management over the entire area of distribution of the stock. This is to make sure that management of these stocks and fleets that fish on them is coordinated at the international level. Activities of the international institution or arrangement may include consultation between parties to the agreement or arrangement, formulation of fishery regulations and their implementation, allocation of resources, collection of information, stock assessment, as well as monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS). (e. g. a Regional Fisheries Management Organization – RFMO). See also CCRF Article 7.1.3 et seq. See also D.1.08, D.1.09 and D.1.10.

RELATED SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENTS

D.1 04 01

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the Standard requires that management of transboundary fish stocks be compatible with requirements set out by RFMOs in Clause 1.4 (ii) and several clauses require consideration of the total stock for assessment and management actions (Clauses 3.2, 3.9(vi), and 4.6).

1.4 (ii) Where the applicant fishery is based on a shared, straddling, high seas or highly migratory stock(s), its management shall be compatible with any requirements set out by applicable regional fisheries management organization(s). Full conformance under this clause requires- 'There is effective and timely consultation with other U.S. state, federal, relevant regional/international fisheries management organizations, relevant to the stock(s) under consideration.
3.2 Data review and analysis shall consider all fishery removals of the target stock(s) including retained catch and discards in target and non-target fisheries.
3.9 The nominated scientific institutions shall use best available scientific evidence, advice, and/or objectively verified information as a basis to inform stock assessment and provide advice on the objectives of fisheries management including: (vi) the structure and composition of the stock(s) under consideration, which contribute to its resilience shall be taken into account.
4.6 The determination of suitable conservation and management measures shall take account of: 1) Total fishing mortality from all sources, including discards, unobserved mortality, incidental mortality, unreported catches and catches in other fisheries either within or outside of the jurisdiction of the management system of the stock under consideration, 2) The size and health (structure and resilience to fishing pressure) of the stock under consideration and 3) Relevant environmental, biological, technological, economic, cultural, social, and commercial aspects.

Furthermore, the scope of the G.U.L.F. RFM Standard is currently limited to applications for assessment from State/Federal US Fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico and not other international fisheries. Where the US fishery is based on a stock that has other international fisheries, management will be assessed to ensure that all stock components are appropriately managed which would include an evaluation of any RFMO measures and/or bilateral arrangements between the US management and these other entities.
Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for the above clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 1.4(ii), p. 22; Clause 3.2, p. 36; Clause 3.9(vi), p. 48; Clause 4.6, p. 56-57. Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 1.4(ii)- p. 40-43, Clause 3.2- 70-75, Clause 3.9(vi)- p. 88-93, Clause 4.6- p. 102-104

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 1.4(ii), p. 8; Clause 3.2, p. 11; Clause 3.9(vi)- p. 12; Clause 4.6, p. 14. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 1.4(ii), p. 22; Clause 3.2, p. 36; Clause 3.9(vi), p. 48; Clause 4.6, p. 56-57.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 1.4(ii), p. 42-43; Clause 3.2, 70-75; Clause 3.9(vi), p. 88-93; Clause 4.6, p. 102-104.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wpcontent/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.1 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

GOVERNANCE AND FISHERY MANAGEMENT

▶ MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

D.1 05 PARTICIPATORY MANAGEMENT

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The standard requires the governance and fisheries management system under which the unit of certification is managed to be both participatory and transparent, to the extent permitted by national laws and regulations.

GUIDANCE

Participatory is described in the Glossary. Principle 2.4 (2.5) of the FAO Guidelines requires ecolabelling schemes to be transparent, including balanced and fair participation by all interested parties. Requiring the standard also to require that the governance and management system being assessed is participatory and transparent (i.e. not just the scheme/ standard itself) is consistent with paragraph 6.13 of the CCRF, which states that: States should, to the extent permitted by national laws and regulations, ensure that decision making processes are transparent and achieve timely solutions to urgent matters. States, in accordance with appropriate procedures, should facilitate consultation and the effective participation of industry, fish workers, environmental and other interested organizations in decision–making with respect to the development of laws and policies related to fisheries management, development, international lending and aid.

To meet this Essential Component, the standard must require the fisheries management organization or arrangement to make information and advice used in its decision-making publicly available, to the extent allowed by national laws and regulations. While it is possible for an organization to be separately participatory or transparent, being one without the other is regarded as of much less value, hence both are needed to meet this Essential Component. A participatory approach to fisheries management requires there to be an opportunity for all interested and affected parties to be involved in the management process. This does not mean that stakeholders are necessarily required to have specific decision rights in the fishery, or that participatory mechanisms must be included in National laws, but there should be a consultation process that regularly seeks and accepts relevant information, including traditional, fisher or community knowledge and there should be a transparent mechanism by which the management system demonstrates consideration of the information obtained.

RELATED SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENTS

D.1 05 01 D.1 05 02 D.1 05 03 D.1 05 04 D.1 05 05

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because Clause 1.2 requires the fishery management to be publicly accessible'.
1.2 The fishery management system shall have an identified framework or documented procedure, publicly accessible (to national and international government agencies, fisheries participants, and other stakeholders) that allows it to create, amend and abolish laws, regulations and other legal instruments or measures that are used to implement and improve upon responsible fisheries management for the applicant fishery.

Clause 1.6 regarding the regular review process of the management system includes information from stakeholders.
1.6 The review process shall be clearly linked to improvement of the management system under clause 1.2 for the applicant fishery, and based on the use of best available scientific evidence, advice and/or objectively verified information by the management system from recognized institutions and other sources, including fisheries and external bodies and shall respond in a timely manner.
Finally, Clause 3.5 allows for the use of stakeholder information-
3.5 Data can include relevant traditional, fisher or community knowledge, provided their validity can be objectively verified.

Additionally, note that the scope of the Scheme is limited to U. S.-based fisheries where government activities and decision-making, including fisheries management at both the state and federal level, require the opportunity for public participation in the policy and rule making process. Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for the above clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 1.2, p. 18; Clause 1.6, p. 24; Clause 3.5, p. 39. Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 1.2- p. 38-40, Clause 1.6- p. 47-48, and Clause 3.5- p. 81-82.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 1.2, p. 8; Clause 1.6, p. 9; Clause 3.5, p. 11.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 1.2, p. 18; Clause 1.6, p. 24; Clause 3.5, p. 39.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 1.2- p. 38-40, Clause 1.6- p. 47-48, and Clause 3.5- p. 81-82.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wpcontent/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.1 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

GOVERNANCE AND FISHERY MANAGEMENT

D.1 06 SMALL SCALE AND/OR DATA LIMITED FISHERIES

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The standard is applicable to governance and management systems for small scale and/or data limited fisheries, with due consideration to the availability of data and the fact that management systems can differ substantially for different types and scales of fisheries.

GUIDANCE

Being data limited is not necessarily synonymous with being small scale (hence the and/or in the Essential Component text), but the issues for fishery management may be similar.

The scheme and standard should be applicable to any fishery that falls within the scheme's geographic scope, i.e. different types and scales of fisheries, including potentially small scale and/or data limited fisheries. If a scheme has a part of its standard that applies only to a subset of fisheries, such as small scale and/or data limited fisheries, then it needs to explain under what circumstances that part of the standard would be invoked. This same logic would apply to other potential subsets of fisheries such as deep sea, low trophic level, salmon etc. This should not mean, however, the standard for these subsets of fisheries is fundamentally different (e.g. lowered) compared to the standard applicable to other fisheries. Being applicable to small scale and/or data limited fisheries relates to being able to take into consideration different kinds of information and utilize different fishery management approaches in a risk management context. In order to be applicable to governance and management systems for small scale and data limited fisheries, the standard should also be applicable to relevant traditional, fisher or community approaches used by the fisheries management organization or arrangement to manage the unit of certification, provided their performance can be objectively verified. Evidence to verify the performance of the relevant traditional, fisher or community approaches would need to be established by the certification body implementing the standard and could be derived, for example, from the assessment of conformance with other GSSI Essential Components, in particular those covering the Stock and Ecosystem Status and Outcomes (D.6).

If the scheme is generally applicable to all types of fisheries, (i.e. including small scale and/or data limited fisheries), then there is no need to explain the specific applicability, but in this case it may be harder for the scheme to demonstrate that the standard is indeed applicable to governance and management systems for small scale and/or data limited fisheries. In this context, it is important to recognize the great diversity of small-scale and/or data limited fisheries, as well as the fact that there is no single, agreed definition of these terms (see the Glossary). Small-scale fisheries represent a diverse and dynamic subsector, often characterized by seasonal migration. The precise characteristics of the subsector vary depending on the location. Accordingly, GSSI does not prescribe a specific definition of small-scale fisheries or data limited fisheries.

RELATED SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENTS

D.1 06 01

D.1 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

GOVERNANCE AND FISHERY MANAGEMENT

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the scheme does allow for varying levels of available scientific information and scale of fisheries through several clauses within the Standard, as follows:
With regard to the stock(s) under consideration, The Standard allows for proxies (Clauses 3.9, 3.8, 4.7) to provide flexibility based on the available scientific information and associated variations in management approached. The use of generic information in the absence of more specific information is allowed within the Standard both for the stock(s) under consideration (3.7) and impacts on the ecosystem (7.1); however, must also require greater precaution in management based on the level of risk associated with it (3.7, 6.1, 6.2, 7.3). Clause 4.6 requires the consideration of social, cultural, and economic aspects of the fishery. The Standard also allows for the use of traditional, fisher or community knowledge both regarding the stock(s) under consideration (3.5) and ecosystem impacts (7.1).
3.5 Data can include relevant traditional, fisher or community knowledge, provided their validity can be objectively verified.
3.7 In the absence of specific information on the stock(s) under consideration, generic evidence based on similar stocks can be used for fisheries with low risk. However, the greater the risk the more specific evidence is necessary to ascertain the sustainability of intensive fisheries.
3.8 The assessment shall include an appraisal of the stock status and harvest rate relative to target and limit reference points, substitutes or proxies that can demonstrably act in a similar way.
3.9 The nominated scientific institutions shall use best available scientific evidence, advice, and/or objectively verified information as a basis to inform stock assessment and provide advice on the objectives of fisheries management including:
i. Management targets consistent with achieving maximum sustainable yield (MSY) (or a suitable proxy) on average, or a lesser fishing mortality if that is optimal in the circumstances of the fishery (e.g. multispecies fisheries) or to avoid severe adverse impacts on dependent predators, taking into consideration relevant economic, social, or ecological factors.
ii. The application of specific limits or directions in key performance indicators, consistent with avoiding recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible, and specification of the actions to be taken if the limits are approached or the desired directions are not achieved.
iii. Accordingly: the stock(s) under consideration shall not be overfished if above the associated limit reference point (or its proxy).
iv. If fishing mortality (or its proxy) is above the associated limit reference point, actions shall be taken to decrease the fishing mortality (or its proxy) below that limit reference point.
v. In the event that evidence shows biomass falling well below target levels, management measures shall allow for restoration within reasonable time frames, relevant to the life history characteristics of the species under consideration.
vi. The structure and composition of the stock(s) under consideration, which contribute to its resilience shall be taken into account.
4.6 The determination of suitable conservation and management measures shall take account of:
1) Total fishing mortality from all sources, including discards, unobserved mortality, incidental mortality, unreported catches and catches in other fisheries either within or outside of the jurisdiction of the management system of the stock(s) under consideration.
2) The size and health (structure and resilience to fishing pressure) of the stock(s) under consideration.
3) Relevant environmental, biological, technological, economic, cultural, social, and commercial aspects.
4.7 Management measures shall generally be consistent with achieving Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) (or a suitable proxy) on average, or a yield based on a lesser fishing mortality if that is optimal in the circumstances of the fishery. This should take account of (where relevant to the fishery):
i. Insufficient data and greater uncertainty of the state of the stock(s) under consideration such that a higher level of precaution is required when defining harvest rates.
ii. Should take into account the structure and composition of the stock(s) under consideration, which contribute to its resilience.
6.1 Where there is greater uncertainty about the state of the stock(s) under consideration, including new or exploratory stocks, management shall demonstrate more precautionary approaches to managing the resource appropriate to the available data, including a more conservative fishing mortality.
6.2 Uncertainty shall be taken into account through suitable statistical analysis and/or other objective risk based methods.
7.1 The most probable adverse impacts of the fishery on the ecosystem shall be considered, evaluated and effectively addressed. Evaluation shall be based on best available scientific evidence, advice and/or objectively verified information; including
traditional, fisher and community knowledge.
7.2 In the absence of specific information on the ecosystem impacts of fishing, generic evidence based on similar fishery situations can be used for fisheries with low risk of severe adverse impact using a suitable risk management approach.
7.3 Where risk is considered greater, more specific evidence of the impacts of the fishery on the ecosystem and its components is required.

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for the above clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 3.5, p. 39; Clause 3.7, p. 41; Clause 3.8, p 42; Clause 3.9, p. 43-48; Clause 4.6, p. 56-57; Clause 4.7, p. 58-60; Clause 6.1, p. 64; Clause 6.2, p. 65; Clause 7.1, p. 69-70; Clause 7.2, p. 71; Clause 7.3, p. 72. Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 3.5- p. 81-82, Clause 3.7- p. 85, Clause 3.8- p. 86-87, Clause 3.9- p. 88-93, Clause 4.6- p. 102-104, Clause 4.7- p. 104-106, Clause 6.1- p. 112-116, Clause 6.2- p. 117-118, Clause 7.1- p. 122-135, Clause 7.2- p. 136, and Clause 7.3- p. 137.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 3.5, p. 11; Clause 3.7, p. 12; Clause 3.8, p. 12; Clause 3.9, p. 12; Clause 4.6, p. 14; Clause 4.7, p. 14; Clause 6.1, p. 15; Clause 6.2, p. 15; Clause 7.1-7.3, p. 16. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 3.5, p. 39; Clause 3.7, p. 41; Clause 3.8, p 42; Clause 3.9, p. 43-48; Clause 4.6, p. 56-57; Clause 4.7, p. 58-60; Clause 6.1, p. 64; Clause 6.2, p. 65; Clause 7.1, p. 69-70; Clause 7.2, p. 71; Clause 7.3, p. 72. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust; Oct. 2016): Clause 3.5; p. 81-82; Clause 3.7; p. 85; Clause 3.8; p. 86-87; Clause 3.9; p. 88-93; Clause 4.6; p. 102-104; Clause 4.7; p. 104-106; Clause 6.1; p. 112-116; Clause 6.2; p. 117-118; Clause 7.1; p. 122-135; Clause 7.2; p. 136; Clause 7.3; p. 137. https://www.audubongulf.org/wpcontent/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.1 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

GOVERNANCE AND FISHERY MANAGEMENT

D.1 07 COMPLIANCE OF THE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The standard requires that the fisheries management system under which the unit of certification is managed operates in compliance with local, national and international laws and regulations, including the requirements of any regional fisheries management organisation that exercises internationally recognised management jurisdiction over the fisheries on the stock under consideration.

GUIDANCE

Under this Essential Component the standard requires that the fisheries management system must operate legally (locally, nationally and internationally); the legality of the fishery (i.e. compliance with applicable fishing regulations) is covered under other requirements in this Performance Area. For the purposes of clarity, this includes compliance with the rules and regulations of any RFMO/A that exercises internationally recognized management jurisdiction over fisheries on the stock under consideration in the high seas and implementation of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Resolution 61/105, paragraphs 76-95 concerning responsible fisheries in the marine ecosystem.

RELATED SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENTS

D.1 07 01 D.1 07 02

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because Fundamental Clause A1 of the Standard requires a legally mandated fishery management system respecting local, national and international law including regional fisheries management organizations. A1 is broken down into 12 Supporting Clauses for assessment purposes and Clauses 1.1, 1,2 and 1.4 directly address the requirements of this component.

A1. There shall be a structured and legally mandated fishery management system, and an appropriate policy, legal and institutional framework for fisheries management based upon and respecting international, national and local fishery laws, including the requirements of any regional fisheries management organizations that manage the fisheries on the stock(s) under consideration.
1.1 The fishery management system shall have a legal basis defining the powers of the authorities and laws that identify by objectives or otherwise allowing for responsible fisheries management as defined by this Standard.
1.2 The fishery management system shall have an identified framework or documented procedure, publicly accessible (to national and international government agencies, fisheries participants, and other stakeholders) that allows it to create, amend and abolish laws, regulations and other legal instruments or measures that are used to implement and improve upon responsible fisheries management for the applicant fishery.
1.4 (i) Institutions that make up the management system shall consult with other U.S. State, Federal, relevant regional/international fisheries management organizations, relevant to the stock(s) under consideration and;
(ii) Where the applicant fishery is based on a shared, straddling, high seas or highly migratory stock(s), its management shall be compatible with any requirements set out by applicable regional fisheries management organization(s).

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for the above clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 1.1, page 17; Clause 1.2, page 18; Clause 1.4, pages 21-22.

Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 1.1- pages 35-37, Clause 1.2- pages 38-40, and Clause 1.4(i)(ii) - pages 42-43.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 1.1 and 1.2, page 8; Clause 1.4, page 8. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 1.1, page 17; Clause 1.2, page 18; Clause 1.4, pages 21-22.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust; Oct. 2016): Clause 1.1, p. 35-37; Clause 1.2, p. 38-40; Clause 1.4, p. 42-43.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wpcontent/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.1 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

GOVERNANCE AND FISHERY MANAGEMENT

▶ LEGAL FRAMEWORK

D.1 08 COMPLIANCE OF THE FISHERY

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The standard requires that the fishery of which the Unit of Certification is a part is managed under an effective legal framework at the local, national or regional (international) level as appropriate.

GUIDANCE

Legal framework is described in the Glossary. An effective legal framework is one that is shown to be fit for purpose, such that the fishery seeking certification proceeds in an orderly and well controlled manner. An effective legal framework should enable the fisheries management organization or arrangement to perform its functions without hindrance from systemic and repeated illegal activity. An effective legal framework can be one that incorporates traditional, fisher or community approaches (e.g. co-management under community approaches) provided their performance can be objectively verified. With respect to fisheries in the high seas, the legal obligations of UNCLOS and UNFSA have particular relevance. See also Essential Component D.1.09 regarding the need for effective and suitable monitoring, surveillance, control and enforcement of the fishery of which the unit of certification is a part.

Evidence of the performance of the legal framework can be derived from the assessment of conformance with other Essential Components, in particular D.1.09 and D.1.10 covering compliance and enforcement.

RELATED SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENTS

D.1 08 01

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the Standard requires a legally mandated fishery management system (Clause 1.1) with an identified framework or documented procedures for creating, amending and abolishing laws and regulations (Clause 1.2).

1.1 The fishery management system shall have a legal basis defining the powers of the authorities and laws that identify by objectives or otherwise allowing for responsible fisheries management as defined by this Standard.
1.2 The fishery management system shall have an identified framework or documented procedure, publicly accessible (to national and international government agencies, fisheries participants, and other stakeholders) that allows it to create, amend and abolish laws, regulations and other legal instruments or measures that are used to implement and improve upon responsible fisheries management for the applicant fishery.
1.4 (i) Institutions that make up the management system shall consult with other U.S. State, Federal, relevant regional/international fisheries management organizations, relevant to the stock(s) under consideration and;
(ii) Where the applicant fishery is based on a shared, straddling, high seas or highly migratory stock(s), its management shall be compatible with any requirements set out by applicable regional fisheries management organization(s).

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for the above clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 1.1- page 17, Clause 1.2- page 18, Clause 1.4(i)(ii)- pages 21-22. Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 1.1- pages 35-37, Clause 1.2- pages 38-40, and Clause 1.4(i)(ii)- pages 42-43.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 1.1, 1.2 and 1.4, page 8.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 1.1, page 17; Clause 1.2, page 18; Clause 1.4, pages 21-22.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust; Oct. 2016): Clause 1.1, pages 35-37; Clause 1.2, pages 38-40; Clause 1.4, pages 42-43.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wpcontent/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.1 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

GOVERNANCE AND FISHERY MANAGEMENT

D.1 09 COMPLIANCE OF THE FISHERY

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The standard requires effective and suitable monitoring, surveillance, control and enforcement of the fishery of which the unit of certification is a part.

GUIDANCE

Effective and suitable monitoring, surveillance, control and enforcement is described in the Glossary. Evidence of high levels of compliance in the fishery of which the Unit of Certification is a part with all applicable local, national and international laws and regulations (as appropriate, per Essential Component D.1.10) would be indicative of effective monitoring, surveillance, control and enforcement. The suitability of monitoring, surveillance, control and enforcement for the fishery of which the Unit of Certification is a part should be assessed by the technical team undertaking the assessment for certification relative to the standard.

Both this Essential Component and Essential Component D.1.08 (effective legal framework) derive from Paragraph 29.5 (36.6) of the Ecolabelling Guidelines which refers to "the fishery". It is, therefore, the effective and suitable monitoring, surveillance, control and enforcement of the "fishery" (see Glossary) that is the subject of this Essential Component, and this may extend beyond the unit of certification (as per paragraph 25 of the Guidelines, the unit of certification could encompass: the whole fishery, where a fishery refers to the activity of one particular gear-type or method leading to the harvest of one or more species; a sub-component of a fishery, for example a national fleet fishing a shared stock; or several fisheries operating on the same resources). If the stock under consideration is not transboundary, then the Standard need only be concerned with the effectiveness and suitability of the monitoring, surveillance, control and enforcement activities at the national level for the fishery of which the Unit of Certification is a part. For transboundary stocks, however, there are several Essential Components that apply such that the Standard must be concerned with fishery management and compliance at the international level and the status of the whole stock across its entire range. Essential Component D.1.08 covers the need for an effective legal framework at the local, national or regional (international) level as appropriate and Essential Component D.1.10 covers the need for the Unit of Certification to be operating in compliance with the requirements of local, national and international law and regulations. Under Essential Component D.1.04, where the stock under consideration is a transboundary fish stock, straddling fish stock, highly migratory fish stock or high seas fish stock, the standard must require the existence of a bilateral, subregional or regional fisheries organization or arrangement (e.g. an RFMO), as appropriate, covering the stock under consideration over its entire area of distribution. This is to make sure that management of these stocks and fleets that fish on them is coordinated at the international level. RFMOs are not generally responsible directly for monitoring, surveillance, control and enforcement; this is done by national authorities (i.e. of vessels operating within their waters of national jurisdiction and also of vessels flying their flag when they are fishing outside of those waters). If the Unit of Certification is part of a national fleet fishing on a transboundary stock, then it is still likely to be the effectiveness and suitability of the monitoring, surveillance, control and enforcement activities at the national level which is of prime importance for certification. If the Unit of Certification covers all the fishing on the stock under consideration, then the monitoring, surveillance, control and enforcement all of the national fleets is of concern. Note also that under Essential Component D.5.02 (assessment of the stock under consideration), the Standard must require assessment of the current status and trends of the stock under consideration to consider total fishing mortality on that stock from all sources, and under Essential Component D.6.01, the stock under consideration must not be overfished. Hence any deficiencies in the monitoring, surveillance, control and enforcement of fleets fishing on a stock under consideration that is a transboundary fish stock, straddling fish stock, highly migratory fish stock or high seas fish stock that compromise the effective assessment of the status of that stock would need to be of concern for certification.

Article 7.7.2 of the CCRF requires states to ensure that laws and regulations provide for sanctions applicable in respect of violations which are adequate in severity to be effective.

Article 7.7.3 of the CCRF requires states, in conformity with their national laws, to implement effective fisheries monitoring, control, surveillance and law enforcement measures including, where appropriate, observer programmes, inspection schemes and vessel monitoring systems. Standards may refer to these mechanisms as appropriate.

RELATED SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENTS

D.1 09 01 D.1 09 02

D.1 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

GOVERNANCE AND FISHERY MANAGEMENT

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because under Fundamental A2 (Gulf States fishery management organizations shall implement monitoring and control systems to allow for effective enforcement of management measures and their associated rules and regulations), Clause 2.1 explicitly requires effective mechanisms for monitoring, surveillance, control and enforcement of the fishery.

2.1. Effective mechanisms shall be established for fisheries monitoring, surveillance, control and enforcement measures including, where appropriate, observer programs, inspection schemes and vessel monitoring systems, to ensure compliance with the conservation and management measures for the fishery in question (Standard, page 10).

The Guidance to Assessment document provides further clarification on the scoring requirements of Clause 2.1 (page 31). To receive full conformance to this clause, the fishery must meet all three Evaluation Parameters (EPs) - Process/Framework, Implementation and Effectiveness and Evidence basis. This requires that a mechanism is in place for monitoring, surveillance, control and enforcement, and that it is effectively implemented with supporting evidence of compliance. An example of Clause can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016) on pages 60-61.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 2.1, page 10.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 2.1, page 31.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust; Oct. 2016): Clause 2.1, p. 60-61.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wpcontent/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.1 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

GOVERNANCE AND FISHERY MANAGEMENT

D.1 10 COMPLIANCE OF THE FISHERY

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The standard requires that the Unit of Certification operates in compliance with the requirements of local, national and international law and regulations.

GUIDANCE

This requirement covers the compliance of the Unit of Certification with all applicable laws and regulations. Paragraph 28 (35) of the Ecolabelling Guidelines requires compliance both by the fishery and the management system. The requirement for the management system to be in compliance with applicable laws and regulations is addressed in Essential Component D.1.07.

Conformance with this Essential Component should be considered alongside Essential Component D.1.09 - the requirement for effective and suitable monitoring, surveillance, control and enforcement. Conformance with this Essential Component requires there to be no evidence of systematic (methodical, regular, organized) or systemic (universal, throughout the system) non-compliance by fishers in the unit of certification with the requirements of local, national and international law and regulations. However, a lack of evidence of non-compliance by itself may not be sufficient if the monitoring, surveillance, control and enforcement is not effective and suitable for the fishery. Evidence of non-compliance may come from a variety of sources, including local and national monitoring, surveillance, control and enforcement programs, regional fisheries management organisations (RFMOs), and third party bodies such as industry organisations and non-governmental organisations. The Standard should require all of these sources to be consulted and taken into consideration.

Article 7.7.2 of the CCRF requires states to ensure that laws and regulations provide for sanctions applicable in respect of violations which are adequate in severity to be effective.

Article 7.7.3 of the CCRF requires states, in conformity with their national laws, to implement effective fisheries monitoring, control, surveillance and law enforcement measures including, where appropriate, observer programmes, inspection schemes and vessel monitoring systems. Standards may refer to these mechanisms as appropriate.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because, in addition to the evidence provided in component D.1.07, which requires the management system to be in compliance with local, national, and international law (Clauses 1.1, 1.2, 1.4) and the evidence provided in component D.1.09 requiring an effective monitoring, surveillance, control and enforcement system (Clause 2.1), the Standard also requires sanctions for non-compliance with local, state and national laws in Clause 2.2.

2.2 Non-compliance with conservation and management measures will result in sanctions, including, but not limited to, removal of authorization to fish and/or to serve as masters or officers of a fishing vessel. Sanctions shall be enforceable through local, state and national law, applicable in respect of violations and illegal activities shall be adequate in severity to be effective in securing compliance and discouraging violations wherever they occur.

To receive full conformance to Clause 2.2, based on the criteria provided in the Guidance to Assessment document (page 32), the client must produce evidence that the sanctions are effective in ensuring compliance.

An example of this clause can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 2.2 - page 62.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 2.2, p. 10.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 2.2, p. 32.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust; Oct. 2016): Clause 2.2, p. 62.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wpcontent/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.2 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

▶ STOCK UNDER CONSIDERATION

D.2 01 MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The standard requires the existence of management objectives that are applicable to the unit of certification and the stock under consideration and seek outcomes consistent with the long term sustainable use of the fisheries resources under management.

GUIDANCE

The Standard must show evidence of requiring the existence of clearly stated management objectives that meet the description in the Glossary The appropriateness of those objectives is tested through the assessment of conformance with Essential Components in other Performance Areas, including, the actions (management measures, monitoring etc.) taken to meet them and the outcomes for the stock under consideration and the ecosystem.

The “fishery” referred to in Paragraph 28 of the Guidelines encompasses both the unit of certification and the stock under consideration (as per paragraph 28.1), as do the management objectives referred to in this Essential Component.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because Fundamental Clause C4 requires the existence of management objectives designed to achieve optimal utilization and ensure long-term sustainable use of the resource. C4 is broken down into 7 Supporting Clauses, and clauses 4.1, 4.2, 4.3 and 4.5i explicitly require management objectives for long-term conservation of stocks. This requirement is further supported by clause 4.4 where short term objectives cannot be allowed to compromise long term objectives for sustainable use of the resource.

C4. The management system shall specify management objectives to achieve optimal utilization of the resource and ensure that the stock(s) is (are) not overfished and that overfishing is not occurring.

4.1 For the stock(s) under consideration, documented management approaches and objectives shall be available, with the intent that management will be successful at delivering objectives for the long-term conservation of the stock(s).

4.2 In the event of overfishing, there shall be objectives for the management system and actions taken to reduce fishing mortality to levels that have been identified as appropriate for high productivity and long term conservation and implemented in a timely manner.

4.3 In the event that evidence shows biomass falling to levels where recruitment is impaired, there shall be objectives for the management system to allow for restoration of the stock(s) within reasonable timeframes, relevant to the life history characteristics of the species under consideration to levels that allow for high productivity.

4.5 Accordingly, for the stock under consideration, there shall be defined objectives or goals for the fishery and its long-term sustainable use. Stock management objectives may vary and include additional economic and social aspects but must include the following:
i. Maintenance of the stock at or above the levels necessary to ensure their continued biological productivity and;

4.4 Short-term considerations shall not compromise the long-term management objectives for conservation and sustainable use of the fisheries resources.

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for the above clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 4.1, p. 49; Clause 4.2, p. 50; Clause 4.3, p. 51; Clause 4.5, p. 53-55; Clause 4.4, p. 52. Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 4.1- pages 94-96, Clause 4.2 - page 97, Clause 4.3- pages 98-99, Clause 4.5(i)- page 101 and Clause 4.4- p. 100.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 4.1, p. 13, Clause 4.2, p. 13; Clause 4.3, p. 13; Clause 4.5, p. 13; Clause 4.4, p. 13.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 4.1, p. 49; Clause 4.2, p. 50; Clause 4.3, p. 51; Clause 4.5, p. 53-55; Clause 4.4, p. 52.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 4.1, p. 94-96; Clause 4.2, p. 97; Clause 4.3, p. 98-99; Clause 4.5(i), p. 101; Clause 4.4, p. 100.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.2 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

▶ MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

D.2 02 BEST SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE AVAILABLE

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The standard requires that management objectives take into account the best scientific evidence available.

GUIDANCE

This Essential Component applies to all management objectives referred to in Essential Components under Performance Area D.2.

Best scientific evidence available is described in the Glossary. It can come from assessments of stock status outside of the typical “stock assessment”, accommodating techniques for data limited fisheries and including traditional knowledge, providing its validity can be objectively verified (i.e. the knowledge has been collected and analysed though a systematic process, and is not simply hearsay).

Note that the requirement for the management system to take into account the best scientific evidence available is not inconsistent with the Precautionary Approach (see Essential Component D.3.12), which requires inter alia that the absence of adequate scientific information should not be used as a reason for postponing or failing to take conservation and management measures. Both of these requirements apply.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the Standard requires the collection and use of best scientific evidence available for both the stock(s) under consideration (3.9, 4.2, 4.3, and 5.1) and ecosystem impacts (E7, 7.1). Furthermore, Clause 1.6 requires that the periodic review of the management system and its regulations, management measures and outputs be clearly linked to improvements based on best available scientific evidence and/or objectively verified information.

3.9 The nominated scientific institutions shall use best available scientific evidence, advice, and/or objectively verified information as a basis to inform stock assessment and provide advice on the objectives of fisheries management including:
i. Management targets consistent with achieving maximum sustainable yield (MSY) (or a suitable proxy) on average, or a lesser fishing mortality if that is optimal in the circumstances of the fishery (e.g. multispecies fisheries) or to avoid severe adverse impacts on dependent predators, taking into consideration relevant economic, social, or ecological factors.
ii. The application of specific limits or directions in key performance indicators, consistent with avoiding recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible, and specification of the actions to be taken if the limits are approached or the desired directions are not achieved.
iii. Accordingly: the stock(s) under consideration shall not be overfished if above the associated limit reference point (or its proxy).
iv. If fishing mortality (or its proxy) is above the associated limit reference point, actions shall be taken to decrease the fishing mortality (or its proxy) below that limit reference point.
v. In the event that evidence shows biomass falling well below target levels, management measures shall allow for restoration within reasonable time frames, relevant to the life history characteristics of the species under consideration.
vi. The structure and composition of the stock(s) under consideration, which contribute to its resilience shall be taken into account.

Section C of the Standard requires the use of and response to scientific evidence in clauses 4.2, 4.3 and 5.1.
4.2 In the event of overfishing, there shall be objectives for the management system and actions taken to reduce fishing mortality to levels that have been identified as appropriate for high productivity and long term conservation and implemented in a timely manner.
4.3 In the event that evidence shows biomass falling to levels where recruitment is impaired, there shall be objectives for the management system to allow for restoration of the stock(s) within reasonable timeframes, relevant to the life history characteristics of the species under consideration to levels that allow for high productivity.
5.1. The mechanism for controlling harvest rate shall be identifiable, formally established and implemented in accordance with the best available scientific information.

Fundamental Clause E7 Adverse impacts of the fishery on the ecosystem shall be appropriately assessed and effectively addressed. Assessment shall be based on best available science, local knowledge where it can be objectively verified and using a suitable risk based management approach appropriate to the data available for determining most probable adverse impacts and taking into account the relevant environmental, economic, technological, social, and cultural aspects.
7.1 The most probable adverse impacts of the fishery on the ecosystem shall be considered, evaluated and effectively addressed. Evaluation shall be based on best available scientific evidence, advice and/or objectively verified information; including
traditional, fisher and community knowledge.

1.6 The review process shall be clearly linked to improvement of the management system under clause 1.2 for the applicant fishery, and based on the use of best available scientific evidence, advice and/or objectively verified information by the management system from recognized institutions and other sources, including fisheries and external bodies and shall respond in a timely manner.

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for the above clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 3.9, p. 43-48; Clause 4.2, p. 50; Clause 4.3, p. 51; Clause 5.1, p. 61; Clause 7.1, p. 69-70; Clause 1.6, p. 24. Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 3.9- pages 88-93, Clause 4.2- page 97, Clause 4.3- page 98-99, Clause 5.1- pages 107-109, Clause 7.1- pages 122-135, and Clause 1.6- pages 47-48.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 3.9, p. 12; Clause 4.2, p. 13; Clause 4.3, page 13; Clause 5.1, p. 14; Clause 7.1, p. 16; Clause 1.6, page 9. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 3.9, p. 43-48; Clause 4.2, p. 50; Clause 4.3, p. 51; Clause 5.1, p. 61; Clause 7.1, p. 69-70; Clause 1.6, p. 24.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 3.9, p. 88-93; Clause 4.2, p. 97; Clause 4.3, p. 98-99; Clause 5.1, p. 107-109; Clause 7.1, p. 122-135; Clause 1.6, p. 47-48.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.2 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

▶ STOCK UNDER CONSIDERATION

D.2 03 REFERENCE POINTS

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The standard requires that the management objectives clearly define target and limit reference points, or proxies for the stock under consideration on the basis of the best scientific evidence available and in accordance with the Precautionary Approach. Target reference points must be consistent with achieving Maximum Sustainable Yield, MSY (or a suitable proxy) on average and limit reference points (or proxies) must be consistent with avoiding recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible.

GUIDANCE

The Glossary provides descriptions of target and limit reference points. Reference points must be set at levels consistent with achieving maximum sustainable yield (MSY) (or a suitable proxy) on average, or a lesser fishing mortality if that is optimal in the circumstances of the fishery (e.g. multispecies fisheries) or to avoid severe adverse impacts on dependent predators. To be effective, reference points must be incorporated within a framework of decision rules (See D.3.04) to ensure that the stock does not fall below a limit, Blim, at which recruitment could be significantly impaired, or lead to average recruitment that is significantly lower than it would be with a higher stock biomass. The level of Blim should be set on the basis of historical information, applying an appropriate level of precaution according to the reliability of that information. In addition, an upper limit should be set on fishing mortality, Flim, which is the fishing mortality rate that, if sustained, would drive biomass down to the Blim level.

A proxy is a surrogate or substitute approach that results in acceptable outcomes consistent with the primary approach. In the context of reference points, when data are insufficient to estimate reference points directly other measures of productive capacity can serve as reasonable substitutes or “proxies”. Suitable proxies may be, for example, standardized cpue as a proxy for biomass or specific levels of fishing mortality and biomass which have proven useful in other fisheries and can be used with a reasonable degree of confidence in the absence of better defined levels. It is important to note that the use of a proxy may involve additional uncertainty, and if so, should trigger the use of extra precaution in the setting of biological reference points. The words “or proxies” are a consideration for small scale and/or data limited fisheries, This should not be interpreted to mean that small scale and/or data limited fisheries do not require target and limit reference points, but that the methods used to develop them and monitor the stock status in relation to them may be less data intensive than for large scale fisheries. See also Essential Components D.1.04 and D.5.04.

RELATED SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENTS

D.2 03 01 D.2 03 02

D.2 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because Fundamental Clause C4 requires management objectives for optimal utilization of the stock and avoidance of overfishing and overfished conditions. C4 is broken down into 7 Supporting Clauses with more specific requirements including 4.7, 4.2 and 4.3, which require management measures consistent with MSY or suitable proxy, and management objectives and actions for overfishing and overfished conditions. Fundamental Clause C5, broken down into Clauses 5.1 and 5.2, also requires that a suitable mechanism exists to control harvest levels in accordance with objectives for achieving MSY or suitable proxy. Furthermore, clause 3.9 requires that the responsible scientific institutions shall use best available scientific evidence, advice, and/or objectively verified information as a basis to inform stock assessments and provide advice on the objectives of fisheries management including management targets consistent with achieving MSY or a suitable proxy and specific limits or directions in key performance indicators consistent with avoiding recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible. Finally, Section D of the Standard contains requirements for use of the Precautionary Approach throughout the management system. Clauses 6.1-6.5 are all applicable to precautionary requirements for the stock(s) under consideration.

C4. The management system shall specify management objectives to achieve optimal utilization of the resource and ensure that the stock(s) is (are) not overfished and that overfishing is not occurring.
4.7 Management measures shall generally be consistent with achieving Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) (or a suitable proxy) on average, or a yield based on a lesser fishing mortality if that is optimal in the circumstances of the fishery.
This should take account of (where relevant to the fishery):
i. Insufficient data and greater uncertainty of the state of the stock(s) under consideration such that a higher level of precaution is required when defining harvest rates.
ii. Should take into account the structure and composition of the stock(s) under consideration, which contribute to its resilience.
4.2 In the event of overfishing, there shall be objectives for the management system and actions taken to reduce fishing mortality to levels that have been identified as appropriate for high productivity and long term conservation and implemented in a timely manner.
4.3 In the event that evidence shows biomass falling to levels where recruitment is impaired, there shall be objectives for the management system to allow for restoration of the stock(s) within reasonable timeframes, relevant to the life history characteristics of the species under consideration to levels that allow for high productivity.

C5. A suitable mechanism shall exist to allow the harvest to be increased or decreased in accordance with the objectives for achieving maximum sustainable yield (or a suitable proxy) or optimal yield, depending on the nature and state of the resource (s) and taking into consideration environmental, social and economic factors.
5.1 The mechanism for controlling harvest shall be identifiable, formally established and implemented in accordance with the best available scientific information.
5.2 Measures, harvest control mechanisms and associated actions shall be designed for when overfished conditions are approached and these shall be sufficiently formalized so that
management can effectively respond and take action to situations of impaired recruitment, overfishing or increasing risk of exceeding these or other negative outcomes, in a timely manner.

3.9 The nominated scientific institutions shall use best available scientific evidence, advice, and/or objectively verified information as a basis to inform stock assessment and provide advice on the objectives of fisheries management including:
i. Management targets consistent with achieving maximum sustainable yield (MSY) (or a suitable proxy) on average, or a lesser fishing mortality if that is optimal in the circumstances of the fishery (e.g. multispecies fisheries) or to avoid severe adverse impacts on dependent predators, taking into consideration relevant economic, social, or ecological factors.
ii. The application of specific limits or directions in key performance indicators, consistent with avoiding recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible, and specification of the actions to be taken if the limits are approached or the desired directions are not achieved.
iii. Accordingly: the stock(s) under consideration shall not be overfished if above the associated limit reference point (or its proxy).
iv. If fishing mortality (or its proxy) is above the associated limit reference point, actions shall be taken to decrease the fishing mortality (or its proxy) below that limit reference point.
v. In the event that evidence shows biomass falling well below target levels, management measures shall allow for restoration within reasonable time frames, relevant to the life history characteristics of the species under consideration.
vi. The structure and composition of the stock(s) under consideration, which contribute to its resilience shall be taken into account.

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for the above clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 4.7, p. 58-60; Clause 4.2, p. 50; Clause 4.3, p. 50; Clause 5.1, p. 60; Clause 5.2, p. 61-62; Clause 3.9, p. 42-51; Section D (all), p. 64-68. Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 4.7- pages 104-106, Clause 4.2- page 97, Clause 4.3- pages 98-99, Clause 5.1 - pages 107-109, Clause 5.2- pages 110-111, Clause 3.9 - pages 88-93, and Section D (all)- pages 112-121.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 4.7, p. 14; Clause 4.2, p. 14; Clause 4.3, p. 14; Clause 5.1, p. 14; Clause 5.2, p. 14; Clause 3.9, p. 12; Section D (all), p. 15.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 4.7, p. 58-60; Clause 4.2, p. 50; Clause 4.3, p. 50; Clause 5.1, p. 60; Clause 5.2, p. 61-62; Clause 3.9, p. 42-51; Section D (all), p. 64-68.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 4.7, p. 104-106; Clause 4.2, p. 97; Clause 4.3, p. 98-99; Clause 5.1, p. 107-109; Clause 5.2, p. 110-111; Clause 3.9, p. 88-93; Section D (all), p. 112-121.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.2 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

D.2 04 ENHANCED FISHERIES

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The standard requires, in the case of enhanced fisheries, the existence of management objectives consistent with avoiding significant negative impacts of enhancement activities on the natural reproductive stock component of the stock under consideration and any other wild stocks from which the organisms for stocking are being removed.

GUIDANCE

All Essential Components that address Enhanced Fisheries can be “not applicable” to schemes that do not cover these fisheries. However, it is incumbent on the scheme to explicitly exclude enhanced fisheries (rather than explicitly include them) in order for these requirements to be not applicable. If the scheme remains silent on the issue of enhanced fisheries, then the standard could potentially be applied to fisheries that include enhanced components, but if these are not properly dealt with by the standard (i.e. as per GSSI Essential Components) then the scheme would be deficient when being used to certify such fisheries. In essence, the default position is that a scheme/standard can be applied to enhanced fisheries unless it excludes them explicitly.

The term “significant negative impacts” is used in the FAO Inland Guidelines. This was not intended to be equivalent to “severe adverse impacts” (on dependent predators). The FAO consultation that resulted in the drafting of the Inland Guidelines considered that avoidance of “severe adverse impacts” only would not be consistent with a management obligation to manage enhancement in ways that would not impact the productivity and abundance of the natural reproductive stock component of the stock under consideration.

Any displacement of the naturally reproductive stock components of enhanced stocks must not reduce the natural reproductive stock components below abundance-based Target Reference Points or their proxies. Note that the Target Reference Points are for the natural reproductive stock component. For example, in the case of salmon fisheries, if the spawning stock is comprised of fish both from enhanced and natural origins, the escapement goal considers only the natural origin component. An example Target Reference Point would be an escapement target based on the natural reproductive stock component.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because Fundamental Clause E8 directly addresses management objectives for enhancement activities. Supporting Clause 8.1-8.3 require that the natural reproductive components of the stock be maintained and consideration of adverse impacts.

E8. Where fisheries enhancement is utilized, assessment and monitoring shall consider natural reproductive components of the stock(s) under consideration and ecosystem impacts.

8.1 Stock introductions and transfers of juveniles from enhancement activities shall be from species that are native to the fishery's geographic area.
8.2 Stock assessment shall consider the separate contributions from both natural and enhanced components. Furthermore, the natural reproductive components of the stock(s) under consideration shall be maintained.

8.3 As appropriate, the most probable adverse impacts, from enhancement activities, such as disease transfer, genetic diversity of local populations and effects on other ecosystem components in the receiving waters shall be considered.

The Guidance to Assessment document further clarifies the requirements of 8.1 - 8.2 (pages 86-88) by providing scoring criteria for each clause. To receive full conformance for 8.3, the fishery must show effective consideration of impacts and if negative impacts are identified, remedial actions are required to mitigate these impacts.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause E8, p. 18; Clause 8.1,-8.3, p. 18.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 8.1-8.3, p. 86-88.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

D.2 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

▶ ECOSYSTEM EFFECTS OF FISHING

D.2 05 NON-TARGET CATCHES

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The standard requires the existence of management objectives that seek to ensure that non-target catches and discards by the unit of certification of stocks other than the stock under consideration and any associated culture and enhancement activity do not threaten those non-target stocks with recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible.

GUIDANCE

The term “target” in this Essential Component is used only in the context of “target stock status” in the Elements. This refers to the status of the stock under consideration only. “Non-target catches” refers to everything other than the stock under consideration.

This Essential Component is explicitly and deliberately confined to the effects of non-target catches and discards by the unit of certification on those non-target species/stocks. Cumulative effects on non-target species/stocks are not included in the Ecolabelling Guidelines. They are not part of the Essential Components, but they are covered in the Supplemental Components. The component relating to enhancement activity may be “not applicable” to schemes that explicitly do not cover enhanced fisheries.

Examples of irreversible or very slowly reversible effects on bycatch species include excessive depletion of very long-lived organisms (see Glossary). To mitigate effects that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible requires those effects to be made less severe such that they are no longer likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible.

RELATED SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENTS

D.2 05 01 D.2 05 02

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the Standard requires in Clause 4.5(ii) that management objectives be defined for the stock including minimizing the negative impacts of fishing on the physical environment, non-target stocks, and associated dependent predators. Furthermore, Clause 7.4 requires that non-target stocks be monitored to determine impacts, that the fishery shall not threaten non-target stocks and that monitoring procedures allow for objective scientific verification of the risks and outcomes of non-target stocks. Additionally, Clause 8.3 addresses impacts of enhancement activities on ecosystem components in the receiving waters.

4.5 Accordingly, for the stock under consideration, there shall be defined objectives or goals for the fishery and its long-term sustainable use. Stock management objectives may vary and include additional economic and social aspects but must include the following:
ii. Minimize the negative impacts of fishing on the physical environment and on non-target species (bycatch) and associated dependent species.

7.4 With regard to non-target catches; including discards of fish stocks other than the stock(s) under consideration:
i. Non target stocks shall be monitored to determine the impact exerted by the fishery.
ii. The fishery under consideration shall not threaten these non-target stocks with recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible and if such impacts arise, effective remedial action shall be taken.
iii. The monitoring procedures and activities shall allow for objective and scientific verification of the risks and outcomes.

8.3 As appropriate, the most probable adverse impacts, from enhancement activities, such as disease transfer, genetic diversity of local populations and effects on other ecosystem components in the receiving waters shall be considered.

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for the above clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 4.5- pages 53-55, Clause 7.4- pages 72-75, and Clause 8.3- page 88.

Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 4.5- page 101, Clause 7.4- pages 138-141 and Clause 8.2- p. 157.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 4.5, p. 13, Clause 7.4, p. 16: Clause 8.3, p. 18.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 4.5, p. 53-55; Clause 7.4, p. 73-75; Clause 8.3, p. 88.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 4.5, p. 101; Clause 7.4, p. 138-141; Clause 8.2, p. 157.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.2 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

D.2 06 ENDANGERED SPECIES

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The standard requires the existence of management objectives that seek to ensure that endangered species are protected from adverse impacts resulting from interactions with the unit of certification and any associated culture or enhancement activity, including recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible

GUIDANCE

The context of this Essential Component is Endangered Species. Endangered species are defined in the Glossary. These species are already adversely impacted at the population level, by definition, and are susceptible to further adverse impacts at this level from which they need to be protected. Where “adverse impacts” is used in the FAO Guidelines (“adverse impacts of the fishery on the ecosystem”) there is no further qualification provided (i.e. no “significant” or “severe”). Elsewhere in the Guidelines, the term “adverse impacts” is qualified, but in each case this is in a very specific context. For example. the term “significant negative impacts” is used in the FAO Ecolabelling Guidelines only in relation to enhanced fisheries and “severe adverse impacts” is used only in relation to dependent predators. The term “significant adverse impacts” occurs only in the Deep Sea Guidelines with respect to VMEs.

The FAO Guidelines acknowledge that much greater scientific uncertainty is to be expected in assessing possible adverse ecosystem impacts of fisheries than in assessing the state of target stocks (paragraph 31 (41)), hence the management objectives to protect endangered species should take into account risk and uncertainty.

RELATED SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENTS

D.2 06 01

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because Clause 4.5(ii) requires management objectives to minimize negative impacts on all non-target species and Clause 7.6 (i-iv) explicitly addresses management objectives regarding fishery interactions with endangered, threatened or protected (ETP) species.

4.5 Accordingly, for the stock under consideration, there shall be defined objectives or goals for the fishery and its long-term sustainable use. Stock management objectives may vary and include additional economic and social aspects but must include the following:
ii. Minimize the negative impacts of fishing on the physical environment and on non-target species (bycatch) and associated dependent species.

7.6 With regard to species that have been recognized as endangered, threatened or protected:
i. Consistent with A1, fishery management systems shall give formal recognition of populations of species identified as endangered, threatened and/or protected (ETP) in the geographic location of the fishery by international, national or state authorities within the context of the likely risk posed by the fishery under consideration.
ii. The fishery management system shall act to avoid adverse impact on the
populations of ETP species.
iii. Evaluation and monitoring procedures and activities shall be implemented to determine both the current status of the impact on ETP's caused by the fishery and to monitor the effectiveness of avoidance and mitigation measures that are implemented to minimize further impact on the mortality of those populations of ETP species.
iv. Monitoring procedures and activities shall be robust enough to allow for objective and scientific verification of the risks and outcomes.

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for the above clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 7.6(i-iv)- pages 79-82. Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 7.6 (i-iv)- pages 146-147.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 4.5(ii), p. 13 and Clause 7.6, p. 17.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 4.5(ii), p. 53-55 and Clause 7.6, p. 79-82.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 4.5(ii), p. 101 and Clause 7.6, p. 146-147.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.2 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

D.2 07 HABITAT

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The standard requires the existence of management objectives seeking to avoid, minimize or mitigate impacts of the unit of certification on essential habitats for the stock under consideration and on habitats that are highly vulnerable to damage by the fishing gear of the unit of certification.

GUIDANCE

Essential habitats are described in the Glossary. The CCRF (Article 6.8) refers to "critical fisheries habitats in marine and fresh water ecosystems" which can be regarded as substantively the same as essential habitats for the purposes of the practical application of this Essential Component. Critical fisheries habitats in marine and fresh water ecosystems include wetlands, mangroves, reefs, lagoons, nursery and spawning areas. Examples of impacts on habitat that should be avoided include those listed in the CCRF: destruction, degradation, pollution and other significant impacts. In accordance with Paragraph 28.2 of the Ecolabelling Guidelines, in assessing fishery impacts, the full spatial range of the relevant habitat should be considered, not just that part of the spatial range that is potentially affected by fishing. The purpose of this is to consider both the degree to which the habitat is rare, or common, and also that there may be impacts on the same habitat in other parts of its spatial range.

RELATED SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENTS

D.2 07 01

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because Clauses 4.5(ii), 7.5(i-ii) and 3.4 require management objectives for research and management activities seeking to minimize fishery impacts on habitat.

4.5 Accordingly, for the stock under consideration, there shall be defined objectives or goals for the fishery and its long-term sustainable use. Stock management objectives may vary and include additional economic and social aspects but must include the following:
ii. Minimize the negative impacts of fishing on the physical environment and on non-target species (bycatch) and associated dependent species.

7.5 With regard to the habitat interaction of the fishery either through direct contact or other indirect effects:
i. Habitats that are vulnerable to damage by the fishing gear(s) under consideration shall be monitored to determine the risk that the fishery exerts upon their long term viability.
ii. Impacts on habitats vulnerable to damage by the fishing gear or are protected by legislation must be avoided or minimized through mitigation measures.
iii. The monitoring procedures and activities shall allow for objective and scientific verification of the risks and outcomes, including prior to introduction of new fishing gear, and in assessing fishery impacts, the full spatial range of the relevant habitat shall be considered, not just the part of the spatial range that is potentially affected by fishing.

3.4 Data shall be collected and research advanced to improve the understanding of the biology, life-cycle and reproductive cycle of the stock under consideration, its geographic range, its habitat, the environmental factors that may influence stock abundance, and its role in the ecosystem, to improve management of the fishery.

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for the above clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 7.5(i-iii), p. 76-78; Clause 4.5, p. 53-55; Clause 3.4, p. 38. Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 7.5 (i-iii)- p. 142-145, Clause 4.5ii- p. 101, and Clause 3.4- p. 79-80.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 4.5, p. 13; Clause 7.5, p. 17; Clause3.4, p. 11. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 4.5, p. 53-55; Clause 7.5(i-iii), p. 76-78; Clause 3.4, p. 38.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 4.5(ii), p. 101; Clause 7.5 (i-iii), p. 142-145; Clause 3.4, p. 79-80.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.2 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

D.2 08 DEPENDENT PREDATORS

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The standard requires the existence of management objectives that seek to avoid severe adverse impacts on dependent predators resulting from fishing on a stock under consideration that is a key prey species.

GUIDANCE

This Essential Component is about objectives for fishing mortality on stocks under consideration that are key prey species, not about fishing mortality on Dependent Predators themselves. Where the stock under consideration is a key prey species, the standard must require that fishing mortality on that species/stock is managed so as not to result in severe adverse impacts on Dependent Predators. The FAO Guidelines require that all sources of fishing mortality on the stock under consideration are taken into account (whether or not it is a prey species) in assessing the state of the stock under consideration, including discards, unobserved mortality, incidental mortality, unreported catches and catches in other fisheries. Management measures to meet these objectives are required under D.3.10. Severe adverse impacts are mentioned in the Essential Components only in relation to dependent predators. This is in line with the Ecolabelling Guidelines. The severity of adverse impacts is related to their potential reversibility. Severe adverse impacts can be regarded as those that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible, which is described in the Glossary.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because several clauses of the Standard requires management objectives and directly address impacts on dependent predators, including Clauses 4.5(ii), 7.7, and 3.9(i).

4.5 Accordingly, for the stock under consideration, there shall be defined objectives or goals for the fishery and its long-term sustainable use. Stock management objectives may vary and include additional economic and social aspects but must include the following:
ii. Minimize the negative impacts of fishing on the physical environment and on non-target species (bycatch) and associated dependent species.

7.7 The role of the stock(s) under consideration in the food web shall be considered, and if it is a key prey species in the ecosystem, management measures shall be in place to avoid severe adverse impacts on dependent predators.

3.9 The nominated scientific institutions shall use best available scientific evidence, advice, and/or objectively verified information as a basis to inform stock assessment and provide advice on the objectives of fisheries management including:
i. Management targets consistent with achieving maximum sustainable yield (MSY) (or a suitable proxy) on average, or a lesser fishing mortality if that is optimal in the circumstances of the fishery (e.g. multispecies fisheries) or to avoid severe adverse impacts on dependent predators, taking into consideration relevant economic, social, or ecological factors.

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for the above clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 7.7- p. 83, Clause 3.9(i)- p. 43, and Clause 4.5(ii)- p. 55. Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 7.7(i-ii)- p. 147-153, Clause 3.9(i) - p. 88-93, and Clause 4.5(ii)- p. 101.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 4.5(ii), p. 13; Clause 7.7, p. 17; and Clause 3.9(i), p. 12. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 4.5(ii), p. 55; Clause 7.7, p. 83; and Clause 3.9(i), p. 43.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 4.5(ii), p. 101; Clause 7.7, p. 147-153; and Clause 3.9(i), p. 88-93.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.2 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

D.2 09 ECOSYSTEM STRUCTURE, PROCESSES AND FUNCTION

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The standard requires the existence of management objectives that seek to minimize adverse impacts of the unit of certification, including any associated enhancement activities if applicable, on the structure, processes and function of aquatic ecosystems that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible.

GUIDANCE

This Essential Component covers adverse impacts on the structure, processes and function of aquatic ecosystems. Ecosystem structure, processes and function are described in the Glossary. The Guidelines do not extend consideration of these impacts to all fisheries operating in the ecosystem where the unit of certification is operating and therefore this is not included in this Essential Component. This language is in accordance with Section 4.1.4.1 of the FAO Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries, which suggests one of the broad management objectives for fisheries could be to keep impact on the structure, processes and functions of the ecosystem at an acceptable level.

An earlier version of the requirements included an Essential Component on the conservation of biodiversity. Conservation of biodiversity is not mentioned separately in the Guidelines, but it is included in the CCRF Article 7.2.2 (d), which requires that States and sub-regional or regional fisheries management organizations and arrangements should adopt appropriate measures, based on the best scientific evidence available to provide that inter alia biodiversity of aquatic habitats and ecosystems is conserved. The structure processes and function of aquatic ecosystems includes biodiversity, hence this is considered to be included in this Essential Component.

Examples of irreversible or very slowly reversible indirect effects on the ecosystem include genetic modification and changed ecological role.

RELATED SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENTS

D.2 09 01 D.2 09 02 D.2 09 03

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because Section E of the Standard includes several clauses requiring management objectives and actions related to minimizing impacts to the structure, processes and function of the ecosystem including activities associated with enhancement of fisheries. Fundamental Clause E7 requires that impacts on the ecosystem be appropriately assessed and effectively addressed and Fundamental clause E8 requiring similar assessment and monitoring of ecosystem impacts from enhancement Activities. The Supporting Clauses in Section E related to this component are 7.1, 7.7, 7.9, 8.1, 8.2 and 8.3)

E7. Adverse impacts of the fishery on the ecosystem shall be appropriately assessed and effectively addressed. Assessment shall be based on best available science, local knowledge where it can be objectively verified and using a suitable risk based management approach appropriate to the data available for determining most probable adverse impacts and taking into account the relevant environmental, economic, technological, social, and cultural aspects.
7.1 The most probable adverse impacts of the fishery on the ecosystem shall be considered, evaluated and effectively addressed. Evaluation shall be based on best available scientific evidence, advice and/or objectively verified information; including traditional, fisher and community knowledge.
7.7 The role of the stock(s) under consideration in the food web shall be considered, and if it is a key prey species in the ecosystem, management measures shall be in place to avoid severe adverse impacts on dependent predators.
7.9 In so far as introduction of artificial structures promotes fisheries enhancement, the management system must consider the environmental consequences such as habitat modification and serious or irreversible harm to the natural ecosystem's structure and function.

E8. Where fisheries enhancement is utilized, assessment and monitoring shall consider natural reproductive components of the stock(s) under consideration and ecosystem impacts.
8.1 Stock introductions and transfers of juveniles from enhancement activities shall be from species that are native to the fishery's geographic area.
8.2 Stock assessment shall consider the separate contributions from both natural and enhanced components. Furthermore, the natural reproductive components of the stock(s) under consideration shall be maintained.
8.3 As appropriate, the most probable adverse impacts, from enhancement activities, such as disease transfer, genetic diversity of local populations and effects on other ecosystem components in the receiving waters shall be considered.

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for the above clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 7.1- p. 69-70, Clause 7.7-p.- 83, Clause 7.9- p. 85, and Clauses 8.1- 8.3- p. 86-88. Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 7.1- p. 122-135, Clause 7.7- p.147-153, Clause 7.9- p. 155, Clause 8.1- p. 156 and Clause 8.2- p. 157.

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 7.1- p. 16, Clause 7.7-p.- 17, Clause 7.9- p. 18, and Clauses 8.1- 8.3- p. 18. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 7.1- p. 69-70, Clause 7.7-p.- 83, Clause 7.9- p. 85, and Clauses 8.1- 8.3- p. 86-88.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 7.1- p. 122-135, Clause 7.7- p.147-153, Clause 7.9- p. 155, Clause 8.1- p. 156 and Clause 8.2- p. 157.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.3 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

MANAGEMENT APPROACHES, STRATEGIES AND PLANS

▶ MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

D.3 01 DOCUMENTED MANAGEMENT APPROACH

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The standard requires the existence of documented management approaches or other management framework covering the unit of certification and the stock under consideration, including management measures consistent with achieving management objectives for the stock under consideration.

GUIDANCE

A documented management approach or other management framework is an important component of the Management System. It provides clarity and transparency with respect to how the system is intended to function. The establishment of management approaches for the stock under consideration may not be entirely within the purview of the fishery management organization or arrangement that manages the fishery of which the Unit of Certification is a part. The stock's distribution may extend beyond its area of jurisdiction and there may be other fisheries targeting the stock under consideration that fall under a separate administrative jurisdiction (potentially in another country). Nevertheless the management measures that apply to the unit of certification should be consistent with achieving management objectives for the stock under consideration.

There is no uniform way that management approaches need to be documented (for example they do not have to be all within one overarching Fishery Management Plan), but the standard must require the various elements of the management system to be present and identifiable and in use by the fishery management organization or arrangement (D.1.01) , including the constitution and rules and procedures of the Fisheries Management Organization or Arrangement and the compliance regime (D.1.01-D.1.07); the legal framework (D.1.08); the management objectives (D.2); methodologies (D.5) although not necessarily all within one overarching Fishery Management Plan. It should be expected that the documentation would be current. The frequency of updates should be consistent with the requirements of meeting the management objectives and implementing management measures.

RELATED SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENTS

D.3 01 01 D.3 01 02 D.3 01 03

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because multiple clauses of the Standard require documented management approaches consistent with achieving management objectives for the stock under consideration, including the following:

1.2 The fishery management system shall have an identified framework or documented procedure, publicly accessible (to national and international government agencies, fisheries participants, and other stakeholders) that allows it to create, amend and abolish laws, regulations and other legal instruments or measures that are used to implement and improve upon responsible fisheries management for the applicant fishery.
4.1 For the stock(s) under consideration, documented management approaches and objectives shall be available, with the intent that management will be successful at delivering objectives for the long-term conservation of the stock(s).
4.2 In the event of overfishing, there shall be objectives for the management system and actions taken to reduce fishing mortality to levels that have been identified as appropriate for high productivity and long term conservation and implemented in a timely manner.
4.3 In the event that evidence shows biomass falling to levels where recruitment is impaired, there shall be objectives for the management system to allow for restoration of the stock(s) within reasonable timeframes, relevant to the life history characteristics of the species under consideration to levels that allow for high productivity.
4.7 Management measures shall generally be consistent with achieving Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) (or a suitable proxy) on average, or a yield based on a lesser fishing mortality if that is optimal in the circumstances of the fishery.
This should take account of (where relevant to the fishery):
i. Insufficient data and greater uncertainty of the state of the stock(s) under consideration such that a higher level of precaution is required when defining harvest rates.
ii. Should take into account the structure and composition of the stock(s) under consideration, which contribute to its resilience.
5.1 The mechanism for controlling harvest shall be identifiable, formally established and implemented in accordance with the best available scientific information.
5.2 Measures, harvest control mechanisms and associated actions shall be designed for when overfished conditions are approached and these shall be sufficiently formalized so that management can effectively respond and take action to situations of impaired recruitment, overfishing or increasing risk of exceeding these or other negative outcomes, in a timely manner.

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for the above clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 1.2, p. 18; Clause 4.1, p. 49; Clause 4.2, p. 50; Clause 4.3, p. 51; Clause 4.7, p. 58-60; Clause 5.1, p. 61; Clause 5.2, p. 62-63. Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 1.2- p. 38-40, Clause 4.1- p. 94-96, Clause 4.2- p. 97, Clause 4.3- p. 98-99, Clause 4.7(i-ii)- p. 104-106, Clause 5.1- p. 107-109, and Clause 5.2- p. 110-111.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 1.2, p. 8; Clause 4.1, p. 13; Clause 4.2, p. 13; Clause 4.3, p. 13, Clause 4.7, p. 14; Clause 5.1, p. 14; Clause 5.2, p. 14. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 1.2, p. 18; Clause 4.1, p. 49; Clause 4.2, p. 50; Clause 4.3, p. 51; Clause 4.7, p. 58-60; Clause 5.1, p. 61; Clause 5.2, p. 62-63.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 1.2, p. 38-40; Clause 4.1, p. 94-96; Clause 4.2, p. 97; Clause 4.3, p. 98-99; Clause 4.7, p. 104-106; Clause 5.1, p. 107-109; Clause 5.2, p. 110-111.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.3 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

MANAGEMENT APPROACHES, STRATEGIES AND PLANS

D.3 02 BEST SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE AVAILABLE

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The standard requires that management measures implemented through the management system to achieve the management objectives are based on the best scientific evidence available.

GUIDANCE

This Essential Component applies to all management measures referred to in Essential Components under Performance Area D.3.

Best scientific evidence available is described in the Glossary. Note that it includes traditional knowledge and can come from assessments of stock status outside of a typical stock assessment, accommodating techniques for data limited fisheries, providing their validity can be objectively verified (i.e. the knowledge has been collected and analysed though a systematic process, and is not simply hearsay).

Note also that the requirement for the management system to take into account the best scientific evidence available is not inconsistent with the Precautionary Approach (see Essential Component D.3.12), which requires inter alia that the absence of adequate scientific information should not be used as a reason for postponing or failing to take conservation and management measures. Both of these requirements apply.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because, in addition to the evidence provided in component D.2.02 requiring that management objective be based on scientific evidence, Clauses 4.7(i-ii), 5.1 and 5.2 specifically require management measures in response to the best scientific evidence available for the stock(s) under consideration. Furthermore, Clause 1.6 requires that the review process for the management system and associated laws and regulations also be based on best scientific evidence available. Finally, Fundamental Clause E7 requires the use of best scientific evidence in determining impacts to the ecosystem. E7 breaks down into nine Supporting Clauses and Clause 7.1 explicitly requires the collection and use of scientific data as well as traditional knowledge if it can be objectively verified.

4.7 Management measures shall generally be consistent with achieving Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) (or a suitable proxy) on average, or a yield based on a lesser fishing mortality if that is optimal in the circumstances of the fishery.
This should take account of (where relevant to the fishery):
i. Insufficient data and greater uncertainty of the state of the stock(s) under consideration such that a higher level of precaution is required when defining harvest rates.
ii. Should take into account the structure and composition of the stock(s) under consideration, which contribute to its resilience.

5.1 The mechanism for controlling harvest shall be identifiable, formally established and implemented in accordance with the best available scientific information.
5.2 Measures, harvest control mechanisms and associated actions shall be designed for when overfished conditions are approached and these shall be sufficiently formalized so that
management can effectively respond and take action to situations of impaired recruitment,
overfishing or increasing risk of exceeding these or other negative outcomes, in a timely
manner.
1.6 The review process shall be clearly linked to improvement of the management system under clause 1.2 for the applicant fishery, and based on the use of best available scientific evidence, advice and/or objectively verified information by the management system from recognized institutions and other sources, including fisheries and external bodies and shall respond in a timely manner.

E7. Adverse impacts of the fishery on the ecosystem shall be appropriately assessed and effectively addressed. Assessment shall be based on best available science, local knowledge where it can be objectively verified and using a suitable risk based management approach appropriate to the data available for determining most probable adverse impacts and taking into account the relevant environmental, economic, technological, social, and cultural aspects.
7.1 The most probable adverse impacts of the fishery on the ecosystem shall be considered, evaluated and effectively addressed. Evaluation shall be based on best available
scientific evidence, advice and/or objectively verified information; including traditional, fisher and community knowledge.

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for the above clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 4.7, p. 58-60; Clause 5.1, p. 61; Clause 5.2, p. 62-63; Clause 1.6, p. 24; Clause 7.1, p. 69-70. Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 4.7(i-ii)- p. 105-106, Clause 5.1- p. 107-109, and Clause 5.2- p. 110-111, Clause 1.6- p. 47-48 and Clause 7.1- p.122-135.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 4.7, p. 14; Clause 5.1, p. 14; Clause 5.2, p. 14; Clause 1.6, p. 9; Clause 7.1, p. 16.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 4.7, p. 58-60; Clause 5.1, p. 61; Clause 5.2, p. 62-63; Clause 1.6, p. 24; Clause 7.1, p. 69-70.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 4.7, p. 105-106; Clause 5.1, p. 107-109; Clause 5.2, p. 110-111; Clause 1.6, p. 47-48; Clause 7.1, p.122-135.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.3 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

MANAGEMENT APPROACHES, STRATEGIES AND PLANS

▶ STOCK UNDER CONSIDERATION

D.3 03 FISHING MORTALITY

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The standard requires that management measures for the stock under consideration consider the impacts on the stock under consideration of all the fisheries utilizing that stock under consideration over its entire area of distribution.

GUIDANCE

This Essential Component addresses cumulative impacts of fishing from all sources on the stock under consideration as specified in the Ecolabelling Guidelines. Management measures for the stock under consideration must be based on an assessment of that stock which takes account of all removals from the stock over its entire area of distribution, i.e. not just by the unit of certification but by all fisheries that utilize that stock, including bycatch, discards, unobserved mortality, incidental mortality, unreported catches, and catches taken outside of the unit of certification. These terms are not defined here, or in the Glossary. They are used collectively in this context to cover all possible descriptions of fishery removals of the stock under consideration.

Area of Distribution is described in the Glossary based on a CITES reference for species, but this can apply to stocks in a fisheries context.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because Clause 4.6 requires that management measures take into account total fishing mortality from all sources, as follows:
4.6 The determination of suitable conservation and management measures shall take account of:
1) Total fishing mortality from all sources, including discards, unobserved mortality, incidental mortality, unreported catches and catches in other fisheries either within or outside of the jurisdiction of the management system of the stock(s) under consideration.
2) The size and health (structure and resilience to fishing pressure) of the stock(s) under consideration.
3) Relevant environmental, biological, technological, economic, cultural, social, and commercial aspects (Standard, page 14).

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for the above clause can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 4.6- p. 56-57. Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 4.6- p. 102-104.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 4.6, p. 14.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 4.2, p. 56-57.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 4.6- p. 102-104.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.3 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

MANAGEMENT APPROACHES, STRATEGIES AND PLANS

D.3 04 DECISION RULES

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The standard requires that management measures specify the actions to be taken in the event that the status of the stock under consideration drops below levels consistent with achieving management objectives that allow for the restoration of the stock to such levels within a reasonable time frame. This requirement also pertains to species introductions or translocations that have occurred historically and which have become established as part of the natural ecosystem.

GUIDANCE

This requires the specification in advance of decision rules that mandate remedial management actions to be taken if target reference points are exceeded and/or limit reference points are approached or exceeded or the desired directions in key indicators of stock status are not achieved. For example, decreasing fishing mortality (or its proxy) if the stock size approaches its limit reference point. This is a central component of the Precautionary Approach (see D.3.12).

RELATED SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENTS

D.3 04 01

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because Clause 5.1 requires the existence of a mechanism for controlling harvest levels and Clauses 4.2 and 5.2 require measures and associated actions designed for overfishing and overfished conditions. Furthermore, Clause 3.9 requires the use of best scientific evidence in determining management objectives and measures regarding the status of the stock(s) under consideration.

5.1 The mechanism for controlling harvest shall be identifiable, formally established and implemented in accordance with the best available scientific information.
4.2 In the event of overfishing, there shall be objectives for the management system and actions taken to reduce fishing mortality to levels that have been identified as appropriate for high productivity and long term conservation and implemented in a timely manner.
5.2 Measures, harvest control mechanisms and associated actions shall be designed for when overfished conditions are approached and these shall be sufficiently formalized so that management can effectively respond and take action to situations of impaired recruitment, overfishing or increasing risk of exceeding these or other negative outcomes, in a timely manner.
3.9 The nominated scientific institutions shall use best available scientific evidence, advice, and/or objectively verified information as a basis to inform stock assessment and provide advice on the objectives of fisheries management including:
i. Management targets consistent with achieving maximum sustainable yield (MSY) (or a suitable proxy) on average, or a lesser fishing mortality if that is optimal in the circumstances of the fishery (e.g. multispecies fisheries) or to avoid severe adverse impacts on dependent predators, taking into consideration relevant economic, social, or ecological factors.
ii. The application of specific limits or directions in key performance indicators, consistent with avoiding recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible, and specification of the actions to be taken if the limits are approached or the desired directions are not achieved.
iii. Accordingly: the stock(s) under consideration shall not be overfished if above the associated limit reference point (or its proxy).
iv. If fishing mortality (or its proxy) is above the associated limit reference point, actions shall be taken to decrease the fishing mortality (or its proxy) below that limit reference point.
v. In the event that evidence shows biomass falling well below target levels, management measures shall allow for restoration within reasonable time frames, relevant to the life history characteristics of the species under consideration.
vi. The structure and composition of the stock(s) under consideration, which contribute to its resilience shall be taken into account.

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for the above clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 5.1, p. 61; Clause 4.2, p. 50; Clause 5.2, p. 62-63; Clause 3.9, p. 43-48. Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 5.1- p. 107-109, Clause 4.2- p. 97, Clause 5.2- p. 110-111, and Clause 3.9(i-vi)- p. 42-47.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 5.1, p. 14; Clause 4.2, p. 13; Clause 5.2, p. 14; Clause 3.9, p. 12. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 5.1, p. 61; Clause 4.2, p. 50; Clause 5.2, p. 62-63; Clause 3.9, p. 43-48.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 5.1, p. 107-109; Clause 4.2, p. 97; Clause 5.2, p. 110-111; Clause 3.9 p. 42-47.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.3 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

MANAGEMENT APPROACHES, STRATEGIES AND PLANS

D.3 05 ENHANCED FISHERIES

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The standard requires, in the case of enhanced fisheries, management measures designed to achieve management objectives (see D.2.06) seeking to avoid significant negative impacts of enhancement activities on the natural reproductive stock components of the stock under consideration and any other wild stocks from which the organisms for stocking are being removed.

GUIDANCE

This Essential Component addresses the need for standards to require management measures to achieve the management objectives in Essential Component D.2.06. It refers to Enhanced Fisheries, hence it may be regarded as not applicable if the Scheme/Standard explicitly excludes enhanced fisheries (see also Guidance for D.2.06) The term natural reproductive stock components is explained in the Glossary. The term “significant negative impacts” is used in the Inland Guidelines. This was not intended to be equivalent to severe adverse impacts (on dependent predators). The consultation that resulted in the drafting of the Inland Guidelines considered that avoidance of “severe adverse impacts” only would not be consistent with a management obligation to manage enhancement in ways that would not impact the productivity and abundance of the natural reproductive stock component of the stock under consideration.

In the case where organisms for stocking originate from wild stocks other than the stock under consideration, those stocks should be managed according to the provisions of Article 7 of the CCRF. In particular, those stocks should be within biologically based limits, or if outside those limits, the removal of organisms for stocking purposes does not hinder recovery and rebuilding of those stocks

Standards that apply to enhanced components of the stock under consideration require that stocking of enhanced fisheries, whether sourced from aquaculture facilities or wild stocks, is undertaken in such a way as to maintain inter alia:

i) The integrity of the environment; ii) The conservation of genetic diversity; iii) Disease control; iv) Quality of stocking material, and v) The donor wild stocks.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because Clauses 8.1-8.3 address management measures regarding avoidance of negative impacts from enhancement activities on the stock under consideration and the ecosystem. Clause 8.1 specifically requires that introductions and transfers be native. Clause 8.2 explicitly requires that stock assessments consider the separate contributions from both natural and enhanced components and that natural reproductive components of the stock under consideration be maintained. Clause 8.3 addresses negative impacts on the ecosystem from enhancement activities. Further scoring clarification on Clauses 8.3 in the Guidance to Assessment document (page 86-88) requires that a framework or process for identifying impacts including, but not limited to, disease transfer, genetic diversity of local populations, and effects on other ecosystem components, and that, where adverse impacts are identified, remedial actions are effectively implemented to mitigate them.

8.1 Stock introductions and transfers of juveniles from enhancement activities shall be from species that are native to the fishery's geographic area.

8.2 Stock assessment shall consider the separate contributions from both natural and enhanced components. Furthermore, the natural reproductive components of the stock(s) under consideration shall be maintained.

8.3 As appropriate, the most probable adverse impacts, from enhancement activities, such as disease transfer, genetic diversity of local populations and effects on other ecosystem components in the receiving waters shall be considered.

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for these clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 8.1- 8.3, p. 86-88. Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 8.1- p. 156, and Clause 8.2- p. 157.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause E8, p. 18; Clause 8.1,-8.3, p. 18.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 8.1-8.3, p. 86-88.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

D.3 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

MANAGEMENT APPROACHES, STRATEGIES AND PLANS

▶ ECOSYSTEM EFFECTS OF FISHING

D.3 06 NON-TARGET CATCHES

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The standard requires that management measures are designed to achieve management objectives (see D.2.07) seeking to ensure that non-target catches and discards by the unit of certification of stocks other than the stock under consideration and any associated culture and enhancement activity do not threaten those non-target stocks with recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible.

GUIDANCE

This is the partner Essential Component of D.2.07. Non-target catches and discards refers to species/stocks that are taken by the unit of certification other than the stock for which certification is being sought (see Glossary). Examples of irreversible or very slowly reversible effects on bycatch species include recruitment overfishing or excessive depletion of very long-lived organisms. Management measures should mitigate effects that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible by making those effects less severe such that they are no longer likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible.

RELATED SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENTS

D.3 06 01 D.3 06 02 D.3 06 03 D.3 06 04 D.3 06 05 D.3 06 06 D.3 06 07

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because multiple clauses address management measures for non-target catches and discards by the unit of certification. Clause 7.4 requires that non-target stocks, including discards, be monitored in a manner that allows for objective and scientific verification of the risks and outcomes, that the fishery under consideration does not threaten these non-target stocks with recruitment overfishing or other irreversible or slowly reversible impacts, and if impacts occur remedial actions are taken. Furthermore, Clause 8.2 addresses adverse impacts of enhancement activities on local populations and ecosystem components.

7.4 With regard to non-target catches; including discards of fish stocks other than the stock(s) under consideration:
i. Non target stocks shall be monitored to determine the impact exerted by the fishery.
ii. The fishery under consideration shall not threaten these non-target stocks with recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible and if such impacts arise, effective remedial action shall be taken.
iii. The monitoring procedures and activities shall allow for objective and scientific verification of the risks and outcomes.

8.2 As appropriate, the most probable adverse impacts, from enhancement activities, such as disease transfer, genetic diversity of local populations and effects on other ecosystem components in the receiving waters shall be considered.

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for the above clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 7.4 (i-iii) p. 71-73, and Clause 8.2- p. 86. Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 7.4- p. 138-141, and Clause 8.2- p. 157.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 7.4 (i-iii) p. 16, and Clause 8.3- p. 18.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 7.4 (i-iii) p. 71-73, and Clause 8.23- p. 86.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 7.4 (i-iii) p. 71-73, and Clause 8.2- p. 86.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.3 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

MANAGEMENT APPROACHES, STRATEGIES AND PLANS

D.3 07 NON-TARGET CATCHES

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The standard requires the existence of management measures that minimize unwanted catch and discards, where appropriate, and reduce post-released mortality where incidental catch is unavoidable.

GUIDANCE

This Essential Component is related to D.3.06 in that minimizing unwanted catch and discards and reducing post-released mortality can help to reduce the impact of non-target catches and discards by the unit of certification. Under the CCRF, users of aquatic ecosystems should minimize waste and catch of non-target species, both fish and non-fish species. Non-target catches and discards refer to species/stocks that are taken by the unit of certification other than the stock for which certification is being sought (see Glossary).

The words “where appropriate” give a scheme the flexibility not to require a fishery to have bycatch avoidance if there is no risk of bycatch in the fishery.

RELATED SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENTS

D.3 07 01 D.3 07 02 D.3 07 03

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because, Clause 7.4 explicitly requires that non-target stocks are monitored to determine impacts and that remedial action be taken where adverse impacts occur. The scoring guidance for this clause (Guidance to Assessment, 7.4(ii), page 74) specifically refers to remedial measures designed to reduce post-release mortality such as safe handling practices and bycatch reduction devises as part of the Implementation and Effectiveness scoring parameter.

7.4 With regard to non-target catches; including discards of fish stocks other than the stock(s) under consideration:
i. Non target stocks shall be monitored to determine the impact exerted by the fishery.
ii. The fishery under consideration shall not threaten these non-target stocks with recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible and if such impacts arise, effective remedial action shall be taken.
iii. The monitoring procedures and activities shall allow for objective and scientific verification of the risks and outcomes.

Clause 7.4(ii) includes the following Implementation and Effectiveness Parameter, which must be met to receive full conformance and includes the following requirement:
'Implementation and Effectiveness: Relevant non-target stocks are not threatened by the fishery under consideration. Where they are, effective and appropriate remedial action is taken by the management organization to reverse these trends. Examples of remedial measures include, but are not limited to, incidental take allowances, bycatch quotas, prohibitions on retention, safe release practices, use of bycatch reduction devices, such as square mesh panels, escape rings/gaps, etc. or practices, such as temporal (e.g. no night fishing/night fishing only) or spatial (e.g. closed areas) restrictions on fishing activity targeting the stock under consideration.'

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for the above clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 7.4 - pages 73-75. Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 4.5(ii)- p. 101, and Clause 7.4 (i-iii) p. 138-141.

REFERENCES

1) G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.1 (March 2016): Clause 7.4, p. 16.
http://audubongulf.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Standard-V1.1-CLEAN-11.30.16.pdf

2) G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.1 (September 2016): Clause 7.4 p. 73-75.
http://audubongulf.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-CLEAN-11.30.16.pdf

3) G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 7.4, p. 138-141.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.3 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

MANAGEMENT APPROACHES, STRATEGIES AND PLANS

D.3 08 ENDANGERED SPECIES

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The standard requires the existence of management measures, as necessary, designed to achieve the management objectives (D.2.08) that seek to ensure that endangered species are protected from adverse impacts resulting from interactions with the unit of certification and any associated culture or enhancement activity, including recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible.

GUIDANCE

The context of this Essential Component is Endangered Species. Endangered species are defined in the Glossary. These species are already adversely impacted at the population level, by definition, and are susceptible to further adverse impacts at this level from which they need to be protected. Where “adverse impacts” is used in relation to Endangered Species in the FAO Guidelines there is no further qualification provided (i.e. no “significant” or “severe”). Elsewhere in the Guidelines, the term “adverse impacts” is qualified, but in each case this is in a very specific context. For example the term “significant negative impacts” is used in the FAO Ecolabelling Guidelines only in relation to enhanced fisheries and “severe adverse impacts” is used only in relation to dependent predators. The term “significant adverse impacts” occurs only in the Deep Sea Guidelines with respect to VMEs.

The FAO Guidelines acknowledge that much greater scientific uncertainty is to be expected in assessing possible adverse ecosystem impacts of fisheries than in assessing the state of target stocks (paragraph 31 (41)), hence the management measures to meet the objectives to protect endangered species should take into account risk and uncertainty.

RELATED SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENTS

D.3 08 01

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because Clause 7.6 requires management measures to ensure that endangered species are protected from adverse impacts resulting from interactions with the unit of certification, including recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible. Clause 7.6 requires that the management agency formally recognize ETP species in the geographic region and requires the management agency to act to avoid impact to ETP populations. Evaluation and monitoring of both the status of impacts to ETPs and the effectiveness of avoidance and mitigation measures is required.

7.6 With regard to species that have been recognized as endangered, threatened or protected:
i. Consistent with A1, fishery management systems shall give formal recognition of populations of species identified as endangered, threatened and/or protected (ETP) in the geographic location of the fishery by international, national or state authorities within the context of the likely risk posed by the fishery under consideration.
ii. The fishery management system shall act to avoid adverse impact on the populations of ETP species.
iii. Evaluation and monitoring procedures and activities shall be implemented to determine both the current status of the impact on ETP's caused by the fishery and to monitor the effectiveness of avoidance and mitigation measures that are implemented to minimize further impact on the mortality of those populations of ETP species.
iv. Monitoring procedures and activities shall be robust enough to allow for objective and scientific verification of the risks and outcomes.

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for the above clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 7.6 (i-iv)- p. 79-82. Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 7.6 (i-iv)- p. 146-147.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 7.6, page 17.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 7.6, pages 79-82.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 7.6, pages 146-147.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.3 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

MANAGEMENT APPROACHES, STRATEGIES AND PLANS

D.3 09 HABITAT

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The standard requires the existence of management measures, as necessary, designed to achieve the management objectives (D.2.09) seeking to avoid, minimize or mitigate impacts of the unit of certification on essential habitats for the "stock under consideration" and on habitats that are highly vulnerable to damage by the fishing gear of the unit of certification. In assessing fishery impacts, the Standard requires consideration of the full spatial range of the relevant habitat, not just that part of the spatial range that is potentially affected by fishing.

GUIDANCE

Essential habitats are described in the Glossary. There is no reason to regard them as being significantly different from the "critical fisheries habitats in marine and fresh water ecosystems" referred to in the CCRF (Article 6.8), which include wetlands, mangroves, reefs, lagoons, nursery and spawning areas. Examples of impacts on habitat that should be avoided include those listed in this paragraph: destruction, degradation, pollution and other significant impacts. The purpose of the requirement to consider the full spatial range of the relevant habitat in assessing fishery impacts may be to consider both the degree to which the habitat is rare, or common, and also that there may be impacts on the same habitat in other parts of its spatial range.

RELATED SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENTS

D.3 09 01

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because, in addition to Clause 4.5(ii) explicitly requiring objectives to minimize impacts to the physical habitat, Clause 7.5 of the Standard set out specific requirements for habitat impacts. Clause 7.5ii specifically requires that habitat impacts are avoided or minimized through mitigation measures.

7.5 With regard to the habitat interaction of the fishery either through direct contact or other indirect effects:
i. Habitats that are vulnerable to damage by the fishing gear(s) under consideration shall be monitored to determine the risk that the fishery exerts upon their long term viability.
ii. Impacts on habitats vulnerable to damage by the fishing gear or are protected by legislation must be avoided or minimized through mitigation measures.
iii. The monitoring procedures and activities shall allow for objective and scientific verification of the risks and outcomes, including prior to introduction of new fishing gear, and in assessing fishery impacts, the full spatial range of the relevant habitat shall be considered, not just the part of the spatial range that is potentially affected by fishing.

4.5 Accordingly, for the stock under consideration, there shall be defined objectives or goals for the fishery and its long-term sustainable use. Stock management objectives may vary and include additional economic and social aspects but must include the following:
ii. Minimize the negative impacts of fishing on the physical environment and on non-target species (bycatch) and associated dependent species.

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for the above clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 7.5 (i-iii) p. 76-78 and Clause 4.5 (ii)- p. 55. Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 7.5 (i-iii)- p. 142-145 and Clause 4.5 (ii)- p. 101.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 7.5, p. 17; Clause 4.5(ii), p. 13.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 7.5, p. 76-78; Clause 4.5(ii), p. 55.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 7.5, p. 142-145; Clause 4.5(ii), p. 101.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.3 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

MANAGEMENT APPROACHES, STRATEGIES AND PLANS

D.3 10 DEPENDANT PREDATORS

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The standard requires the existence of management measures, as necessary, designed to meet the objectives (D.2.10) that seek to avoid severe adverse impacts on dependent predators resulting from fishing on a stock under consideration that is a key prey species.

GUIDANCE

This is the partner Essential Component of D.2.10. Where the stock under consideration is a key prey species, the standard must require that fishing mortality on that species/stock is managed so as not to result in severe adverse impacts on Dependent Predators. The FAO Guidelines require that all sources of fishing mortality on the stock under consideration are taken into account (whether or not it is a prey species) in assessing the state of the stock under consideration, including discards, unobserved mortality, incidental mortality, unreported catches and catches in other fisheries. Severe adverse impacts are mentioned in the Essential Components only in relation to dependent predators. This is in line with the Ecolabelling Guidelines. The severity of adverse impacts is related to their potential reversibility. Severe adverse impacts can be regarded as those that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible, which is described in the Glossary.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because Clause 7.7 explicitly requires management measures to avoid adverse impacts on dependent predators. Furthermore, Clause 3.9(i) considers adverse impacts on dependent predators when setting management targets and Clause 4.5(ii) requires defined objectives to minimize negative impacts f fishing on associated dependent predators.

7.7 The role of the stock(s) under consideration in the food web shall be considered, and if it is a key prey species in the ecosystem, management measures shall be in place to avoid severe adverse impacts on dependent predators.

3.9 The nominated scientific institutions shall use best available scientific evidence, advice, and/or objectively verified information as a basis to inform stock assessment and provide advice on the objectives of fisheries management including:
i. Management targets consistent with achieving maximum sustainable yield (MSY) (or a suitable proxy) on average, or a lesser fishing mortality if that is optimal in the circumstances of the fishery (e.g. multispecies fisheries) or to avoid severe adverse impacts on dependent predators, taking into consideration relevant economic, social, or ecological factors.

4.5 Accordingly, for the stock under consideration, there shall be defined objectives or goals for the fishery and its long-term sustainable use. Stock management objectives may vary and include additional economic and social aspects but must include the following:
ii. Minimize the negative impacts of fishing on the physical environment and on non-target species (bycatch) and associated dependent species.

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for the above clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 7.7- p. 83, Clause 3.9(i)- p. 43, Clause 4.5(ii)- p. 55. Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 7.7(i)- p. 147-153, Clause 3.9(i)- p. 88-93 and Clause 4.5 (ii)- p. 101.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 7.7, p. 18; Clause 3.9(i)- p. 12; Clause 4.5(ii), p. 13. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 7.7, p. 83; Clause 3.9(i), p. 43; Clause 4.5(ii), p. 55.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 7.7(i), p. 147-153; Clause 3.9(i), p. 88-93; Clause 4.5(ii), p. 101.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.3 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

MANAGEMENT APPROACHES, STRATEGIES AND PLANS

D.3 11 ECOSYSTEM STRUCTURE, PROCESSES AND FUNCTION

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The standard requires the existence of management measures, as necessary, designed to achieve the management objectives (D.2.09) that seek to minimize adverse impacts of the unit of certification, including any associated enhancement activities, on the structure, processes and functions of aquatic ecosystems that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible.

GUIDANCE

Ecosystem structure, processes and function are described in the Glossary. This language is in accordance with Section 4.1.4.1 of the FAO Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries, which suggests one of the broad management objectives for fisheries could be to keep impact on the structure, processes and functions of the ecosystem at an acceptable level.

Adverse impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible are discussed in the Glossary. These may include genetic modification and changed ecological role.

An earlier version of the requirements included an Essential Component on the conservation of biodiversity. Conservation of biodiversity is not mentioned separately in the Guidelines, but it is included in the CCRF Article 7.2.2 (d), which requires that States and sub-regional or regional fisheries management organizations and arrangements should adopt appropriate measures, based on the best scientific evidence available to provide that inter alia biodiversity of aquatic habitats and ecosystems is conserved. The structure processes and function of aquatic ecosystems includes biodiversity, hence this is considered to be included in this Essential Component.

RELATED SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENTS

D.3 11 01 D.3 11 02

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because several clauses within Section E requires that impacts of the fishery on the ecosystem be appropriately assessed and effectively addressed. Clause 7.1 requires that impacts of the fishery on the ecosystem be evaluated and effectively addressed. Clause 7.7 specifically deals with the role of the stock under consideration in the food-web. Clause 7.9 addresses impacts to the environment and ecosystem from habitat enhancement activities and clause 8.3 addresses negative impacts on the ecosystem from enhancement activities.

7.1 The most probable adverse impacts of the fishery on the ecosystem shall be considered, evaluated and effectively addressed. Evaluation shall be based on best available scientific evidence, advice and/or objectively verified information; including traditional, fisher and community knowledge.
- Further scoring guidance provided in the Guidance to Assessment (page 69) requires the following to meet full conformance: "The most probable adverse impacts of the fishery on the ecosystem/ environment are effectively considered, evaluated, and addressed based on best available scientific evidence, advice, and/or objectively verified information, including, traditional, fisher, and community knowledge."Additionally, the Implementation and Effectiveness parameter includes the following: 'Those impacts that are likely to have serious consequences shall be addressed.'

7.7 The role of the stock(s) under consideration in the food web shall be considered, and if it is a key prey species in the ecosystem, management measures shall be in place to avoid severe adverse impacts on dependent predators.
- Further scoring guidance provided in the Guidance to Assessment (page 83) requires the fishery to meet the requirements of the Implementation and Effectiveness Parameter to receive full conformance and this parameter requires the following: 'The stock under consideration does not represent a key prey species in the ecosystem and if it does, management measures are in place to avoid severe adverse impacts on dependent predators.'

7.9 In so far as introduction of artificial structures promotes fisheries enhancement, the management system must consider the environmental consequences such as habitat modification and serious or irreversible harm to the natural ecosystem's structure and function.

8.3 As appropriate, the most probable adverse impacts, from enhancement activities, such as disease transfer, genetic diversity of local populations and effects on other ecosystem components in the receiving waters shall be considered.
- Further scoring guidance in the Guidance to Assessment document (page 88) requires that a framework or process for identifying impacts including, but not limited to, disease transfer, genetic diversity of local populations, and effects on other ecosystem components, and that, where adverse impacts are identified, remedial actions are effectively implemented to mitigate them.

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for the above clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 7.7- p. 83, Clause 7.9- p. 85, and Clause 8.3- p. 88. Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 7.7- p. 147-153, Clause 7.9- p. 155, and Clause 8.2- p. 157.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 7.7- p. 17, Clause 7.9- p. 18, and Clause 8.3- p. 18. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 7.7- p. 83, Clause 7.9- p. 85, and Clause 8.3- p. 88.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 7.7- p. 147-153, Clause 7.9- p. 155, and Clause 8.2- p. 157..
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.3 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

MANAGEMENT APPROACHES, STRATEGIES AND PLANS

▶ MANAGEMENT UNDER UNCERTAINTY

D.3 12 PRECAUTIONARY APPROACH

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The standard requires that the precautionary approach is applied widely through the management system to the conservation, management and exploitation of living aquatic resources in order to protect them and preserve the aquatic environment.

GUIDANCE

The General Principles and Article 6.5 of the CCRF prescribe a precautionary approach to all fisheries, in all aquatic systems, regardless of their jurisdictional nature, recognizing that most problems affecting the fishing sector result from insufficiency of precaution in management regimes when faced with high levels of uncertainty.

The precautionary approach referred to in this Essential Component is that elaborated in the FAO Document: Precautionary approach to capture fisheries and species introductions, FAO Technical Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries. No. 2. Rome, FAO. 1996.

To meet this Essential Component, the standard must require inter alia that the management system uses a suitable method of risk management to take into account relevant uncertainties in the status of the stock under consideration and the impacts of the unit of certification on that stock and the ecosystem, including those associated with the use of introduced or translocated species. Where the application of less quantitative and data demanding approaches results in greater uncertainty, the management system should apply more precaution, which may necessitate lower levels of utilization of the resource.

The FAO Guidelines (Paragraph 29.6) state that the absence of adequate scientific information should not be used as a reason for postponing or failing to take conservation and management measures.

The FAO Guidelines (Paragraph 31) note that much greater scientific uncertainty is to be expected in assessing possible adverse ecosystem impacts of fisheries than in assessing the state of target stocks. This issue can be addressed by taking a risk assessment/risk management approach (see also D.5.07).

The FAO Guidelines (Paragraph 32) also note that a past record of good management performance could be considered as supporting evidence of the adequacy of the management measures and the management system.

The suitability of the method of risk management applied should be assessed by the technical team undertaking the assessment for certification.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because Section D of the Standard specifically requires the use of the precautionary approach by the management system for both the stock(s) under consideration and the aquatic environment. Section D is broken down into five Supporting Clauses (6.1-6.5) with specific requirements on use of the precautionary approach.

D. Precautionary Approach
D6. The precautionary approach shall be implemented for the conservation of the stock(s) under consideration and for avoiding long term, irreversible or slowly reversible effects on the aquatic environment.
6.1 Where there is greater uncertainty about the state of the stock(s) under consideration, including new or exploratory stocks, management shall demonstrate more precautionary approaches to managing the resource appropriate to the available data, including a more conservative fishing mortality.
6.2 Uncertainty shall be taken into account through suitable statistical analysis and/or other objective risk based methods.
6.3 Where substitutes or proxies are implemented, they shall be verifiable through objective methods.
6.4 Where proxies and substitutes are chosen they shall be actively implemented within the provisions and management measures and monitored for their effectiveness and reviewed regularly.
6.5 The absence of adequate scientific information shall not be used to postpone or fail to take conservation and management actions for the stock(s) under consideration and the environment where there is objective evidence of impaired stock recruitment ability and/or long term ecosystem impacts.

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for the above clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 6.1, p. 64; Clause 6.2, p. 65; Clause 6.3, p. 66; Clause 6.4, p. 67; Clause 6.5, p. 68. Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 6.1- p. 112-116, Clause 6.2- p. 117-118, Clause 6.3- p. 119, Clause 6.4- p. 120, and Clause 6.5- p. 121.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 6.1, p. 15, Clause 6.2, p. 15; Clause 6.3, p. 15; Clause 6.4, p. 15; Clause 6.5, p. 15. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 6.1, p. 64; Clause 6.2, p. 65; Clause 6.3, p. 66; Clause 6.4, p. 67; Clause 6.5, p. 68. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 6.1, p. 112-116; Clause 6.2, p. 117-118; Clause 6.3, p. 119; Clause 6.4, p. 120; Clause 6.5, p. 121. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.3 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

MANAGEMENT APPROACHES, STRATEGIES AND PLANS

▶ FISHERY MANAGEMENT DOCUMENTATION

D.3 13 CONTINUOUS REVIEW

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The standard requires that the efficacy of management measures and their possible interactions is kept under continuous review, taking into account the multipurpose nature of the use patterns in inland and marine waters.

GUIDANCE

The purpose of continuous review of the efficacy of conservation and management measures and their possible interactions is to ensure that there is a well based expectation that management will be successful, taking into account uncertainty and imprecision. “Management measures” in this Essential Component are the measures referred to in the other Essential Components in this Performance Area. They are regarded as being synonymous with the “conservation and management measures” referred to in CCRF Article 7.6.8.

The expression “taking into account the multipurpose nature of the use patterns in inland and marine waters” refers to the uncertainty arising from other (non-fishery) impacts on the fishery. For example, if there are other users from other sectors, fishery management, although not being able to control those sectors, should take their impacts into account when devising the strategy for achieving management objectives. This is akin to taking into account all sources of mortality on the fish stock, from fishing and non-fishing sources. For example, if water is abstracted from rivers at certain times of the year and this has an adverse impact on the fish stock, management of the fishery should address that fact (perhaps by reducing fishing or having a closed season at this time), although not being able to influence when and to what extent the water is abstracted. In a coastal context, the fishery management should be integrated with coastal zone management to the extent necessary to account for non-fishing impacts.

RELATED SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENTS

D.3 13 01 D.3 13 02 D.3 13 03

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because Clauses 1.5 and 1.6 specifically require regular review of the management system, regulations and management measures. Furthermore, Clause 3.1 requires routine and consistent data collection for assessment of the performance of the fishery and management measures. Clause 6.4 requires monitoring and review of proxies and Clauses 7.4, 7.5, and 7.6 require monitoring and review of ecosystem components and measures to mitigate impacts.

1.5 The management system, its institutional arrangements and their legal basis, regulations and other instruments, and management measures and outputs shall be subject to periodic review through identifiable review procedures and mechanisms.
1.6 The review process shall be clearly linked to improvement of the management system under clause 1.2 for the applicant fishery, and based on the use of best available scientific evidence, advice and/or objectively verified information by the management system from recognized institutions and other sources, including fisheries and external bodies and shall respond in a timely manner.
3.1 Data shall be collected from both fishery dependent and independent sources, as relevant, in a routine and consistent manner to allow for scientifically robust assessment of:
1) The state of the stock(s) relative to the management-elected reference points or suitable substitutes or other performance indicators.
2) The performance of the fishery with respect to the utilization of the resource.
3) The performance of management measures, harvest controls and associated rules that support the strategy and the defined objectives of the fishery.
6.4 Where proxies and substitutes are chosen they shall be actively implemented within the provisions and management measures and monitored for their effectiveness and reviewed regularly.
7.4 With regard to non-target catches; including discards of fish stocks other than the stock(s) under consideration:
i. Non target stocks shall be monitored to determine the impact exerted by the fishery.
ii. The fishery under consideration shall not threaten these non-target stocks with recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible and if such impacts arise, effective remedial action shall be taken.
iii. The monitoring procedures and activities shall allow for objective and scientific verification of the risks and outcomes.
7.5 With regard to the habitat interaction of the fishery either through direct contact or other indirect effects:
i. Habitats that are vulnerable to damage by the fishing gear(s) under consideration shall be monitored to determine the risk that the fishery exerts upon their long term viability.
ii. Impacts on habitats vulnerable to damage by the fishing gear or are protected by legislation must be avoided or minimized through mitigation measures.
iii. The monitoring procedures and activities shall allow for objective and scientific verification of the risks and outcomes, including prior to introduction of new fishing gear, and in assessing fishery impacts, the full spatial range of the relevant habitat shall be considered, not just the part of the spatial range that is potentially affected by fishing.
7.6 With regard to species that have been recognized as endangered, threatened or protected:
i. Consistent with A1, fishery management systems shall give formal recognition of populations of species identified as endangered, threatened and/or protected (ETP) in the geographic location of the fishery by international, national or state authorities within the context of the likely risk posed by the fishery under consideration.
ii. The fishery management system shall act to avoid adverse impact on the populations of ETP species.
iii. Evaluation and monitoring procedures and activities shall be implemented to determine both the current status of the impact on ETP's caused by the fishery and to monitor the effectiveness of avoidance and mitigation measures that are implemented to minimize further impact on the mortality of those populations of ETP species.
iv. Monitoring procedures and activities shall be robust enough to allow for objective and scientific verification of the risks and outcomes.

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for the above clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 1.5, p. 23; Clause 1.6, p. 24; Clause 3.1, p. 34-35; Clause 6.4, p. 67; Clause 7.4, p. 73-75; Clause 7.5, p. 76 -78; Clause 7.6, p. 80-82. Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 1.5- p. 44-46, Clause 1.6- p. 47-48, Clause 3.1- p. 65-69, Clause 6.4- p. 120, Clause 7.4- p. 138-141, Clause 7.5- p. 142-145, Clause 7.6- p. 146-147.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 1.5, p. 8; Clause 1.6, p. 9; Clause 3.1, p. 11; Clause 6.4, p. 15; Clause 7.4, p. 15; Clause 7.5, p. 17; Clause 7.6, p. 17.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 1.5, p. 23; Clause 1.6, p. 24; Clause 3.1, p. 34-35; Clause 6.4, p. 67; Clause 7.4, p. 73-75; Clause 7.5, p. 76 -78; Clause 7.6, p. 80-82.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 1.5, p. 44-46; Clause 1.6, p. 47-48; Clause 3.1, p. 65-69; Clause 6.4, p. 120; Clause 7.4, p. 138-141; Clause 7.5, p. 142-145; Clause 7.6, p. 146-147.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.3 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

MANAGEMENT APPROACHES, STRATEGIES AND PLANS

D.3 14 CONTINUOUS REVIEW

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Standard requires that the methodology and results of assessments of the current status and trends of the stock under consideration are made publicly available in a timely manner, respecting confidentiality where appropriate.

GUIDANCE

This Essential Component is included under the Element of continuous review, but is essentially about transparency. It is linked with Essential Component D. 1.05 that addressed Participatory Management. To meet that Essential Component, the standard must require the fisheries management organization or arrangement to make information and advice used in its decision-making publicly available. The methodology and results of assessments of the current status and trends of the stock under consideration is part of the information and advice used in this decision-making. The publication of this information may be constrained by legitimate rules governing confidentiality.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because Clause 1.2 requires that the fishery management system have an identified procedure that is publicly accessible. The Standard also requires the management system to have the following: Clause 3.1 requires that data be collected in a routine and consistent manner for robust, scientific assessment of the fishery; Clause 3.8 requires assessment of stock status and harvest rates, and Clause 3.9 requires scientific data and advice be used for the objectives of the fishery management system.

1.2 The fishery management system shall have an identified framework or documented procedure, publicly accessible (to national and international government agencies, fisheries participants, and other stakeholders) that allows it to create, amend and abolish laws, regulations and other legal instruments or measures that are used to implement and improve upon responsible fisheries management for the applicant fishery.
3.1 Data shall be collected from both fishery dependent and independent sources, as relevant, in a routine and consistent manner to allow for scientifically robust assessment of:
1) The state of the stock(s) relative to the management-elected reference points or suitable substitutes or other performance indicators.
2) The performance of the fishery with respect to the utilization of the resource.
3) The performance of management measures, harvest controls and associated rules that support the strategy and the defined objectives of the fishery.

3.8 The assessment shall include an appraisal of the stock status and harvest rate relative to target and limit reference points, substitutes or proxies that can demonstrably act in a similar way.
3.9 The nominated scientific institutions shall use best available scientific evidence, advice, and/or objectively verified information as a basis to inform stock assessment and provide advice on the objectives of fisheries management including:
i. Management targets consistent with achieving maximum sustainable yield (MSY) (or a suitable proxy) on average, or a lesser fishing mortality if that is optimal in the circumstances of the fishery (e.g. multispecies fisheries) or to avoid severe adverse impacts on dependent predators, taking into consideration relevant economic, social, or ecological factors.
ii. The application of specific limits or directions in key performance indicators, consistent with avoiding recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible, and specification of the actions to be taken if the limits are approached or the desired directions are not achieved.
iii. Accordingly: the stock(s) under consideration shall not be overfished if above the associated limit reference point (or its proxy).
iv. If fishing mortality (or its proxy) is above the associated limit reference point, actions shall be taken to decrease the fishing mortality (or its proxy) below that limit reference point.
v. In the event that evidence shows biomass falling well below target levels, management measures shall allow for restoration within reasonable time frames, relevant to the life history characteristics of the species under consideration.
vi. The structure and composition of the stock(s) under consideration, which contribute to its resilience shall be taken into account.

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for the above clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 1.2, p. 18; Clause 3.1, p. 34-35; Clause 3.8, p. 42; Clause 3.9, p. 43-48.

Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 1.2- p. 38-40, Clause 3.1- p. 65-69, Clause 3.8- p. 86-87 and Clause 3.9(i-vi)- p. 88-93.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 1.2, p. 8; Clause 3.1, p. 11; Clause 3.8, p. 12; Clause 3.9, p. 12. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 1.2, p. 18; Clause 3.1, p. 34-35; Clause 3.8, p. 42; Clause 3.9, p. 43-48.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 1.2, p. 38-40; Clause 3.1, p. 65-69; Clause 3.8, p. 86-87; Clause 3.9, p. 88-93.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.3 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

MANAGEMENT APPROACHES, STRATEGIES AND PLANS

D.3 15 CONTINUOUS REVIEW

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The Standard requires that the methodology and results of the analysis of the most probable adverse impacts of the unit of certification and any associated culture and enhancement activity on the ecosystem are made publicly available in a timely manner, respecting confidentiality where appropriate.

GUIDANCE

This Essential Component is included under the Element of continuous review, but is essentially about transparency. It is linked with Essential Component D. 1.05 that addressed Participatory Management. To meet that Essential Component, the standard must require the fisheries management organization or arrangement to make information and advice used in its decision-making publicly available. The methodology and results of the analysis of the most probable adverse impacts of the unit of certification and any associated culture and enhancement activity on the ecosystem is part of the information and advice used in this decision-making. The publication of this information may be constrained by legitimate rules governing confidentiality.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because Clause 1.2 of the Standard requires a fishery management system with an identified framework or documented procedure that is publicly accessible. Fundamental Clause E7 requires that adverse impacts on the fishery on the ecosystem are appropriately assessed and effectively addressed by the management system. E7 is broken down into 9 Supporting Clauses and the most relevant to this component are 7.4-7.7, which each require monitoring procedures and activities that are robust enough to allow for objective and scientific verification of the risks and outcomes for each ecosystem element. Finally, Clause 8.3 requires the management system to assess ecosystem impacts associated with enhancement activities. As part of the management system, these requirements also fall within the Clause 1.2 requirement that the management system have a documented procedure that is publicly accessible.

1.2 The fishery management system shall have an identified framework or documented procedure, publicly accessible (to national and international government agencies, fisheries participants, and other stakeholders) that allows it to create, amend and abolish laws, regulations and other legal instruments or measures that are used to implement and improve upon responsible fisheries management for the applicant fishery.
E7. Adverse impacts of the fishery on the ecosystem shall be appropriately assessed and effectively addressed. Assessment shall be based on best available science, local knowledge where it can be objectively verified and using a suitable risk based management approach appropriate to the data available for determining most probable adverse impacts and taking into account the relevant environmental, economic, technological, social, and cultural aspects.
7.1 The most probable adverse impacts of the fishery on the ecosystem shall be considered, evaluated and effectively addressed. Evaluation shall be based on best available scientific evidence, advice and/or objectively verified information; including traditional, fisher and community knowledge.
7.4 With regard to non-target catches; including discards of fish stocks other than the stock(s) under consideration:
i. Non target stocks shall be monitored to determine the impact exerted by the fishery.
ii. The fishery under consideration shall not threaten these non-target stocks with recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible and if such impacts arise, effective remedial action shall be taken.
iii. The monitoring procedures and activities shall allow for objective and scientific verification of the risks and outcomes.
7.5 With regard to the habitat interaction of the fishery either through direct contact or other indirect effects:
i. Habitats that are vulnerable to damage by the fishing gear(s) under consideration shall be monitored to determine the risk that the fishery exerts upon their long term viability.
ii. Impacts on habitats vulnerable to damage by the fishing gear or are protected by legislation must be avoided or minimized through mitigation measures.
iii. The monitoring procedures and activities shall allow for objective and scientific verification of the risks and outcomes, including prior to introduction of new fishing gear, and in assessing fishery impacts, the full spatial range of the relevant habitat shall be considered, not just the part of the spatial range that is potentially affected by fishing.
7.6 With regard to species that have been recognized as endangered, threatened or protected:
i. Consistent with A1, fishery management systems shall give formal recognition of populations of species identified as endangered, threatened and/or protected (ETP) in the geographic location of the fishery by international, national or state authorities within the context of the likely risk posed by the fishery under consideration.
ii. The fishery management system shall act to avoid adverse impact on the populations of ETP species.
iii. Evaluation and monitoring procedures and activities shall be implemented to determine both the current status of the impact on ETP's caused by the fishery and to monitor the effectiveness of avoidance and mitigation measures that are implemented to minimize further impact on the mortality of those populations of ETP species.
iv. Monitoring procedures and activities shall be robust enough to allow for objective and scientific verification of the risks and outcomes.
7.7 The role of the stock(s) under consideration in the food web shall be considered, and if it is a key prey species in the ecosystem, management measures shall be in place to avoid severe adverse impacts on dependent predators.
8.3 As appropriate, the most probable adverse impacts, from enhancement activities, such as disease transfer, genetic diversity of local populations and effects on other ecosystem components in the receiving waters shall be considered. (Standard, page 18)

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for the above clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 1.2, p. 18; Clause 7.1- p. 69-70, Clause 7.4, p. 73-75; Clause 7.5, p. 76 -78; Clause 7.6, p. 80-82; Clause 7.7, p. 83; and Clause 8.3, p. 88.Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 1.2- p. 38-40, Clause 7.4- p. 138-141, Clause 7.5- p. 142-145, Clause 7.6- p. 146-147, Clause 7.7- p. 147-153, Clause 7.9- p. 155 and Clause 8.2- p. 157.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 1.2, p. 8; Clause 7.1- 16, Clause 7.4, p. 16; Clause 7.5, p. 17; Clause 7.6, p. 17; Clause 7.7, p. 17; Clause 8.2, p. 18.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 1.2, p. 18; Clause 7.1- p. 69-70, Clause 7.4, p. 73-75; Clause 7.5, p. 76 -78; Clause 7.6, p. 80-82; Clause 7.7, p. 83; and Clause 8.3, p. 88.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 1.2, p. 38-40; Clause 7.4, p. 138-141; Clause 7.5, p. 142-145; Clause 7.6, p. 146-147; Clause 7.7, p. 147-153; Clause 8.2, p. 157.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.4 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

DATA AND INFORMATION

▶ STOCK UNDER CONSIDERATION

D.4 01 TARGET STOCK STATUS

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The standard requires the collection and maintenance of adequate, reliable and current data and/or other information about the state and trends of the stock under consideration in accordance with applicable international standards and practices.

GUIDANCE

Adequate, reliable and current data and/or other information are those which are commensurate with the development and delivery of the best scientific evidence available. In this case, the requirement for data collection is focussed on the assessment of the status and trends of stock under consideration (see Essential Components D.5.01-D.5.03). Adequate, reliable and current data and/or other information can include relevant traditional, fisher or community knowledge, provided its validity can be objectively verified.

Some fisheries and/or fish stock are hard to monitor for various reasons, including remoteness of operation/distribution and complexity of fishing operations, posing particular challenges with the collection and maintenance of adequate, reliable and current data and/or other information. To meet this Essential Component the standard must require the fishery to acknowledge and explain these challenges and data collection and maintenance to cover all stages of fishery development, in accordance with applicable international standards and practices.

Applicable international standards and practices include the output of the Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics (CWP) and the FAO Guidelines for the routine collection of capture fishery data (1998) FAO Fisheries Technical Paper. No. 382.

RELATED SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENTS

D.4 01 01

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because multiple clauses of the Standard require data collection and assessment of the status and trends of the stock under consideration. Clause 3.1, 3.2 and 3.4 all require data collection and research on the stock under consideration and the Implementation and Effectiveness scoring parameter for each of these clauses require evidence of current data and/or results of evaluations/assessments.

3.1 Data shall be collected from both fishery dependent and independent sources, as relevant, in a routine and consistent manner to allow for scientifically robust assessment of:
1) The state of the stock(s) relative to the management-elected reference points or suitable substitutes or other performance indicators.
2) The performance of the fishery with respect to the utilization of the resource.
3) The performance of management measures, harvest controls and associated rules that support the strategy and the defined objectives of the fishery.

3.2 Data review and analysis shall consider all fishery removals of the target stock(s) including retained catch and discards in target and non-target fisheries.
3.4 Data shall be collected and research advanced to improve the understanding of the biology, life-cycle and reproductive cycle of the stock under consideration, its geographic range, its habitat and role in the ecosystem, to improve management of the fishery.

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for the above clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 3.1- p. 33-34, Clause 3.2- p. 35, and Clause 3.4- p. 37. Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 3.1- p. 65-69, Clause 3.2- p. 70-75, and Clause 3.4- p. 79-80.

REFERENCES

1) G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.1 (March 2016): Clause 3.1, p. 11; Clause 3.2- p. 11; Clause3.4- p. 11.
http://audubongulf.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Standard-V1.1-CLEAN-11.30.16.pdf

2) G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.1 (September 2016): Clause 3.1, p. 33-34; Clause 3.2, p. 35; Clause 3.4, p. 37.
http://audubongulf.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-CLEAN-11.30.16.pdf

3) G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 3.1, p. 65-69; Clause 3.2, p. 70-75; Clause 3.4, p. 79-80.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.4 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

DATA AND INFORMATION

▶ ECOSYSTEM EFFECTS OF FISHING

D.4 02 ECOSYSTEM STRUCTURE, PROCESSES AND FUNCTION

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The standard requires the collection and maintenance of adequate, reliable and current data and/or other information about the effects of the unit of certification, including any associated enhancement activities, on ecosystem structure, processes and function in accordance with applicable international standards and practices.

GUIDANCE

Adequate, reliable and current data and/or other information are described in the Glossary. In general these are data which are commensurate with the development and delivery of the best scientific evidence available. The requirements for data collection are focussed on the effects of the unit of certification on the ecosystem, including direct and indirect effects. The adequacy of data relates primarily to the quantity and type of data collected (including sampling coverage) and depends crucially on the nature of the systems being monitored and purposes to which the data are being put. Some analysis of the precision resulting from sampling coverage would normally be part of an assessment of adequacy and reliability. The currency of data is important inter alia because its capacity for supporting reliable assessment of current status and trends declines as it gets older. Adequate, reliable and current data and/or other information can include relevant traditional, fisher or community knowledge, provided its validity can be objectively verified (i.e. the knowledge has been collected and analysed though a systematic, objective and well-designed process, and is not just hearsay).

The requirements for data collection are focussed on the effects of the unit of certification on the ecosystem structure, processes and function. The component relating to enhancement activities may be “not applicable” to schemes that explicitly do not cover enhanced fisheries.

Ecosystem structure, processes and function are described in the Glossary. This language is in accordance with Section 4.1.4.1 of the FAO Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries, which suggests one of the broad management objectives for fisheries could be to keep impact on the structure, processes and functions of the ecosystem at an acceptable level.

Applicable international standards and practices include the output of the Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics (CWP) and the FAO Guidelines for the routine collection of capture fishery data (1998) FAO Fisheries Technical Paper. No. 382.

RELATED SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENTS

D.4 02 01 D.4 02 02

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because Clauses 7.1 and 7.7 require data collection and assessment of adverse impacts of the fishery on ecosystem structure, processes and function. Additionally, Clauses 7.9 and 8.3 require a framework or procedure for evaluating and addressing adverse impacts of enhancement activities.

7.1 The most probable adverse impacts of the fishery on the ecosystem shall be considered, evaluated and effectively addressed. Evaluation shall be based on best available scientific evidence, advice and/or objectively verified information; including traditional, fisher and community knowledge.
7.7 The role of the stock(s) under consideration in the food web shall be considered, and if it is a key prey species in the ecosystem, management measures shall be in place to avoid severe adverse impacts on dependent predators.
7.9 In so far as introduction of artificial structures promotes fisheries enhancement, the management system must consider the environmental consequences such as habitat modification and serious or irreversible harm to the natural ecosystem's structure and function.
8.3 As appropriate, the most probable adverse impacts, from enhancement activities, such as disease transfer, genetic diversity of local populations and effects on other ecosystem components in the receiving waters shall be considered.

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for the above clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 7.1 p. 69; Clause 7.7, p. 83; Clause 7.9, p. 84; Clause 8.3, p. 88. Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 7.1- p. 122-135, Clause 7.7(i-ii)- pages 147-153, Clause 7.9- p. 154 and Clause 8.2- p. 157.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 7.1, p. 16; Clause 7.7, p. 17; Clause 7.9, p. 18; Clause 8.3, p. 18.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 7.1 p. 69; Clause 7.7, p. 83; Clause 7.9, p. 84; Clause 8.3, p. 88.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 7.1, p. 122-135; Clause 7.7, p. 147-153; Clause 7.9, p. 154; Clause 8.2, p. 157.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.4 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

DATA AND INFORMATION

D.4 03 NON-TARGET CATCHES

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The standard requires the collection and maintenance of adequate, reliable and current data and/or other information on non-target catches and discards in the unit of certification.

GUIDANCE

Adequate, reliable and current data and/or other information are described in the Glossary. In general these are data which are commensurate with the development and delivery of the best scientific evidence available. The requirements for data collection are focussed on the need to assess the effects of the unit of certification on non-target stocks. Non-target catches and discards refer to species/stocks that are taken by the unit of certification other than the stock for which certification is being sought (see Glossary).

The adequacy of data relates primarily to the quantity and type of data collected (including sampling coverage) and depends crucially on the nature of the systems being monitored and purposes to which the data are being put. Some analysis of the precision resulting from sampling coverage would normally be part of an assessment of adequacy and reliability. The currency of data is important inter alia because its capacity for supporting reliable assessment of current status and trends declines as it gets older. Adequate, reliable and current data and/or other information can include relevant traditional, fisher or community knowledge, provided its validity can be objectively verified (i.e. the knowledge has been collected and analysed though a systematic, objective and well-designed process, and is not just hearsay).

The requirements for data collection in this Essential Component are focussed on the effects of the unit of certification on non-target species/stocks. Non-target catches/stocks are described in the Glossary. Catches of Endangered species are covered in Essential Component D.4.04.

Applicable international standards and practices include the output of the Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics (CWP) and the FAO Guidelines for the routine collection of capture fishery data (1998) FAO Fisheries Technical Paper. No. 382.

RELATED SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENTS

D.4 03 01 D.4 03 02 D.4 03 03

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because Clauses 3.3 and 7.4(i-iii) of the Standard require data collection and assessment of non-target catches and discards associated with fishing activity.

3.3 Data review and analysis shall consider catches and discards of other commercial and non-commercial species associated with fishing activity to the extent that impacts on these species can be understood.

7.4 With regard to non-target catches; including discards of fish stocks other than the stock(s) under consideration:
i. Non target stocks shall be monitored to determine the impact exerted by the fishery.
ii. The fishery under consideration shall not threaten these non-target stocks with recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible and if such impacts arise, effective remedial action shall be taken.
iii. The monitoring procedures and activities shall allow for objective and scientific verification of the risks and outcomes.

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for the above clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 3.3, p. 37; 7.4, p. 73-75. Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 3.3- p. 76-78 and Clause 7.4(i-iii)- p. 138-141.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 3.3, p. 11; 7.4, p. 16.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 3.3, p. 37; 7.4, p. 73-75.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 3.3, p. 76-78; Clause 7.4, p. 138-141.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.4 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

DATA AND INFORMATION

D.4 04 ENDANGERED SPECIES

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The standard requires the collection and maintenance of adequate, reliable and current data and/or other information about the effects of the unit of certification, including any associated enhancement activities, on endangered species in accordance with applicable international standards and practices.

GUIDANCE

Adequate, reliable and current data and/or other information is described in the Glossary. In general these are data which are commensurate with the development and delivery of the best scientific evidence available. The requirements for data collection are focussed on the effects of the unit of certification on the ecosystem, including direct and indirect effects. The adequacy of data relates primarily to the quantity and type of data collected (including sampling coverage) and depends crucially on the nature of the systems being monitored and purposes to which the data are being put. Some analysis of the precision resulting from sampling coverage would normally be part of an assessment of adequacy and reliability. The currency of data is important inter alia because its capacity for supporting reliable assessment of current status and trends declines as it gets older. Adequate, reliable and current data and/or other information can include relevant traditional, fisher or community knowledge, provided its validity can be objectively verified (i.e. the knowledge has been collected and analysed though a systematic, objective and well-designed process, and is not just hearsay).

The requirements for data collection are focussed on the effects of the unit of certification on endangered species. The component relating to enhancement activities may be “not applicable” to schemes that explicitly do not cover enhanced fisheries. Endangered species are described in the Glossary.

Applicable international standards and practices include the output of the Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics (CWP) and the FAO Guidelines for the routine collection of capture fishery data (1998) FAO Fisheries Technical Paper. No. 382.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because Clause 7.6 explicitly requires robust, scientific evaluation and monitoring procedures and activities on the status of and impacts to ETP species in Clause 7.6(iii-iv). The Implementation and Effectiveness scoring parameter for these clauses requires documented evidence of current information/data and/or results of evaluations/analysis/assessments.

7.6 With regard to species that have been recognized as endangered, threatened or protected:
i. Consistent with A1, Gulf State management systems shall give formal recognition of populations of species identified as endangered, threatened and/or protected (ETP) in the geographic location of the fishery by international, national or state authorities within the context of the likely risk posed by the fishery under consideration.
ii. The fishery management system shall act to avoid impact on the populations of ETP species such that it does not undermine the ability for those ETP populations to recover.
iii. Monitoring procedures and activities shall be implemented to determine both the current status of the impact on ETP's caused by the fishery and to monitor the effectiveness of avoidance and mitigation measures that are implemented to minimize further impact on the mortality of those populations of ETP species.
iv. Monitoring procedures and activities shall be robust enough to allow for objective and scientific verification of the risks and outcomes.

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for the above clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 7.6(i-iv)- p. 77-80. Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 7.6(i-vi)- p. 146-147.

REFERENCES

1) G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.1 (March 2016): Clause 7.6, p. 17.
http://audubongulf.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Standard-V1.1-CLEAN-11.30.16.pdf

2) G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.1 (September 2016): Clause 7.6, p. 77-80.
http://audubongulf.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-CLEAN-11.30.16.pdf

3) G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 7.6, p. 146-147.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.4 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

DATA AND INFORMATION

D.4 05 HABITAT

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The standard requires that there is knowledge within the fishery management system of the essential habitats for the stock under consideration and habitats that are highly vulnerable to damage by the fishing gear of the unit of certification. This includes knowledge of the full spatial range of the relevant habitat, not just that part of the spatial range that is potentially affected by fishing.

GUIDANCE

The level of knowledge of the essential habitats for the stock under consideration and habitats that are highly vulnerable to damage by the fishing gear of the unit of certification should provide sufficient understanding to enable impacts of the unit of certification on those habitats to be avoided, minimized or mitigated; i.e. for the management objective with respect to habitat (D.2.09) to be achieved. The achievement of this Essential Component should be considered alongside D.5.08 and D.6.07. In particular, the FAO Ecolabelling Guidelines acknowledge the importance of a "risk assessment/risk management approach" to address the issue of greater scientific uncertainty associated with ecosystem impacts; also that the most probable adverse impacts should be considered, taking into account available scientific information, and traditional, fisher or community knowledge provided that its validity can be objectively verified. The knowledge of the habitats in question can therefore include relevant traditional, fisher or community knowledge, provided its validity can be objectively verified (i.e. the knowledge has been collected and analysed though a systematic, objective and well-designed process, and is not just hearsay).

RELATED SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENTS

D.4 05 01 D.4 05 02 D.4 05 03

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because Clause 3.4 requires data collection and research regarding the stock under consideration, including its habitat and geographic range and Clause 7.5 explicitly requires monitoring and assessment of risks and impacts to sensitive habitats from fishing interactions. The Implementation and Effectiveness scoring parameter for these clauses requires documented evidence of current information/data and/or results of evaluations/analysis/assessments.

3.4 Data shall be collected and research advanced to improve the understanding of the biology, life-cycle and reproductive cycle of the stock under consideration, its geographic range, its habitat and role in the ecosystem, to improve management of the fishery.

7.5 With regard to the habitat interaction of the fishery either through direct contact or other indirect effects:
i. Habitats that are vulnerable to damage by the fishing gear(s) under consideration shall be monitored to determine the risk that the fishery exerts upon their long term viability.
i. Impacts on habitats vulnerable to damage by the fishing gear or are protected by legislation must be avoided or minimized through mitigation measures.
iii. The monitoring procedures and activities shall allow for objective and scientific verification of the risks and outcomes, including prior to introduction of new fishing gear, and in assessing fishery impacts, the full spatial range of the relevant habitat shall be considered, not just the part of the spatial range that is potentially affected by fishing.

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for the above clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 3.4- p. 37 and Clause 7.5(i-iii)- p. 74-76. Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 3.4- p. 79-80 and Clause 7.5(i-iii)- p. 142-145.

REFERENCES

1) G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.1 (March 2016): Clause 3.4, p. 11; Clause 7.5, p. 16-17.
http://audubongulf.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Standard-V1.1-CLEAN-11.30.16.pdf

2) G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.1 (September 2016): Clause 3.4, p. 37; Clause 7.5, p. 74-76.
http://audubongulf.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-CLEAN-11.30.16.pdf

3) G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 3.4, p. 79-80; Clause 7.5, p. 142-145
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.4 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

DATA AND INFORMATION

D.4 06 DEPENDENT PREDATORS

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The standard requires that data and information are collected on the role of the stock under consideration in the food-web to enable determination of whether it is a key prey species in the ecosystem, and if so whether fishing on that stock might result in severe adverse impacts on dependent predators.

GUIDANCE

The data and information collected must be sufficient to provide adequate knowledge of the role of the stock under consideration in the food-web to determine whether it is a key prey species and, if so, whether fishing on that stock under consideration might result in severe adverse impacts on dependent predators. Where the stock under consideration is a key prey species, the standard must require that fishing mortality on that species/stock is managed so as not to result in severe adverse impacts on Dependent Predators. The FAO Guidelines require that all sources of fishing mortality on the stock under consideration are taken into account (whether or not it is a prey species) in assessing the state of the stock under consideration, including discards, unobserved mortality, incidental mortality, unreported catches and catches in other fisheries.

Data and information on the role of the stock under consideration in the food-web can include relevant traditional, fisher or community knowledge, provided its validity can be objectively verified (i.e. the knowledge has been collected and analysed though a systematic, objective and well-designed process, and is not just hearsay).

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because Clauses 3.4 and 7.7 require data collection, research, monitoring and assessment of the role of the species under consideration in the ecosystem and adverse impacts to dependent predators.

3.4 Data shall be collected and research advanced to improve the understanding of the biology, life-cycle and reproductive cycle of the stock under consideration, its geographic range, its habitat, the environmental factors that may influence stock abundance, and its role in the ecosystem, to improve management of the fishery.

7.7 The role of the stock(s) under consideration in the food web shall be considered, and if it is a key prey species in the ecosystem, management measures shall be in place to avoid severe adverse impacts on dependent predators.

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for the above clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 3.4- p. 38 and Clause 7.7- p. 83.

Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 3.4- p. 79-80 and Clause 7.7(i-ii)- p. 147-153.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 3.4, p. 11; Clause 7.7, p. 17. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 3.4, p. 38; Clause 7.7, p. 83. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 3.4, p. 79-80; Clause 7.7, p. 147-153. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.4 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

DATA AND INFORMATION

▶ TRADITIONAL, FISHER OR COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE

D.4 07 TRADITIONAL, FISHER OR COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The standard requires that any traditional, fisher or community knowledge used within the management system can be objectively verified.

GUIDANCE

The methods by which traditional, fisher or community knowledge can be objectively verified will vary between fisheries, and will need to be assessed by the auditors. Elsewhere in the Benchmark there is the general suggestion that the knowledge should be collected and analysed though a systematic, objective and well-designed process, and is not be just hearsay. Scientific uncertainty associated with the use of traditional, fisher or community knowledge can be assessed using a risk assessment/risk management approach, as specified in the Guidelines. In all cases, the management measures implemented by the management system must be based on the best scientific evidence available (Essential Component D.3.02).

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because Clauses 3.5 and 7.1 of the Standard allow the use of traditional fisher or community knowledge provided their validity can be objectively verified.

3.5 Data can include relevant traditional, fisher or community knowledge, provided their validity can be objectively verified.

7.1 The most probable adverse impacts of the fishery on the ecosystem shall be considered, evaluated and effectively addressed. Evaluation shall be based on best available scientific evidence, advice and/or objectively verified information; including traditional, fisher and community knowledge.

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for the above clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 3.5, p. 39; Clause 7.1, p. 69-70.

Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 3.5- p. 81-82, and Clause 7.1- p. 136.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 3.5, p. 11; Clause 7.1, p. 16. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 3.5, p. 39; Clause 7.1, p. 69-70. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 3.5, p. 81-82; Clause 7.1, p. 136. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.5 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGIES

▶ STOCK UNDER CONSIDERATION

D.5 01 STOCK ASSESSMENT

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The standard requires management decisions by the fishery management organization or arrangement (D.1.02) to be based on an assessment of the current status and trends of the stock under consideration, using adequate, reliable and current data and/or other information. Other information may include generic evidence based on similar stocks, when specific information on the stock under consideration is not available, providing there is low risk to the stock under consideration in accordance with the Precautionary Approach.

GUIDANCE

This is a partner Essential Component to D.4.01 which covers the collection and maintenance of the data to be used in the stock assessment referred to in this Essential Component. The purpose of the stock assessment is to contribute to the best scientific evidence available which is used by the fishery management organization or arrangement (D.1.02) to establish management objectives for the stock under consideration (D.2), management measures (D.3) to meet those objectives and evidence regarding outcome status (D.6) - i.e. whether the objectives have been met.

The Ecolabelling Guidelines provide additional guidance on the use of data in the stock assessment. Specifically, in the absence of specific information on the stock under consideration, generic evidence based on similar stocks can be used for fisheries with low risk to that stock under consideration. The language of the Essential Component aligns with this text, however, it raises a concern that this approach could be used inappropriately in cases where the risk to the stock under consideration is not “low”. The greater the risk, the more specific evidence is necessary to assess sustainability. In principle, ‘generic evidence based on similar stocks’ should not suffice, but it may be adequate where there is low risk to the stock under consideration. In general, “Low risk to the stock under consideration” would suggest that there is very little chance of the stock becoming overfished, for example where the exploitation rate is very low and the resilience of the stock is high (see Essential Component D.5.03). However, the Standard should make it clear that the evidence for low risk and the justification for using surrogate data must come from the stock assessment itself.

The aim of this Essential Component, in conjunction with Essential Component D.5.04, is to avoid the use of less elaborate methods of stock assessment automatically precluding fisheries from potential certification. Nevertheless, to the extent that the application of such methods results in greater uncertainty about the state of the stock under consideration, more precaution must be applied in managing fisheries on such stocks. This may, for example, necessitate lower levels of utilization of the resource than would be possible with lower levels of uncertainty, in accordance with the Essential Components covering the Precautionary Approach (D.3.12) and the Best Scientific Evidence Available (D.2.02 and D.3.02).

RELATED SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENTS

D.5 01 01

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because, as noted in the response to D.1.02, the Standard does require the management system to be based on an assessment of the current status of the stock, particularly through Clauses 3.1 and 3.9i-vi. Furthermore, the Standard does allow for the use of generic information in accordance with the precautionary Approach, as evidenced in Clauses 3.7, 4.7i and 6.1.
3.1 Data shall be collected from both fishery dependent and independent sources, as relevant, in a routine and consistent manner to allow for scientifically robust assessment of:
1) The state of the stock(s) relative to the management-elected reference points or suitable substitutes or other performance indicators.
2) The performance of the fishery with respect to the utilization of the resource.
3) The performance of management measures, harvest controls and associated rules that support the strategy and the defined objectives of the fishery.
3.9 The nominated scientific institutions shall use best available scientific evidence, advice, and/or objectively verified information as a basis to inform stock assessment and provide advice on the objectives of fisheries management including:
i. Management targets consistent with achieving maximum sustainable yield (MSY) (or a suitable proxy) on average, or a lesser fishing mortality if that is optimal in the circumstances of the fishery (e.g. multispecies fisheries) or to avoid severe adverse impacts on dependent predators, taking into consideration relevant economic, social, or ecological factors.
ii. The application of specific limits or directions in key performance indicators, consistent with avoiding recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible, and specification of the actions to be taken if the limits are approached or the desired directions are not achieved.
iii. Accordingly: the stock(s) under consideration shall not be overfished if above the associated limit reference point (or its proxy).
iv. If fishing mortality (or its proxy) is above the associated limit reference point, actions shall be taken to decrease the fishing mortality (or its proxy) below that limit reference point.
v. In the event that evidence shows biomass falling well below target levels, management measures shall allow for restoration within reasonable time frames, relevant to the life history characteristics of the species under consideration.
vi. The structure and composition of the stock(s) under consideration, which contribute to its resilience shall be taken into account.
3.7 In the absence of specific information on the stock(s) under consideration, generic evidence based on similar stocks can be used for fisheries with low risk. However, the greater the risk the more specific evidence is necessary to ascertain the sustainability of intensive fisheries.
4.7 Management measures shall generally be consistent with achieving Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) (or a suitable proxy) on average, or a yield based on a lesser fishing mortality if that is optimal in the circumstances of the fishery. This should take account of (where relevant to the fishery):
i. Insufficient data and greater uncertainty of the state of the stock(s) under consideration such that a higher level of precaution is required when defining harvest rates.
6.1 Where there is greater uncertainty about the state of the stock(s) under consideration, including new or exploratory stocks, management shall demonstrate more precautionary approaches to managing the resource appropriate to the available data, including a more conservative fishing mortality
Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for the above clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 3.1, p. 34-35; Clause 3.9, p. 43-48; Clause 4.7(i), p. 59; Clause 6.1, p. 64.
Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 3.1- p. 65-69, Clause 3.9(i-vi)- p. 88-93, Clause 4.7(i)- p. 104-106, and Clause 6.1- p. 112-116.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 3.1, p. 11; Clause 3.9, p. 12; Clause 4.7(i), p. 14; Clause 6.1, p. 15.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 3.1, p. 34-35; Clause 3.9, p. 43-48; Clause 4.7(i), p. 59; Clause 6.1, p. 64.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 3.1. p. 65-69; Clause 3.9, p. 88-93; Clause 4.7(i), p. 104-106; Clause 6.1, p. 112-116.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.5 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGIES

D.5 02 STOCK ASSESSMENT

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The standard requires that the assessment of the current status and trends of the stock under consideration considers total fishing mortality on that stock from all sources including discards, unobserved mortality, incidental mortality, unreported catches and catches in all fisheries over its entire area of distribution.

GUIDANCE

This is a partner Essential Component to D.3.03. Management measures for the stock under consideration must be based on an assessment of that stock which takes account of all removals from the stock over its entire area of distribution, i.e. not just by the unit of certification but by all fisheries that utilize that stock, including bycatch, discards, unobserved mortality, incidental mortality, unreported catches, and catches taken outside of the unit of certification. Note that these terms are not defined here, or in the Glossary. They are used collectively in this context to cover all possible descriptions of fishery removals of the stock under consideration. See also Essential Component D.1.09 covering the effective and suitable monitoring, surveillance, control and enforcement of the fishery of which the unit of certification is a part.

Area of Distribution is described in the Glossary based on a CITES reference for species, but in the context of fish and fisheries, this can be used for stocks.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because both Clause 3.2 and 4.6 of the Standard require the consideration of total fishing mortality on the stock from all sources when conducting data review and analysis and when determining management measures.

3.2 Data review and analysis shall consider all fishery removals of the target stock(s) including retained catch and discards in target and non-target fisheries.

4.6 The determination of suitable conservation and management measures shall take account of:
1) Total fishing mortality from all sources, including discards, unobserved mortality, incidental mortality, unreported catches and catches in other fisheries either within or outside of the jurisdiction of the management system of the stock(s) under consideration.
2) The size and health (structure and resilience to fishing pressure) of the stock(s) under consideration.
3) Relevant environmental, biological, technological, economic, cultural, social, and commercial aspects.

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for the above clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 3.2- p. 36 and Clause 4.6- page pages 56-57.

Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 3.2- p. 70-75 and Clause 4.6- p. 102-104.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 3.2 p. 11; Clause 4.6- p. 14.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 3.2, p. 36; Clause 4.6, p. 56-57.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 3.2, p. 70-75; Clause 4.6, p. 102-104.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.5 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGIES

D.5 03 STOCK ASSESSMENT

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The standard requires that the assessment of the current status and trends of the stock under consideration takes into account the structure and composition of that stock which contribute to its resilience.

GUIDANCE

Resilience is described in the Glossary. Understanding the resilience of a stock (i.e. it's ability to recover from a disturbance) is an important part of assessing that stock's status and trends and contributes to an assessment of the level of risk to that stock (see Essential Component D.5.01).

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because Clauses 4.7ii and Clause 4.6 both require the consideration of the structure and composition of the stock when setting management measures.

4.7 Management measures shall generally be consistent with achieving Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) (or a suitable proxy) on average, or a yield based on a lesser fishing mortality if that is optimal in the circumstances of the fishery. This should take account of (where relevant to the fishery):
ii. Should take into account the structure and composition of the stock(s) under consideration, which contribute to its resilience.

4.6 The determination of suitable conservation and management measures shall take account of:
1) Total fishing mortality from all sources, including discards, unobserved mortality, incidental mortality, unreported catches and catches in other fisheries either within or outside of the jurisdiction of the management system of the stock(s) under consideration.
2) The size and health (structure and resilience to fishing pressure) of the stock(s) under consideration.
3) Relevant environmental, biological, technological, economic, cultural, social, and commercial aspects.

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for the above clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 4.7ii- p. 59 and Clause 4.6- p. 55-56.

Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 4.7ii- p. 104-106 and Clause 4.6- p. 102-104.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 4.7ii adn Clause 4.6- p.14.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 4.7ii- p. 59 and Clause 4.6- p. 55-56.57.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 4.7ii- p. 104-106 and Clause 4.6- p. 102-104.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.5 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGIES

D.5 04 ENHANCED FISHERIES

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

In the case of enhanced fisheries, the standard requires that the assessment of current status and trends of the stock under consideration includes an evaluation of whether there are significant negative impacts of enhancement activities on the naturally reproductive component of the stock under consideration.

GUIDANCE

This Essential Component addresses the need for standards to require an assessment to support the achievement of management objectives specified in Essential Component D.2.06. It refers to Enhanced Fisheries, hence it may be regarded as not applicable if the Scheme/Standard explicitly excludes enhanced fisheries (see also Guidance for D.2.06) The term natural reproductive stock components is explained in the Glossary. The term “significant negative impacts” is used in the Inland Guidelines. This was not intended to be equivalent to severe adverse impacts (on dependent predators). The consultation that resulted in the drafting of the Inland Guidelines considered that avoidance of “severe adverse impacts” only would not be consistent with a management obligation to manage enhancement in ways that would not impact the productivity and abundance of the natural reproductive stock component of the stock under consideration.

The Guidelines specifically require that naturally reproductive components of enhanced stocks are not substantially displaced by stocked components. In particular, displacement must not result in a reduction of the natural reproductive stock component below abundance-based target reference points (or their proxies). With respect to aquaculture production of organisms for stocking, there should be an advance evaluation of the effects of aquaculture development on genetic diversity and ecosystem integrity, based on the best scientific information available.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because Fundamental Clause E8 requires that assessment and monitoring consider the natural reproductive components of the stock when fisheries enhancement is used. Supporting Clause 8.12specifically requires the maintenance of the natural reproductive components of the stock.

E8. Where fisheries enhancement is utilized, assessment and monitoring shall consider natural reproductive components of the stock(s) under consideration and ecosystem impacts.

8.2 Stock assessment shall consider the separate contributions from both natural and enhanced components. Furthermore, the natural reproductive components of the stock(s) under consideration shall be maintained.

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for the above clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 8.2- p. 87.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 8.2, p. 18.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 8.2, p. 87.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

D.5 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGIES

D.5 05 ENHANCED FISHERIES

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

In the case of fisheries that are enhanced through aquaculture inputs, the standard requires that the stock assessment of the stock under consideration must consider the separate contributions from aquaculture and natural production.

GUIDANCE

This is a technical requirement applicable to stock assessments of fisheries that are enhanced through aquaculture inputs. If fisheries that are enhanced through aquaculture inputs are explicitly out of scope for the scheme, then this Essential Component is not applicable.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because Clause 8.2 explicitly requires the stock assessment to consider separate contributions from both natural and enahnced components.

8.2 Stock assessment shall consider the separate contributions from both natural and enhanced components. Furthermore, the natural reproductive components of the stock(s) under consideration shall be maintained.

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for the above clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 8.1- 8.3, p. 86-88.

REFERENCES

1) G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.1 (March 2016): Clause 8.2 p. 18.
http://audubongulf.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Standard-V1.1-CLEAN-11.30.16.pdf

2) G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.1 (September 2016): Clause 8.1-8.3, p. 86-88.
http://audubongulf.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-CLEAN-11.30.16.pdf

D.5 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGIES

▶ ECOSYSTEM EFFECTS OF FISHING

D.5 06 NON-TARGET CATCHES

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The standard requires an assessment of the extent to which non-target catches and discards by the unit of certification of stocks other than the stock under consideration and any associated culture and enhancement activities threaten those non-target stocks with recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible.

GUIDANCE

This is the partner Essential Component of D.4.03 that requires the collection and maintenance of adequate, reliable and current data and/or other information on non-target catches and discards in the unit of certification. Non-target catches and discards refers to species/stocks that are taken by the unit of certification other than the stock for which certification is being sought (see Glossary).

This Essential Component addresses the need for standards to require an assessment to support the achievement of management objectives specified in Essential Component D.2.07. This Essential Component is explicitly and deliberately confined to the effects of non-target catches and discards by the unit of certification on those non-target species/stocks. Cumulative effects on non-target species/stocks are not included in the Ecolabelling Guidelines. They are not part of the Essential Components, but they are covered in the Supplemental Components. The component relating to enhancement activity may be “not applicable” to schemes that explicitly do not cover enhanced fisheries. Non-target catches/stocks are described in the Glossary.

Examples of irreversible or very slowly reversible effects on bycatch species include excessive depletion of very long-lived organisms (see Glossary).

RELATED SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENTS

D.5 06 01 D.5 06 02

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because Clause 3.3 requires data review and analysis of non-target species and impacts of the fishery. Furthermore, Clause 7.4 requires monitoring of non-target stocks and requires remedial actions of the fishery is shown to have irreversible or slowly reversible adverse impacts on non-target species. Additionally, Clause 8.1 requires the assessment of impacts to the ecosystem from enhancement activities, including impacts on non-target species.

3.3 Data review and analysis shall consider catches and discards of other commercial and non-commercial species associated with fishing activity to the extent that impacts on these species can be understood.
7.4 With regard to non-target catches; including discards of fish stocks other than the stock(s) under consideration:
i. Non-target stocks shall be monitored to determine the impact exerted by the fishery.
ii. The fishery under consideration shall not threaten these non-target stocks with recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible and if such impacts arise, effective remedial action shall be taken.
iii. The monitoring procedures and activities shall allow for objective and scientific verification of the risks and outcomes.
8.3 As appropriate, the most probable adverse impacts, from enhancement activities, such as disease transfer, genetic diversity of local populations and effects on other ecosystem components in the receiving waters shall be considered.

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for the above clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 3.3- page 37, Clause 7.4(i-iii)- p. 73-75 and Clause 8.2- p. 88. Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 3.2- p. 76-78, Clause 7.4 i-iii- p. 138-141 and Clause 8.2- p. 157.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 3.3, page 11; Clause 7.4, p. 16; Clause 8.2, p. 18. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 3.3, page 37; Clause 7.4, p. 73-75; Clause 8.2, p. 86. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 3.2, p. 76-78; Clause 7.4, p. 138-141; Clause 8.2, p. 157. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.5 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGIES

D.5 07 ECOSYSTEM STRUCTURE, PROCESSES AND FUNCTION

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The standard requires an analysis of the effects of the unit of certification, including any associated enhancement activities where applicable, on ecosystem structure, processes and function to develop timely scientific advice on the likelihood and magnitude of impacts.

GUIDANCE

This is the partner Essential Component of D.4.02 that requires the collection and maintenance of adequate, reliable and current data and/or other information about the effects of the unit of certification, including any enhancement activities, on ecosystem structure, processes and function. The component relating to enhancement activity may be “not applicable” to schemes that explicitly do not cover enhanced fisheries. Ecosystem structure, processes and function are described in the Glossary. This language is in accordance with Section 4.1.4.1 of the FAO Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries, which suggests one of the broad management objectives for fisheries could be to keep impact on the structure, processes and functions of the ecosystem at an acceptable level.

This requirement is about the analysis of these data to develop the best scientific evidence available regarding the ecosystem effects of fishing, which is used by the fishery management organization or arrangement (D.1.02) to establish management objectives (D.2) and management measures (D.3) to meet those objectives.

The data and analysis may include local, traditional or indigenous knowledge and research, providing its validity can be objectively verified.

As expressed in the Guidance relating to the Essential Component on the precautionary approach (D.3.12), much greater scientific uncertainty is to be expected in assessing possible adverse ecosystem impacts of fisheries than in assessing the state of target stocks. This issue can be addressed by taking a risk assessment/risk management approach. Note that some ecosystem impacts such as those on bycatch species are often more readily quantifiable than others, such as those on habitat. While a risk assessment approach may mitigate a lack of quantitative information, the management system must still ensure adequate mitigation of adverse impacts.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because Fundamental clause E7 requires that adverse impacts of the fishery on the ecosystem be appropriately assessed based on best available science. E7 is broken down into nine Supporting Clauses, the most relevant to this component are Clause 7.1, 7.7 and 7.9. Additionally, Clause 8.3 addresses ecosystem impacts from enhancement activities.

E7. Adverse impacts of the fishery on the ecosystem shall be appropriately assessed and effectively addressed. Assessment shall be based on best available science, local knowledge where it can be objectively verified and using a suitable risk based management approach appropriate to the data available for determining most probable adverse impacts and taking into account the relevant environmental, economic, technological, social, and cultural aspects.

7.1 The most probable adverse impacts of the fishery on the ecosystem shall be considered, evaluated and effectively addressed. Evaluation shall be based on best available scientific evidence, advice and/or objectively verified information; including traditional, fisher and community knowledge.
7.7 The role of the stock(s) under consideration in the food web shall be considered, and if it is a key prey species in the ecosystem, management measures shall be in place to avoid severe adverse impacts on dependent predators.
7.9 In so far as introduction of artificial structures promotes fisheries enhancement, the management system must consider the environmental consequences such as habitat modification and serious or irreversible harm to the natural ecosystem's structure and function.
8.3 As appropriate, the most probable adverse impacts, from enhancement activities, such as disease transfer, genetic diversity of local populations and effects on other ecosystem components in the receiving waters shall be considered.

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for the above clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 7.1 - page 69-70, Clause 7.7- p. 83, Clause 7.9- p. 84, and Clause 8.3- p. 88. Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 7.1- p. 122-135, Clause 7.7(i-ii)- p. 147-153, Clause 7.9- p. 155, and Clause 8.2- p. 157

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 7.1, p. 16; Clause 7.7, p. 17; Clause 7.9, p. 18; Clause 8.2, p. 18. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 7.1, p. 69-70; Clause 7.7, p. 83; Clause 7.9, p. 84; Clause 8.3, p. 88. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 7.1, p. 122-135, Clause 7.7, p. 147-153; Clause 7.9, p. 155; Clause 8.2, p. 157. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.5 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGIES

D.5 08 HABITAT

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The standard requires an assessment of the impacts of the unit of certification, including any associated enhancement activities where applicable, on essential habitats for the stock under consideration and on habitats that are highly vulnerable to damage by the fishing gear of the unit of certification. The assessment should consider the full spatial range of the relevant habitat, not just that part of the spatial range that is potentially affected by fishing.

GUIDANCE

This is the partner Essential Component of D.4.05 that requires knowledge within the fishery management system of the essential habitats for the stock under consideration and habitats that are highly vulnerable to damage by the fishing gear of the unit of certification. Under this Essential Component the standard must require and assessment of the impacts of the unit of certification on these habitats. The component relating to enhancement activity may be “not applicable” to schemes that explicitly do not cover enhanced fisheries. The results of the assessment should provide sufficient understanding of the relevant habitats and fishery impacts on them to enable those impacts to be avoided, minimized or mitigated; i.e. for the management objective with respect to habitat (D.2.09) to be achieved. The achievement of this Essential Component should be considered alongside D.4.05 and D.6.07. In particular, the FAO Ecolabelling Guidelines acknowledge the importance of a “risk assessment/ risk management approach” to address the issue of greater scientific uncertainty; also that the most probable adverse impacts should be considered, taking into account available scientific information, and traditional, fisher or community knowledge provided that its validity can be objectively verified.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because Clause 7.5(i & iii) requires an analysis of fishery impacts to vulnerable habitats and continued monitoring of risks and outcomes with consideration for the full spatial range of the relevant habitat. Furthermore, Clause 7.9 requires an evaluation of impacts to the ecosystem, including habitats, from enhancement activities.

7.5 With regard to the habitat interaction of the fishery either through direct contact or other indirect effects:
i. Habitats that are vulnerable to damage by the fishing gear(s) under consideration shall be monitored to determine the risk that the fishery exerts upon their long term viability.
iii. The monitoring procedures and activities shall allow for objective and scientific verification of the risks and outcomes, including prior to introduction of new fishing gear, and in assessing fishery impacts, the full spatial range of the relevant habitat shall be considered, not just the part of the spatial range that is potentially affected by fishing.

7.9 In so far as introduction of artificial structures promotes fisheries enhancement, the management system must consider the environmental consequences such as habitat modification and serious or irreversible harm to the natural ecosystem's structure and function.

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for the above clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 7.5, p. 76-78 and Clause 7.9- p. 85

Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 3.4- p. 79-80, Clause 7.5(i-iii)- pages 142-145 and Clause 7.9- p. 155.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 7.5- p. 17 and Clause 7.9- p. 18.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 7.5, p. 76-78 and Clause 7.9- p. 85.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 7.5, p. 142-145, Clause 7.9, p. 155.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.5 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGIES

D.5 09 DEPENDANT PREDATORS

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The standard requires that data and information on the role of the stock under consideration in the food-web are assessed to determine whether it is a key prey species in the ecosystem, and if so whether fishing on that stock might result in severe adverse impacts on dependent predators.

GUIDANCE

The purpose of assessing the data and information is to provide adequate knowledge of the role of the stock under consideration in the food-web. Adequate knowledge means there is enough understanding of the role of the stock under consideration in the food-web to determine whether it is a key prey species and, if so, whether fishing on that stock under consideration might result in severe adverse impacts on dependent predators.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because Clause 7.7 requires the consideration of the role of the species in the ecosystem, including determining if it is a key prey species and adverse impacts on dependent predators, in assessments and management measures for the stock under consideration. The scoring guidance for this clause (Guidance to Assessment, page 83) requires outputs of recent assessments and determination of whether the target stock is a key prey species under the Implementation and Effectiveness parameter..
This requirement is also supported by Clause 3.9(i) requiring consideration of impacts on dependant predators when determining management targets and Clause 3.4 requiring data be collected and researched on the role of the target species in the ecosystem.

7.7 The role of the stock(s) under consideration in the food web shall be considered, and if it is a key prey species in the ecosystem, management measures shall be in place to avoid severe adverse impacts on dependent predators.

3.9 The nominated scientific institutions shall use scientific data and provide the best stock assessment information and related advice for the objectives of fisheries management including:
i. Management targets consistent with achieving maximum sustainable yield (MSY) (or a suitable proxy) on average, or a lesser fishing mortality if that is optimal in the circumstances of the fishery (e.g. multispecies fisheries) or to avoid severe adverse impacts on dependent predators, taking into consideration relevant economic, social, or ecological factors.

3.4 Data shall be collected and research advanced to improve the understanding of the biology, life-cycle and reproductive cycle of the stock under consideration, its geographic range, its habitat and role in the ecosystem, to improve management of the fishery.

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for the above clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 7.7, p. 83; Clause 3.9(i)- p. 43; and Clause 3.4- p. 38.

Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 7.7- p. 147-153; Clause 3.9(i)- p. 88-93 and Clause 3.4- p. 79-80.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 7.7- p. 17; Clause 3.9(i)- p. 12; and Clause 3.4- p. 11. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 7.7, p. 83; Clause 3.9(i)- p. 43; and Clause 3.4- p. 38.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 7.7, p. 147-153. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.5 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGIES

D.5 10 ENDANGERED SPECIES

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The standard requires an assessment of the impacts of the unit of certification, including any associated enhancement activities where applicable, on endangered species.

GUIDANCE

This is the partner Essential Component of D.4.04 that requires the collection and maintenance of adequate, reliable and current data and/or other information about the effects of the unit of certification, including any enhancement activities, on endangered species. Under this Essential Component the standard must require and assessment of the impacts of the unit of certification on these species. The component relating to enhancement activity may be "not applicable" to schemes that explicitly do not cover enhanced fisheries. The results of the assessment should provide sufficient understanding of the relevant endangered species and fishery impacts on them to enable their protection from those impacts; i.e. for the management objective with respect to endangered species (D.2.08) to be achieved.

The achievement of this Essential Component should be considered alongside D.4.04 and D.6.06. In particular, the FAO Guidelines acknowledge the importance of a "risk assessment/risk management approach" to address the issue of greater scientific uncertainty associated with ecosystem impacts; also that the most probable adverse impacts should be considered, taking into account available scientific information, and traditional, fisher or community knowledge provided that its validity can be objectively verified.

CONCLUSION

The Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Scheme is in alignment because Standard requires the assessment of impacts of the unit of certification on ETP species in Clauses 7.6iii & iv.

7.6 With regard to species that have been recognized as endangered, threatened or protected:
iii. Evaluation and monitoring procedures and activities shall be implemented to determine both the current status of the impact on ETP's caused by the fishery and to monitor the effectiveness of avoidance and mitigation measures that are implemented to minimize further impact on the mortality of those populations of ETP species.
iv. Monitoring procedures and activities shall be robust enough to allow for objective and scientific verification of the risks and outcomes.

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for the above clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 7.6(iii-iv)- p. 80-82.

Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 7.6(i-iv)- p. 146-147.

REFERENCES

1) G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.1 (March 2016): Clause 7.6, p. 17.
http://audubongulf.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Standard-V1.1-CLEAN-11.30.16.pdf

2) G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.1 (September 2016): Clause 7.6 (iii-iv), p. 80-82.
http://audubongulf.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-CLEAN-11.30.16.pdf

3) G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 7.6, p. 146-147.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.6 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

STOCK AND ECOSYSTEM STATUS AND OUTCOMES

▶ STOCK UNDER CONSIDERATION

D.6 01 TARGET STOCK STATUS

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The standard requires that the stock under consideration is not overfished.

GUIDANCE

The stock under consideration is considered to be overfished if its stock size is below its limit reference point (or its proxy). Decision rules should avoid stocks falling below Blim but sometimes they do not for reasons that may or may not be wholly or partly due to the fishery and/or the management of the fishery. Nevertheless, the language in the Guidelines states that "the stock under consideration is not overfished, and is maintained at a level which promotes the objective of optimal utilization and maintains its availability for present and future generations." If the stock under consideration of a certified fishery becomes overfished, the scheme should cause the certification of this fishery to be suspended or revoked.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because Clause 3.9 requires that the best stock assessment information and advice be used for setting fishery management objectives including target and limit reference points, and the scoring guidance for 3.9(iii) under the Implementation and Effectiveness Evaluation Parameter requires a non-conformance if the stock is found to be below the limit reference point. Additionally, Section C, including Clauses 4.3, 4.5 and 5.2 have explicit requirements for management measures and actions associated with overfishing and overfished conditions of the stock under consideration.

3.9 The nominated scientific institutions shall use best available scientific evidence, advice,
and/or objectively verified information as a basis to inform stock assessment and provide
advice on the objectives of fisheries management including:
ii. The application of specific limits or directions in key performance indicators, consistent with avoiding recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible, and specification of the actions to be taken if the limits are approached or the desired directions are not achieved.
iii. Accordingly: the stock(s) under consideration shall not be overfished if above the associated limit reference point (or its proxy).
v. In the event that evidence shows biomass falling well below target levels, management measures shall allow for restoration within reasonable time frames, relevant to the life history characteristics of the species under consideration.
Clause 3.9(iii) Guidance:
Implementation and Effectiveness: The stock is at or above the limit reference point (or its proxy). To be effective, reference points must be incorporated within a framework of decision rules to ensure that the stock does not fall below a limit, Blim, at which recruitment could be significantly impaired, or lead to average recruitment that is significantly lower than it would be with a higher stock biomass. The level of Blim should be set on the basis of historical information, applying an appropriate level of precaution according to the reliability of that information. In addition, an upper limit should be set on fishing mortality, Flim, which is the fishing mortality rate that, if sustained, would drive biomass down to the Blim level. If the stock is below the limit reference point it can be considered overfished. The overfished status can be due to anthropogenic or environmental pressure (causing reduced productivity), but once below limit, recruitment can be considered impaired and the stock overfished. If this is the case, a non-conformance will be issued here and corrective action will be requested from the client.
C4. The management system shall specify management objectives to achieve optimal utilization of the resource and ensure that the stock(s) is (are) not overfished and that overfishing is not occurring.
4.3 In the event that evidence shows biomass falling to levels where recruitment is impaired, there shall be objectives for the management system to allow for restoration of the stock(s) within reasonable timeframes, relevant to the life history characteristics of the species under consideration to levels that allow for high productivity.
4.5 Accordingly, for the stock under consideration, there shall be defined objectives or goals for the fishery and its long-term sustainable use. Stock management objectives may vary and include additional economic and social aspects but must include the following:
i. Maintenance of the stock at or above the levels necessary to ensure their continued biological productivity and;
5.2 Measures, harvest control mechanisms and associated actions shall be designed for when overfished conditions are approached and these shall be sufficiently formalized so that management can effectively respond and take action to situations of impaired recruitment, overfishing or increasing risk of exceeding these or other negative outcomes, in a timely manner.

G.U.L.F. RFM definitions:
Overfished (from FAO Glossary of Terms), A stock is considered overfished when exploited beyond an explicit limit beyond which its abundance is considered "too low"to ensure safe reproduction. In many fisheries fora the term is used when biomass has been estimated to be below a limit biological reference point that is used as the signpost defining an "overfished condition". This sign post is often taken as being FMSY but the usage of the term may not always be consistent.

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for the above clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 3.9, p. 43-48; Clause 4.3, p. 51; Clause 4.5(i), p. 54; Clause 5.2, p. 62-63. Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 3.9(i-vi)- pages 88-93, Clause 4.3- p. 98-99, Clause 4.5(i)- p. 101 and Clause 5.2- p. 110-111.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 3.9, p. 12; Clause 4.3, p. 13, Clause 4.5(i), p. 13; Clause 5.2, p. 14.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 3.9, p. 43-48; Clause 4.3, p. 51; Clause 4.5(i), p. 54; Clause 5.2, p. 62-63.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 3.9, p. 88-93; Clause 4.3, p. 98-99; Clause 4.5(i), p. 101; Clause 5.2, p. 110-111.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.6 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

STOCK AND ECOSYSTEM STATUS AND OUTCOMES

D.6 02 TARGET STOCK STATUS

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The standard requires the existence of outcome indicator(s) consistent with achieving management objectives for the stock under consideration (D.2.01, D.2.03, D.2.04).

GUIDANCE

The relevant management objectives are those referred to in Performance Area 2 and are for the whole of the stock under consideration. The outcome indicators should be consistent with demonstrating that the management objectives have been effectively achieved. Outcome indicators are required for all management objectives for the stock under consideration, which may include, for example, target reference points that take into account the requirements of dependent predators, where appropriate (D.2.10).

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the scoring structure for each Clause of the Standard requires that the fishery meet three evaluation parameters- 1) Process of Framework, 2) Implementation and Effectiveness and 3) Evidence Basis. To receive full conformance for any clause, all three parameters must be met. The Guidance to Assessment document (page 12) provides the following description of the Implementation and Effectiveness Evaluation Parameter:

Implementation and Effectiveness:
Is information available that demonstrates that the framework, process or procedure is implemented consistent with the intent of the clause? This EP requires that the current status of implementation and its effectiveness to be measured, as appropriate to the aspect of fisheries management specific to each clause. Examples include data collection systems and the data collected, implementation of stock assessment practices and implementation of activities that respond to the outcome of stock status; implementation of management measures and rules through various mechanisms, monitoring and enforcement. If evidence on the current status of implementation and effectiveness is scarce or non-existent then this EP is not satisfied, resulting in a non-conformity. Therefore, for all clauses provided as evidence in D.2.01, D.2.03, and D.2.04 requiring management objectives and measures for the stock under consideration (Clauses 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.5, 4.7, 5.1 and 5.2), including when fisheries enhancement activities are used (8.1-8.3), the Implementation and Effectiveness parameter is the outcome indicator for scoring of these clauses. For example, Clause 4.5 requires 'for the stock(s) under consideration, there shall be defined objectives or goals for the fishery and its long-term sustainable use.'
The Implementation and Effectiveness parameter for this clause, as determined in the Guidance to Assessment document requires: Management objectives and goals are in place with defined objectives or goals for the fishery and its long-term sustainable use. Evidence shall be sought for the presence of effective implementation of long-term management measures for the most important aspects of fishery management. These include routine stock assessment activities, sustainable levels of stock biomass and appropriate exploitation levels.

For specifics on the Implementation and Effectiveness Evaluation Parameters for the other clauses listed above, please refer to the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document as follows: Clause 4.1, p. 49; Clause 4.2, p. 50; Clause 4.3, p. 51; Clause 4.7, p. 58-60; Clause 5.1, p. 61; Clause 8.1-8.3, p. 8-88. Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 4.1- p. 94-96, Clause 4.2- p. 97, Clause4.3- p. 98-99, Clause 4.5(i)(ii)- p. 101, Clause 4.7- p.104-106, Clause 5.1- p. 107-109, Clause 3.8- p. 86-87, Clause 3.9(i-vi)- p. 88-93, Clause 8.1- p. 156 and 8.2 - page 157.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 4.1, p. 13; Clause 4.2, p. 13; Clause 4.3, p. 13; Clause 4.7, p. 14; Clause 5.1, p. 14; Clause 8.1,- 8.3, p. 18.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 4.1, p. 49; Clause 4.2, p. 50; Clause 4.3, p. 51; Clause 4.7, p. 58-60; Clause 5.1, p. 61; Clause 8.1-8.3, p. 8-88.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 4.1, p. 94-96; Clause 4.2, p. 97; Clause4.3, p. 98-99; Clause 4.5, p. 101; Clause 4.7, p.104-106; Clause 5.1, p. 107-109; Clause 3.8, p. 86-87; Clause 3.9, p. 88-93; Clause 8.1, p. 156; Clause 8.2, p. 157.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.6 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

STOCK AND ECOSYSTEM STATUS AND OUTCOMES

D.6 03 ENHANCED FISHERIES

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The standard requires that the natural reproductive stock components of enhanced stocks are not overfished.

GUIDANCE

All Essential Components that address Enhanced Fisheries can be “not applicable” to schemes that explicitly do not cover these fisheries. In the case of enhanced fisheries, the stock under consideration may comprise naturally reproductive components and components maintained by stocking. The natural reproductive stock component of enhanced stocks is described in the Glossary.

In the context of avoiding significant negative impacts of enhancement activities on the natural reproductive components of the stock under consideration, the Inland Ecolabelling Guidelines state that displacement [of the naturally reproductive components of enhanced stocks by stocked components] must not result in a reduction of the natural reproductive stock component below abundance-based target reference points (or their proxies).

Decision rules (D.3.05) should avoid stocks falling below Blim but sometimes they do not for reasons that may or may not be wholly or partly due to the fishery and/or the management of the fishery. Nevertheless, the language in the Guidelines states that both the stock under consideration and the naturally reproductive components of enhanced stocks are not overfished. In addition, naturally reproductive components of enhanced stocks are not substantially displaced by stocked components. If the stock under consideration of a certified fishery becomes overfished, the scheme should cause the certification of this fishery to be suspended or revoked.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because, in combination with the evidence provided in D.6.01 (Clauses 3.9, 4.3, 4.5, and 5.2), Clauses 8.1, 8.2 and 8.3 require, in the case of enhanced fisheries, that the natural reproductive components of the stock and the genetic diversity of local populations be maintained.

8.1 Stock introductions and transfers of juveniles from enhancement activities shall be from species that are native to the fishery's geographic area.

8.2 Stock assessment shall consider the separate contributions from both natural and enhanced components. Furthermore, the natural reproductive components of the stock(s) under consideration shall be maintained.

8.3 As appropriate, the most probable adverse impacts, from enhancement activities, such as disease transfer, genetic diversity of local populations and effects on other ecosystem components in the receiving waters shall be considered.

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for the above clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 3.9, p. 43-48; Clause 4.3, p. 51; Clause 4.5(i), p. 54; Clause 5.2, p. 62-63; Clause 8.1-8.3, p. 86-88. Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 3.9(i-vi)- pages 88-93, Clause 4.3- p. 98-99, Clause 4.5(i)- p. 101, Clause 5.2- p. 110-111, Clause 8.1- p. 156, and Clause 8.2- p. 157.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 3.9, p. 12; Clause 4.3, p. 13; Clause 4.5(i), p. 13; Clause 5.2, p. 14; and Clauses 8.1-8.3, p. 18.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 3.9, p. 43-48; Clause 4.3, p. 51; Clause 4.5(i), p. 54; Clause 5.2, p. 62-63; Clause 8.1- 8.3, p. 86-88.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 3.9, p. 88-93; Clause 4.3, p. 98-99; Clause 4.5(i), p. 101; Clause 5.2, p. 110-111; Clause 8.1, p. 156; Clause 8.2, p. 157.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.6 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

STOCK AND ECOSYSTEM STATUS AND OUTCOMES

D.6 04 ENHANCED FISHERIES

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

In the case of enhanced fisheries, the standard requires that the natural reproductive stock component of enhanced stocks is not substantially displaced by stocked components.

GUIDANCE

All Essential Components that address Enhanced Fisheries can be “not applicable” to schemes that explicitly do not cover these fisheries. In the case of enhanced fisheries, the stock under consideration may comprise naturally reproductive components and components maintained by stocking. The natural reproductive stock component of enhanced stocks is described in the Glossary.

With respect to “substantially displaced”, in particular, displacement must not result in a reduction of the natural reproductive stock component below abundance-based target reference points (or their proxies).

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because Clauses 8.1 , 8.2 and 8.3 require, in the case of enhanced fisheries, that the natural reproductive components of the stock and the genetic diversity of local populations be maintained.

8.1 Stock introductions and transfers of juveniles from enhancement activities shall be from species that are native to the fishery's geographic area.

8.2 Stock assessment shall consider the separate contributions from both natural and enhanced components. Furthermore, the natural reproductive components of the stock(s) under consideration shall be maintained.

8.3 As appropriate, the most probable adverse impacts, from enhancement activities, such as disease transfer, genetic diversity of local populations and effects on other ecosystem components in the receiving waters shall be considered.

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for the above clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 8.1-8.3- p. 86-88.

Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 8.1- p. 156 and Clause 8.2- p. 157.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 8.1-8.3, p. 18.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 8.1,-8.3p. 86-88.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 8.1, p. 156; Clause 8.2, p. 157.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.6 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

STOCK AND ECOSYSTEM STATUS AND OUTCOMES

▶ ECOSYSTEM EFFECTS OF FISHING

D.6 05 NON-TARGET CATCHES

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The standard requires the existence of outcome indicator(s) consistent with achieving management objectives for non-target stocks (D.2.05).

GUIDANCE

The relevant management objectives are those referred to in Performance Area 2 and are for non-target species/stocks. The outcome indicators should be consistent with demonstrating that the management objectives (D.2.07) have been effectively achieved. Non-target stocks refer to species/stocks that are taken by the unit of certification other than the stock for which certification is being sought (see Glossary).

Examples of irreversible or very slowly reversible effects on bycatch species include excessive depletion of very long-lived organisms (see Glossary). To mitigate effects that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible requires those effects to be made less severe such that they are no longer likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because, as noted in D.6.02, the scoring structure for each clause of the Standard requires that an Implementation and Effectiveness Evaluation Parameter (EP) to be met for a clause to receive full conformance. Multiple clauses of the Standard require management objectives and activities for non-target stocks as is evidenced in the response to D.2.05 (Clauses 4.5ii, 7.4i-iii and 8.3). For each of these clauses, the Implementation and Effectiveness EP requires evidence of the current status and demonstration that the requirements of the clause are in effect.

For example, Clause 7.4(i) Implementation and Effectiveness EP requires the following-
Information and data collected is sufficiently reliable so as to allow appropriate evaluation of the state of the relevant non-target stock. Describe the outputs of the most recent assessments or evaluations of relevant non-target species in relation to the established objectives for their management, as appropriate. Determine if the monitoring system in place is robust enough to ensure that potential impacts of the fishery on non-target stocks are detectable and allows for objective and scientific verification of the risks and outcomes.

And Clause 7.4(ii) the Full Conformance scoring requirement states:
Relevant non-target stocks are not threatened with recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible or where they are effective remedial actions are taken.

And, the 7.4(ii) Implementation and Effectiveness EP states:
Relevant non-target stocks are not threatened by the fishery under consideration. Where they are, effective and appropriate remedial action is taken by the management organization to reverse these trends. Examples of remedial measures include, but are not limited to, incidental take allowances, bycatch quotas, prohibitions on retention, safe release practices, use of bycatch reduction devices, such as square mesh panels, escape rings/gaps, etc. or practices, such as temporal (e.g. no night fishing/night fishing only) or spatial (e.g. closed areas) restrictions on fishing activity targeting the stock under consideration.

Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 3.2- p. 70-75, Clause 4.5- p. 101, and Clause 7.4- p. 138-141.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 3.2, p. 11; Clause 4.5, p. 13; Clause 7.4, p. 16.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 3.2, p. 36; Clause 4.5, p. 53-55; Clause 7.4, p. 73-75.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 3.2, p. 70-75; Clause 4.5, p. 101; Clause 7.4, p. 138-141.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.6 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

STOCK AND ECOSYSTEM STATUS AND OUTCOMES

D.6 06 ENDANGERED SPECIES

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The standard requires the existence of outcome indicator(s) consistent with achieving management objectives (D.2.08) that seek to ensure that Endangered species are protected from adverse impacts resulting from interactions with the unit of certification and any associated culture or enhancement activity, including recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible.

GUIDANCE

The context of this Essential Component is Endangered Species. Endangered species are defined in the Glossary. These species are already adversely impacted at the population level, by definition, and are susceptible to further adverse impacts at this level from which they need to be protected. Where “adverse impacts” is used in relation to Endangered Species in the FAO Guidelines there is no further qualification provided (i.e. no “significant” or “severe”). Elsewhere in the Guidelines, the term “adverse impacts” is qualified, but in each case this is in a very specific context. For example. The term “significant negative impacts” is used in the FAO Ecolabelling Guidelines only in relation to enhanced fisheries and “severe adverse impacts” is used only in relation to dependent predators. The term “significant adverse impacts” occurs only in the Deep Sea Guidelines with respect to VMEs.

The outcome indicators required by the standard should be consistent with demonstrating that the management objectives for Endangered Species (D.2.08) have been effectively achieved. The actual outcome would be measures by an assessment required under D.5.10.

The FAO Ecolabelling Guidelines acknowledge that much greater scientific uncertainty is to be expected in assessing possible adverse ecosystem impacts of fisheries than in assessing the state of target stocks (paragraph 31 (41)), hence the outcome indicators necessary to meet this Essential Component should take into account risk and uncertainty.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because Clause 7.6i-vi explicitly requires the management system to formally recognize ETP species, monitor status and impacts and implement measures to avoid or mitigation negative impacts to ETP species. Each element (i-vi) of Clause 7.6 is scored individually and must meet an Implementation and Effectiveness Evaluation Parameter (EP) to receive full conformance. As noted in the response to D.6.02, the Implementation and Effectiveness EP requires the current status and effectiveness of the elements required by the clause in order to receive full conformance. For example, to receive full conformance to 7.6(ii), the fishery must meet the following: The fishery management system acts effectively to avoid impact on the populations of ETP species such that it does not undermine the ability for those ETP populations to recover.

7.6 With regard to species that have been recognized as endangered, threatened or protected:
i. Consistent with A1, fishery management systems shall give formal recognition of populations of species identified as endangered, threatened and/or protected (ETP) in the geographic location of the fishery by international, national or state authorities within the context of the likely risk posed by the fishery under consideration.
ii. The fishery management system shall act to avoid adverse impact on the populations of ETP species.
iii. Evaluation and monitoring procedures and activities shall be implemented to determine both the current status of the impact on ETP's caused by the fishery and to monitor the effectiveness of avoidance and mitigation measures that are implemented to minimize further impact on the mortality of those populations of ETP species.
iv. Monitoring procedures and activities shall be robust enough to allow for objective and scientific verification of the risks and outcomes.

Full details on the Implementation and Effectiveness Evaluation Parameters for each element of Clause 7.6 can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document on pages 79-82. Examples of these clauses in use can be found in The Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016) provides an example of Clause 7.6(i-iv) scoring and justification on pages 146-147.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 3.2, p. 11; Clause 7.6, p. 17.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 7.6, p. 79-82.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 7.6, p. 146-147.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.6 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

STOCK AND ECOSYSTEM STATUS AND OUTCOMES

D.6 07 HABITAT

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The standard requires the existence of outcome indicator(s) consistent with achieving management objectives (D.2.09) for avoiding, minimizing or mitigating the impacts of the unit of certification on essential habitats for the "stock under consideration" and on habitats that are highly vulnerable to damage by the fishing gear of the unit of certification.

GUIDANCE

The outcome indicators should be consistent with demonstrating that the management objectives have been effectively achieved for habitat (D.2.09).

Essential habitats are described in the Glossary. Examples of impacts on habitat that should be avoided include the destruction or severe modification of rare and/or vulnerable habitats. In assessing fishery impacts, the full spatial range of the relevant habitat should be considered, not just that part of the spatial range that is potentially affected by fishing.

The FAO Guidelines acknowledge that much greater scientific uncertainty is to be expected in assessing possible adverse ecosystem impacts of fisheries than in assessing the state of target stocks (paragraph 31 (41)), hence the outcome indicators necessary to meet this Essential Component should take into consideration risk and uncertainty.

RELATED SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENTS

D.6 07 01

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because Clauses 7.5(i-iii), 4.5(ii), and 3.4 of the Standard require research and management activities seeking to minimize fishery impacts on habitat and each of these clauses must meet the criteria of an Implementation and Effectiveness Evaluation Parameter to receive full conformance. As noted in the response to D.6.02, the Implementation and Effectiveness EP is an outcome indicator for these clauses, requiring current status and a measure of effectiveness within the scoring of these clauses. For example, Clause 7.5(ii) scoring guidance requires Impacts on habitats vulnerable to damage by the fishing gear or protected by legislation are effectively avoided or minimized through mitigation measures to receive full conformance.

7.5 With regard to the habitat interaction of the fishery either through direct contact or other indirect effects:
i. Habitats that are vulnerable to damage by the fishing gear(s) under consideration shall be monitored to determine the risk that the fishery exerts upon their long term viability.
ii. Impacts on habitats vulnerable to damage by the fishing gear or are protected by legislation must be avoided or minimized through mitigation measures.
iii. The monitoring procedures and activities shall allow for objective and scientific verification of the risks and outcomes, including prior to introduction of new fishing gear, and in assessing fishery impacts, the full spatial range of the relevant habitat shall be considered, not just the part of the spatial range that is potentially affected by fishing.

4.5 Accordingly, for the stock under consideration, there shall be defined objectives or goals for the fishery and its long-term sustainable use. Stock management objectives may vary and include additional economic and social aspects but must include the following:
ii. Minimize the negative impacts of fishing on the physical environment and on non-target species (bycatch) and associated dependent species.

3.4 Data shall be collected and research advanced to improve the understanding of the biology, life-cycle and reproductive cycle of the stock under consideration, its geographic range, its habitat, the environmental factors that may influence stock abundance, and its role in the ecosystem, to improve management of the fishery.

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for the above clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 7.5, p. 76-78; Clause 4.5, p. 53-55; Clause 3.4, p. 38. Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 7.5 (i-iii)- p. 142-145, Clause 4.5ii- p. 101, and Clause 3.4- p. 79-80.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 7.5, p. 17; Clause 4.5, p. 13; Clause 3.4, p. 11. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 7.5, p. 76-78; Clause 4.5, p. 53-55; Clause 3.4, p. 38.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 7.5, p. 142-145; Clause 4.5(ii), p. 101; Clause 3.4, p. 79-80.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.6 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

STOCK AND ECOSYSTEM STATUS AND OUTCOMES

D.6 08 DEPENDANT PREDATORS

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The standard includes outcome indicator(s) consistent with achieving management objectives (D.2.10) that seek to avoid severe adverse impacts on dependent predators resulting from fishing on a stock under consideration that is a key prey species.

GUIDANCE

The outcome indicators should be consistent with demonstrating that the management objectives have been effectively achieved for dependent predators (D.2.10). Dependent predators are described in the Glossary.

The FAO Guidelines acknowledge that much greater scientific uncertainty is to be expected in assessing possible adverse ecosystem impacts of fisheries than in assessing the state of target stocks (paragraph 31 (41)), hence the outcome indicators should take into account risk and uncertainty.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because, as noted in D.2.08, Clauses 7.7(i), 3.9(i) and 4.5(ii) all require management measures and activities for consideration of the role of the target stock in the ecosystem and impacts to dependent predators. Each Clause must meet all three Evaluation Parameters (EPs), including Implementation and Effectiveness, to receive full conformance to these clauses. Most significantly, the scoring requirement to receive full conformance for Clause 7.7(i) is: The role of the stock under consideration in the food web is effectively considered, and for a key prey species in the ecosystem, management measures are in place to avoid severe adverse impacts on dependent predators. (Guidance to Assessment, p. 81)

7.7 The role of the stock(s) under consideration in the food web shall be considered, and if it is a key prey species in the ecosystem, management measures shall be in place to avoid severe adverse impacts on dependent predators.
3.9 The nominated scientific institutions shall use best available scientific evidence, advice, and/or objectively verified information as a basis to inform stock assessment and provide advice on the objectives of fisheries management including:
i. Management targets consistent with achieving maximum sustainable yield (MSY) (or a suitable proxy) on average, or a lesser fishing mortality if that is optimal in the circumstances of the fishery (e.g. multispecies fisheries) or to avoid severe adverse impacts on dependent predators, taking into consideration relevant economic, social, or ecological factors.
4.5 Accordingly, for the stock under consideration, there shall be defined objectives or goals for the fishery and its long-term sustainable use. Stock management objectives may vary and include additional economic and social aspects but must include the following:
ii. Minimize the negative impacts of fishing on the physical environment and on non-target species (bycatch) and associated dependent species.

Full details on the Implementation and Effectiveness EPs for the above clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 7.7- pages 83, Clause 3.9(i)- p. 43 and Clause 4.5- p. 53-55. Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 7.7i-ii- p. 147-153, Clause 3.9i- p. 88-93 and Clause 4.5- p. 101.

REFERENCES

Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 7.7, p. 17; Clause 3.9(i), p. 12; Clause 4.5, p. 13. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 7.7, p. 83; Clause 3.9(i), p. 43; Clause 4.5, p. 53-55. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 7.7, p. 147-153; Clause 3.9(i), p. 88-93; Clause 4.5, p. 101.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.6 *Evidence of alignment with applicable GSSI Essential Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

STOCK AND ECOSYSTEM STATUS AND OUTCOMES

D.6 09 ECOSYSTEM STRUCTURE, PROCESSES AND FUNCTION

GSSI ESSENTIAL COMPONENT

The standard requires the existence of outcome indicator(s) consistent with achieving management objectives (D.2.11) that seek to minimize adverse impacts of the unit of certification, including any enhancement activities, on the structure, processes and function of aquatic ecosystems that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible. Any modifications to the habitat for enhancing the stock under consideration must be reversible and not cause serious or irreversible harm to the natural ecosystem's structure, processes and function.

GUIDANCE

The outcome indicators should be consistent with demonstrating that the management objectives for impacts on the structure, processes and function of aquatic ecosystems (D.2.11) have been effectively achieved. The component relating to enhancement activity may be "not applicable" to schemes that explicitly do not cover enhanced fisheries.

Ecosystem structure, processes and function are described in the Glossary. This language is in accordance with Section 4.1.4.1 of the FAO Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries, which suggests one of the broad management objectives for fisheries could be to keep impact on the structure, processes and functions of the ecosystem at an acceptable level.

The FAO Guidelines acknowledge that much greater scientific uncertainty is to be expected in assessing possible adverse ecosystem impacts of fisheries than in assessing the state of target stocks (paragraph 31 (41)), hence the outcome indicators necessary to meet this Essential Component should take into account risk and uncertainty.

RELATED SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENTS

D.6 09 01

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because Section E of the Standard contains several clauses requiring research and management activities designed to minimize fishery impacts on aquatic ecosystems, including Clauses 7.1, 7.7, 7.9, and 8.3. Each of these clauses must meet the criteria of an Implementation and Effectiveness Evaluation Parameter to receive full conformance. As noted in D.6.02, the Implementation and Effectiveness EP requires the current status and effectiveness of the elements required by the clause in order to receive full conformance.

7.1 The most probable adverse impacts of the fishery on the ecosystem shall be considered, evaluated and effectively addressed. Evaluation shall be based on best available scientific evidence, advice and/or objectively verified information; including traditional, fisher and community knowledge.
7.7 The role of the stock(s) under consideration in the food web shall be considered, and if it is a key prey species in the ecosystem, management measures shall be in place to avoid severe adverse impacts on dependent predators.
7.9 In so far as introduction of artificial structures promotes fisheries enhancement, the management system must consider the environmental consequences such as habitat modification and serious or irreversible harm to the natural ecosystem's structure and function.
8.3 As appropriate, the most probable adverse impacts, from enhancement activities, such as disease transfer, genetic diversity of local populations and effects on other ecosystem components in the receiving waters shall be considered.

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for the above clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 7.1- p. 69-70, Clause 7.7- p. 83, Clause 7.9- p. 84, Clause 8.3- p. 88. Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 7.1- p. 122-135, Clause 7.7(i-ii)- p.147-153, Clause 7.9- p. 155, and Clause 8.2- p. 157

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 7.1, p. 16; Clause 7.7, p. 17; Clause 7.9, p. 18; Clause 8.3, p. 18. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 7.1, p. 69-70; Clause 7.7, p. 83; Clause 7.9, p. 84; Clause 8.3, p. 88.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 7.1, p. 122-135; Clause 7.7, p.147-153; Clause 7.9, p. 155; Clause 8.2, p. 157.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D

EVIDENCE OF ALIGNMENT WITH IMPLEMENTED **GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENTS** FOR FISHERIES CERTIFICATION STANDARDS

D.1 *Evidence of alignment with implemented GSSI Supplementary Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

GOVERNANCE AND FISHERY MANAGEMENT

▶ FISHERY MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION

D.1 01 01 MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION

GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT

The standard requires that the fishery management organization or arrangement provides advice that contributes to the attainment of objectives for the management of the deep-sea fishery (DSFs) in the high seas under consideration and the prevention of significant adverse impacts on Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems (VMEs.) from fishing.

Rationale: This Supplementary Component represents an additionally detailed focus on the activities of the fishery management organization or arrangement regarding the prevention of significant adverse impacts on VMEs in DSFs on the high seas.

GUIDANCE

To meet the parent Essential Component, the fishery management organization or arrangement is expected to be fit for purpose. This is tested through the other Essential Components that assess the performance and content of the management system. This Supplementary Component looks more specifically at the advice provided by the fishery management organization or arrangement with respect to the management of DSFs in the high seas. The fishery management organization or arrangement must be required to provide specific advice on the prevention of significant adverse impacts on VMEs arising from fishing by the Unit of Certification. The FAO International Guidelines for the Management of Deep Sea Fisheries in the High Seas provide detail on what is regarded as a VME and what is a significant adverse impact in this context.

CONCLUSION

This GSSI Supplementary Component is not applicable to the G.U.L.F. RFM Program because the certification is only available to fisheries operating within U.S. Gulf of Mexico waters and does not include deep-sea fisheries in the high seas. This is evidenced by the following statement in the Standard: 'The purpose of the G.U.L.F. Certification Scheme is to provide U.S. Gulf State fisheries with a "Certification of Responsible Fisheries Management" to an internationally recognized standard.'

This is also clearly stated in the Guidance to Assessment document: The Audubon Nature Institute (hereafter Audubon) Gulf United for Lasting Fisheries Responsible Fisheries Management (hereafter G.U.L.F. RFM) Certification Standard (hereafter the Standard) is a tool for use in the evaluation of United States fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico to an eco-certification program developed and owned by Audubon.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Forward, page 3.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): General Introduction, page 7.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

D.1 *Evidence of alignment with implemented GSSI Supplementary Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

GOVERNANCE AND FISHERY MANAGEMENT

D.1 01 02 MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION

GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT

The standard requires that in giving due recognition to the requirements and opportunities of small-scale fisheries the fishery management organization or arrangement adopts measures for the long-term conservation and sustainable use of fisheries resources and to secure the ecological foundation for food production.

Rationale: This Supplementary Component qualifies the management system with respect to long-term conservation and sustainability of fisheries resources. There is a particular focus on the requirements and opportunities of small scale fisheries and their role in securing the ecological foundation for food production.

GUIDANCE

The standard requires that in giving due recognition to the requirements and opportunities of small-scale fisheries the fishery management organization or arrangement adopts measures for the long-term conservation and sustainable use of fisheries resources and to secure the ecological foundation for food production.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because all U.S. Gulf of Mexico fisheries are eligible for G.U.L.F. RFM certification regardless of size or scale of the fishery. The G.U.L.F. RFM Fisheries Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) includes members of inshore, small-scale fisheries and small-business owners from regional fisheries (blue crab, oyster) to ensure that the interests of these fisheries are represented.

The Standard requires a publically accessible management system (Clause 1.2) that allows for participation by all industry and community members. Several clauses specifically allow for traditional, fisher and community knowledge provided it can be objectively verified (Clauses 1.6, 3.5 and 7.1). The Standard also allows for proxies in several clauses as a means of accommodating small-scale or data-limited fisheries with more limited assessment methods provided that more precautionary approaches to management are used where risks are greater (Clauses 3.8, 3.9, 4.7, 6.3 and 6.4).

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for the relevant clauses above can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 1.2, p.18; Clause 1.6, p. 24; Clause 3.5, p. 39; Clause 3.8, p. 42; Clause 3.9, p. 43-48; Clause 4.7, p. 59-60; Clause 6.3, p. 66; Clause 6.4, p. 67; Clause 7.1, p. 69-70.

Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 1.2- p.38-40, Clause 1.6- p. 47-48, Clause 3.5- p. 81-82, Clause 3.8- p. 86-87, Clause 3.9- p. 88-93, Clause 4.7- p. 104-106, Clause 6.3- p. 119, Clause 6.4- p. 120, and Clause 7.1- p. 122-135.

REFERENCES

1) G.U.L.F. RFM Fisheries Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Member List.
http://audubongulf.wpengine.com/advancing-our-fisheries/third-party-certification/g-u-l-f-tac/

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 1.2, p.8; Clause 1.6, p. 9; Clause 3.5, p. 11; Clause 3.8 and 3.9, p. 12; Clause 4.7, p. 14; Clause 6.3 and 6.4, p. 15; Clause 7.1, p. 16.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 1.2, p.18; Clause 1.6, p. 24; Clause 3.5, p. 39; Clause 3.8, p. 42; Clause 3.9, p. 43-48; Clause 4.7, p. 59-60; Clause 6.3, p. 66; Clause 6.4, p. 67; Clause 7.1, p. 69-70.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

4) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 1.2, pages 38-40; Clause 1.6, pages. 47-48; Clause 3.5, pages. 81-82; Clause 3.8, p. 86-87; Clause 3.9, p. 88-93; Clause 4.7, pages 104-106; Clause 6.3, page 119; Clause 6.4, page 120; and Clause 7.1, pages 122-135.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.1 *Evidence of alignment with implemented GSSI Supplementary Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

GOVERNANCE AND FISHERY MANAGEMENT

D.1 01 04 MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION

GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT

The standard requires that the fishery management organization or arrangement at a minimum, shall:

- identify interested parties and oversee the formulation of the management objectives;
- translate, in cooperation with the interested parties, these objectives into management plans and define the criteria upon which decisions and regulatory measures will be based, evaluated and adjusted as necessary;
- ensure implementation of the management measures through monitoring control and surveillance; and
- coordinate the collection and analysis of information and data necessary to allow responsible fisheries management.

Rationale: This Supplementary Component ensures that the minimum essential functions that any FMO are recognised.

There was an objection from within the F-EWG to inclusion of the last bullet point from the list in the FAO Technical Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries. Fisheries management. No. 4 paragraph 1.6.2 (ii), therefore this bullet point was omitted.

GUIDANCE

To meet the parent Essential Component, the fishery management organization or arrangement is expected to be fit for purpose. This is tested through the other Essential Components that assess the performance and content of the management system. This Supplemental Component lists several specific activities from the FAO Technical Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries. No. 4. Fisheries management that the fishery management organization or arrangement is required to undertake. These are not inconsistent with the parent Essential Component, but are specified in greater detail in the Supplemental Component.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the Standard includes the following clauses which address the sub-components of this Supplementary Component:

Clause 1.2 requires the management system to have a documented framework or procedure for creating, amending and abolishing laws, regulations and management measures that is publically accessible. Additionally, Clause 4.1 requires documented management approaches and objectives for the stock under consideration.
Where the Standard refers to documented procedures, approaches and objectives, attention is drawn to the definition of FMP contained in the Guidance document with regard the process of development and objectives requiring consultation with interested parties.
Fishery management plan (FMP): An explicit arrangement (contract) between the interested parties and the fisheries management authority which makes explicit the objectives and means of management, the nature of the management authority, its powers and responsibilities, it's working and consultation procedures, as well as the rights and responsibilities of the interested parties in the fishery.
Fundamental Clause C4 requires the management system to specify management objectives to achieve optimal utilization of the resource and ensure that the stocks are not overfished and that overfishing is not occurring. This Clause breaks down into multiple Supporting Clauses with specific requirements for management objectives including Clauses 4.2 and 4.3 requiring objectives addressing overfishing and overfished conditions, and Clause 4.5 requiring objectives for maintaining stocks at or above sustainable levels and minimizing negative impacts on the environment and non-target species. Clause 5.1 further requires that a mechanism for controlling harvest be formally established, identifiable, and implemented according to best available science and Clauses 4.6, 4.7 and 5.2 set criteria for management measures.

Clause 2.1 requires "Effective mechanisms shall be established for fisheries monitoring, surveillance, control and enforcement measures including, where appropriate, observer programs, inspection schemes and vessel monitoring systems, to ensure compliance with the conservation and management measures for the fishery in question."

Finally, Section B of the Standard prescribes the requirements for scientific data collection, analysis and advice, most relevant of which is Clause 3.1
3.1 Data shall be collected from both fishery dependent and independent sources, as relevant, in a routine and consistent manner to allow for scientifically robust assessment of:
1) The state of the stock(s) relative to the management-elected reference points or suitable substitutes or other performance indicators.
2) The performance of the fishery with respect to the utilization of the resource.
3) The performance of management measures, harvest controls and associated rules that support the strategy and the defined objectives of the fishery.

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for these clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 1.2, p. 18; Clause 4.1, p. 49; Clause 4.2, p. 50; Clause 4.3, p. 51; Clause 4.5, p. 53-55; Clause 5.1, p. 61; Clause 4.6, p. 56-57; Clause 4.7, p. 58-60; Clause 5.2, p. 62-63; Clause 2.1, p. 31; Clause 3.1, p. 34-35. Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 1.2- p. 38-40, Clause 4.1- p. 94-96, Clause 4.2- p. 97, Clause 4.3- p. 98-99, Clause 4.5- p. 101, Clause 5.1- p. 107-109, Clause 4.6- p. 102-104, Clause 4.7- p. 104-106, Clause 5.2- p. 110-111, Clause 2.1- p. 60-61, and Clause 3.1- p. 65-69.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 1.2, p.8; Clause 4.1-4.3, p. 13; Clause 4.5, p. 13, Clause 5.1, p. 14; Clause 4.6 and 4.7, p. 14; Clause 5.2, p. 14; Clause 2.1, p. 10; Clause 3.1, p. 11.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 1.2, p. 18; Clause 4.1, p. 49; Clause 4.2, p. 50; Clause 4.3, p. 51; Clause 4.5, p. 53-55; Clause 5.1, p. 61; Clause 4.6, p. 56-57; Clause 4.7, p. 58-60; Clause 5.2, p. 62-63; Clause 2.1, p. 31; Clause 3.1, p. 34-35.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 1.2, p. 38-40; Clause 4.1, p. 94-96; Clause 4.2, p. 97; Clause 4.3- p. 98-99; Clause 4.5, p. 101; Clause 5.1, p. 107-109; Clause 4.6, p. 102-104; Clause 4.7, p. 104-106; Clause 5.2, p. 110-111; Clause 2.1, p. 60-61; Clause 3.1, p. 65-69.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wpcontent/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.1 *Evidence of alignment with implemented GSSI Supplementary Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

GOVERNANCE AND FISHERY MANAGEMENT

D.1 02 01 ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT

The standard requires that the fishery management organization or arrangement receives and responds in a timely manner to the best scientific evidence available regarding the status of the DSF fish stock under consideration and the likelihood and magnitude of adverse impacts of the unit of certification on the stock under consideration and prevents significant adverse impacts on VMEs.

Rationale: This Supplementary Component seeks puts a specific focus on preventing significant adverse impacts on VMEs.

GUIDANCE

To meet this Supplementary Component the standard must specifically require the best scientific evidence available regarding the status of the DSF fish stock under consideration. This is essentially part of the Essential Component (except the Supplementary Component is referring specifically to DSF stocks), however, there is an added element in the focus on significant adverse impacts on VMEs. The FAO International Guidelines for the Management of Deep Sea Fisheries in the High Seas provide detail on what is regarded as a VME and what is a significant adverse impact in this context.

CONCLUSION

This GSSI Supplementary Component is not applicable to the G.U.L.F. RFM Program because the certification is only available to fisheries operating within U.S. Gulf of Mexico waters and does not include deep-sea fisheries in the high seas. This is evidenced by the following statement in the Standard: 'The purpose of the G.U.L.F. Certification Scheme is to provide U.S. Gulf State fisheries with a "Certification of Responsible Fisheries Management" to an internationally recognized standard.'

This is also clearly stated in the Guidance to Assessment document: The Audubon Nature Institute (hereafter Audubon) Gulf United for Lasting Fisheries Responsible Fisheries Management (hereafter G.U.L.F. RFM) Certification Standard (hereafter the Standard) is a tool for use in the evaluation of United States fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico to an eco-certification program developed and owned by Audubon.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Forward, page 3.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): General Introduction, page 7.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

D.1 *Evidence of alignment with implemented GSSI Supplementary Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

GOVERNANCE AND FISHERY MANAGEMENT

D.1 04 01 TRANSBOUNDARY STOCKS

GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT

The standard requires that where transboundary fishery resources exist, States should work together to ensure that the tenure rights of small-scale fishing communities that are granted, are protected.

Rationale: This Supplementary Component ensures that the transboundary fisheries management organisation or arrangement recognises the tenure rights of small-scale fishing communities.

GUIDANCE

In addition to the requirement for the existence of a bilateral, subregional or regional fisheries organization or arrangement, this Supplementary Component is seeking the inclusion in the standard of a requirement for the tenure rights of small-scale fishing communities to be protected.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because, as noted in the response to D1.01.02, all U.S. Gulf of Mexico fisheries are eligible for G.U.L.F. RFM certification regardless of size or scale of the fishery. In addition to the evidence provided in D.1.01.02 supporting participation of small-scale fisheries, Clause 1.4 requires the management system to collaborate with all relevant fisheries management agencies (local, national, regional and international) relevant to the stock(s) under consideration, particularly in the case of shared, straddling or highly migratory stock(s).

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for the relevant clauses above can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 1.4- p. 21-22.

Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 1.4- p. 42-43.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 1.4, p. 8.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 1.4, p. 21-22.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 1.4, p. 42-43;
https://www.audubongulf.org/wpcontent/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.1 *Evidence of alignment with implemented GSSI Supplementary Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

GOVERNANCE AND FISHERY MANAGEMENT

D.1 05 03 PARTICIPATORY MANAGEMENT

GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT

The standard requires the governance and fisheries management system under which the unit of certification is managed to be both participatory and transparent, including consultation with “responsible” deep sea fishers, to the extent permitted by national laws and regulations.

Rationale: This Supplementary Component adds specific reference to consultation with “responsible” deep sea fishers. This may go beyond the basic requirement for the governance and fisheries management system to be participatory and transparent.

GUIDANCE

In addition to the governance and fisheries management system being participatory and transparent (as per the parent Essential Component), this Supplemental Component requires to the Standard to include specific consultation with “responsible” deep sea fishers. The source of this Supplemental Component is the FAO Deep Sea Guidelines, which relate to fisheries on the high seas. Hence there is an international context for management of fisheries in areas beyond national jurisdiction which may go beyond the parent requirement. Note, however, that the wording of a Supplemental Component cannot be used as a justification for weakening the application of an Essential Component by implying that something is excluded from the Essential Component that might otherwise have been assumed to be included.

CONCLUSION

This GSSI Supplementary Component is not applicable to the G.U.L.F. RFM Program because the certification is only available to fisheries operating within U.S. Gulf of Mexico waters and does not include deep-sea fisheries in the high seas. This is evidenced by the following statement in the Standard: 'The purpose of the G.U.L.F. Certification Scheme is to provide U.S. Gulf State fisheries with a "Certification of Responsible Fisheries Management" to an internationally recognized standard.'

This is also clearly stated in the Guidance to Assessment document: The Audubon Nature Institute (hereafter Audubon) Gulf United for Lasting Fisheries Responsible Fisheries Management (hereafter G.U.L.F. RFM) Certification Standard (hereafter the Standard) is a tool for use in the evaluation of United States fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico to an eco-certification program developed and owned by Audubon.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Forward, page 3.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): General Introduction, page 7.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

D.1 *Evidence of alignment with implemented GSSI Supplementary Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

GOVERNANCE AND FISHERY MANAGEMENT

D.1 06 01 SMALL SCALE AND/OR DATA LIMITED FISHERIES

GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT

The standard recognises that the knowledge, culture and practices of small scale fisheries communities may inform responsible governance and sustainable development processes including co-management.

Rationale: This Supplementary Component ensures that knowledge, culture and practices of small scale fisheries communities can be used to inform governance and management systems for small-scale fisheries.

GUIDANCE

This Supplementary Component expands on the concept in the parent Essential Component requiring specific recognition of the contribution of the knowledge, culture and practices of small scale fishing communities to responsible governance and sustainable development processes. Co-management is mentioned specifically.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because multiple clauses of the Standard specifically allow for traditional, fisher and community knowledge provided it can be objectively verified (Clauses 1.6, 3.5 and 7.1). The Standard also allows for proxies in several clauses as a means of accommodating small-scale or data-limited fisheries with more limited assessment methods provided that more precautionary approaches to management are used where risks are greater (Clauses 3.8, 3.9, 4.7, 6.3 and 6.4).

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for the relevant clauses above can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 1.6, p. 24; Clause 3.5, p. 39; Clause 3.8, p. 42; Clause 3.9, p. 43-48; Clause 4.7, p. 58-60; Clause 6.3, p. 66; Clause 6.4, p. 67; and Clause 7.1, p. 69-70.

Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 1.6- p. 47-48, Clause 3.5- p. 81-82, Clause 3.8- p. 86-87, Clause 3.9- p. 88-93, Clause 4.7- p. 104-106, Clause 6.3- p. 119, Clause 6.4- p. 120, and Clause 7.1- p. 122-135.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 1.6, p. 9; Clause 3.5, p. 11; Clause 3.8, p. 12; Clause 3.9, p. 12, Clause 4.7, p. 14; Clause 6.3 and 6.4, p. 15; Clause 7.1, p. 16.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 1.6, p. 24; Clause 3.5, p. 39; Clause 3.8, p. 42; Clause 3.9, p. 43-48; Clause 4.7, p. 58-60; Clause 6.3, p. 66; Clause 6.4, p. 67; and Clause 7.1, p. 69-70.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 1.6, p. 47-48; Clause 3.5, p. 81-82; Clause 3.8, p. 86-87; Clause 3.9, p. 88-93; Clause 4.7, p. 104-106; Clause 6.3, p. 119; Clause 6.4, p. 120; Clause 7.1, p. 122-135.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wpcontent/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.1 *Evidence of alignment with implemented GSSI Supplementary Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

GOVERNANCE AND FISHERY MANAGEMENT

D.1 07 01 COMPLIANCE OF THE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT

The standard requires the management system to include national policies, legal and institutional frameworks for the effective management of bycatch and the reduction of discards, including those measures agreed at an international level, for example by RFMOs in which they are members or participate as cooperating non-members.

Rationale: The Supplementary Component puts a greater emphasis on the treatment within the management system of bycatch and reduction of discards and compliance with international agreements.

GUIDANCE

This Supplementary Component puts a greater emphasis on the legal and institutional treatment within the management system of bycatch and reduction of discards. Specifically there is a need to see explicit policies and frameworks for their effective management, and incorporation within domestic legislation of bycatch and discard measures agreed internationally.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the Standard requires both that the management system be compatible with local, national and international fisheries management policies and specific requirements related to non-target species through the following set of clauses.
Fundamental Clause A1 of the Standard requires a legally mandated fishery management system respecting local, national and international law including regional fisheries management organizations. A1 is broken down into 12 Supporting Clauses for assessment purposes and Clauses 1.1, 1,2 and 1.4 directly address the requirements of this component.
Furthermore, the Standard requires in Clause 4.5ii that management objectives be defined for the stock including minimizing the negative impacts of fishing on the physical environment, non-target stocks, and associated dependent predators and Clause 7.4 requires that non-target stocks be monitored to determine impacts, that the fishery shall not threaten non-target stocks and that monitoring procedures allow for objective scientific verification of the risks and outcomes of non-target stocks.

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for the above clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 1.1, p. 17; Clause 1.2, p. 18; Clause 1.4(i)(ii), p. 21-22; Clause 4.5, p. 53-55; Clause 7.4, p. 73-75.

Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 1.1- pages 35-37, Clause 1.2- pages 38-40, Clause 1.4(i)(ii)- p. 42-43, Clause 4.5- page 101, and Clause 7.4- pages 138-141.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 1.1, 1.2 and 1.4, p. 8; Clause 4.5, p. 13; Clause 7.4, p. 16. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 1.1, p. 17; Clause 1.2, p. 18; Clause 1.4(i)(ii), p. 21-22; Clause 4.5, p. 53-55; Clause 7.4, p. 73-75. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust; Oct. 2016): Clause 1.1, p. 35-37; Clause 1.2, p. 38-40; Clause 1.4(i)(ii), p. 42-43; Clause 4.5, p. 101; Clause 7.4, p. 138-141. https://www.audubongulf.org/wpcontent/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.1 *Evidence of alignment with implemented GSSI Supplementary Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

GOVERNANCE AND FISHERY MANAGEMENT

D.1 09 01 COMPLIANCE OF THE FISHERY

GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT

The standard requires effective and suitable monitoring, surveillance, control and enforcement of the unit of certification for management of bycatch and reduction of discards.

Rationale: The Supplementary Component adds a specific emphasis on effective and suitable monitoring, surveillance, control and enforcement for management of bycatch and reduction of discards.

GUIDANCE

Effective and suitable monitoring, surveillance, control and enforcement of the unit of certification for management of bycatch and reduction of discards may be implicit within the parent Essential Component, but this Supplementary Component is seeking specific reference to the management of bycatch and reduction of discards in this context within the Standard.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the Standard requires the following relevant clauses which, in conjunction, address the requirements of this component.
Clause 2.1 explicitly requires effective mechanisms for monitoring, surveillance, control and enforcement of the fishery. "Effective mechanisms shall be established for fisheries monitoring, surveillance, control and enforcement measures including, where appropriate, observer programs, inspection schemes and vessel monitoring systems, to ensure compliance with the conservation and management measures for the fishery in question."

Clause 4.5ii requires that management objectives be defined for the stock including minimizing the negative impacts of fishing on the physical environment, non-target stocks, and associated dependent predators (Standard, p. 13), and Clause 7.4 requires that non-target stocks be monitored to determine impacts, that the fishery shall not threaten non-target stocks and that monitoring procedures allow for objective scientific verification of the risks and outcomes of non-target stocks.

The Guidance to Assessment document provides further clarification on the scoring requirements of these clauses. To receive full conformance, the fishery must meet all three Evaluation Parameters (EPs) - Process/Framework, Implementation and Effectiveness, and Evidence Basis for each clause. Details of scoring guidance for each of these clauses can be found in the Guidance document as follows: Clause 2.1, p. 31; Clause 4.5, p. 53-55; Clause 7.4, p. 73-75.

Example of these clauses can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 2.1- p. 60-61, Clause 4.5- p. 101, and Clause 7.4- p. 138-141.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 2.1, p. 10; Clause 4.5, p. 13; Clause 7.4, p. 16. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 2.1, p. 31; Clause 4.5, p. 53-55; Clause 7.4, p. 73-75.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust; Oct. 2016): Clause 2.1, p. 60-61; Clause 4.5, p. 101; Clause 7.4, p. 138-141.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wpcontent/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.1 *Evidence of alignment with implemented GSSI Supplementary Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

GOVERNANCE AND FISHERY MANAGEMENT

D.1 09 02 COMPLIANCE OF THE FISHERY

GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT

The standard requires that in the case of small scale fisheries, monitoring, control, surveillance and enforcement systems are supported (resourced) and involve small scale fisheries actors as appropriate and promote participatory arrangements within the context of co-management. Small-scale fishers should support the monitoring, control, and surveillance and enforcement systems and provide to the State fisheries authorities the information required for the management of the activity.

Rationale: This Supplementary Component aims for improved MCS outcomes through the use of a participatory approach involving small-scale fisheries.

GUIDANCE

In addition to the effective and suitable monitoring, surveillance, control and enforcement of the unit of certification in the parent Essential Component, this Supplementary Component requires the standard to include explicit promotion of participatory arrangements for these activities within the context of co-management.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the Standard includes the following relevant clauses:

Clause 1.2 requires a publically accessible management system that allows for participation by all industry and community members regardless of size or scale of the fishery.

Multiple clauses of the Standard specifically allow for traditional, fisher and community knowledge provided it can be objectively verified (Clauses 1.6, 3.5 and 7.1).

Clause 2.1 explicitly requires effective mechanisms for monitoring, surveillance, control and enforcement of the fishery. "Effective mechanisms shall be established for fisheries monitoring, surveillance, control and enforcement measures including, where appropriate, observer programs, inspection schemes and vessel monitoring systems, to ensure compliance with the conservation and management measures for the fishery in question."

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for the relevant clauses above can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 1.2, p. 18; Clause 1.6, p. 23; Clause 3.5, p. 39; Clause 7.1, p. 69-70; and Clause 2.1, p. 31.

Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 1.6- p. 47-48, Clause 3.5- p. 81-82, Clause 3.8- p. 86-87, Clause 3.9- p. 88-93, Clause 4.7- p. 104-106, Clause 6.3- p. 119, Clause 6.4- p. 120, Clause 7.1- p. 122-135, and Clause 2.1- p. 60-61.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 1.2, p. 8; Clause 1.6, p. 9; Clause 3.5, p. 11; Clause 7.1, p. 16; Clause 2.1, p. 10.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 1.2, p. 18; Clause 1.6, p. 23; Clause 3.5, p. 39; Clause 7.1, p. 69-70; and Clause 2.1, p. 31.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust; Oct. 2016): Clause 1.2, p. 38-40; Clause 1.6, p. 47-48; Clause 3.5, p. 81-82; Clause 7.1, p. 122-135; and Clause 2.1, p. 60-61.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wpcontent/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.2 *Evidence of alignment with implemented GSSI Supplementary Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

▶ STOCK UNDER CONSIDERATION

D.2 03 01 REFERENCE POINTS

GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT

In requiring management objectives consistent with avoiding adverse impacts on the stock(s) under consideration that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible, the standard recognises that many marine resources exploited in DSFs in the high seas have low productivity and are only able to sustain very low exploitation rates. Also when these resources are depleted, recovery is expected to be long and is not assured.

Rationale: This Supplementary Component expands on its parent Essential Component by seeking explicit recognition of the challenges of exploiting DSF resources on the high seas in a sustainable manner, and the need for suitably constructed management objectives.

GUIDANCE

In requiring management objectives consistent with avoiding adverse impacts on the stock(s) under consideration that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible, to meet this Supplementary Component the standard is expected to include explicit recognition of the characteristics of marine resources exploited in DSFs in the high seas that create specific challenges for their sustainable utilization and exploitation. These include: (i) maturation at relatively old ages; (ii) slow growth; (iii) long life expectancies; (iv) low natural mortality rates; (v) intermittent recruitment of successful year classes; and (vi) spawning that may not occur every year.

CONCLUSION

This GSSI Supplementary Component is not applicable to the G.U.L.F. RFM Program because the certification is only available to fisheries operating within U.S. Gulf of Mexico waters and does not include deep-sea fisheries in the high seas. This is evidenced by the following statement in the Standard: 'The purpose of the G.U.L.F. Certification Scheme is to provide U.S. Gulf State fisheries with a "Certification of Responsible Fisheries Management" to an internationally recognized standard.'

This is also clearly stated in the Guidance to Assessment document: The Audubon Nature Institute (hereafter Audubon) Gulf United for Lasting Fisheries Responsible Fisheries Management (hereafter G.U.L.F. RFM) Certification Standard (hereafter the Standard) is a tool for use in the evaluation of United States fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico to an eco-certification program developed and owned by Audubon.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Forward, page 3.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): General Introduction, page 7.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

D.2 *Evidence of alignment with implemented GSSI Supplementary Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

D.2 03 02 REFERENCE POINTS

GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT

The standard requires that fishery management plans for DSFs in the high seas include biological reference points for the stock under consideration set at levels that ensure, at a minimum, that fish stocks are harvested at levels that are sustainable in the long term. Appropriate biological reference points for stock assessment and management need to be set in a precautionary manner and determined on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the different target stocks, fishery characteristics, and the state of knowledge about the species and fishery.

Rationale: This Supplementary Component expands on its parent Essential Component by requiring standards to recognise the specific characteristics of marine resources exploited in DSF in the high seas in setting suitable biological reference points.

GUIDANCE

To meet this Supplementary Component, standards are expected to recognise the specific characteristics of marine resources exploited in DSF in the high seas in setting suitable biological reference points.

CONCLUSION

This GSSI Supplementary Component is not applicable to the G.U.L.F. RFM Program because the certification is only available to fisheries operating within U.S. Gulf of Mexico waters and does not include deep-sea fisheries in the high seas. This is evidenced by the following statement in the Standard: 'The purpose of the G.U.L.F. Certification Scheme is to provide U.S. Gulf State fisheries with a "Certification of Responsible Fisheries Management" to an internationally recognized standard.'

This is also clearly stated in the Guidance to Assessment document: The Audubon Nature Institute (hereafter Audubon) Gulf United for Lasting Fisheries Responsible Fisheries Management (hereafter G.U.L.F. RFM) Certification Standard (hereafter the Standard) is a tool for use in the evaluation of United States fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico to an eco-certification program developed and owned by Audubon.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Forward, page 3.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): General Introduction, page 7.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

D.2 *Evidence of alignment with implemented GSSI Supplementary Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

D.2 07 01 HABITAT

GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT

The standard requires the existence of management objectives for preventing significant adverse impacts of the unit of certification on VMEs in the high seas.

Rationale: The parent Essential Component does not explicitly exclude impacts on VMEs, but nor are they explicitly included. This Supplementary Component also seeks prevention of significant adverse impacts on VMEs rather than to avoid, minimize or mitigate impacts on Habitat.

GUIDANCE

To meet this Supplementary Component the standard must require management objectives specifically for preventing significant adverse impacts of the unit of certification on VMEs in addition to management measures to avoid, minimize or mitigate impacts of the unit of certification on essential habitats for the “stock under consideration” and on habitats that are highly vulnerable to damage by the fishing gear of the unit of certification. The FAO International Guidelines for the Management of Deep Sea Fisheries in the High Seas provide detail on what is regarded as a VME and what is a significant adverse impact in this context.

CONCLUSION

This GSSI Supplementary Component is not applicable to the G.U.L.F. RFM Program because the certification is only available to fisheries operating within U.S. Gulf of Mexico waters and does not include deep-sea fisheries in the high seas. This is evidenced by the following statement in the Standard: 'The purpose of the G.U.L.F. Certification Scheme is to provide U.S. Gulf State fisheries with a "Certification of Responsible Fisheries Management" to an internationally recognized standard.'

This is also clearly stated in the Guidance to Assessment document: The Audubon Nature Institute (hereafter Audubon) Gulf United for Lasting Fisheries Responsible Fisheries Management (hereafter G.U.L.F. RFM) Certification Standard (hereafter the Standard) is a tool for use in the evaluation of United States fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico to an eco-certification program developed and owned by Audubon.

VMEs are defined by the FAO Guidelines on the Management of Deep Sea Fisheries on the High Seas (2008), dealing with Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ; i.e. outside of the 200nm EEZ). This component, therefore, is interpreted to relate only to the High Seas /ABNJ and does is not applicable to the G.U.L.F. RFM Scheme

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Forward, page 3.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): General Introduction, page 7.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

D.2 *Evidence of alignment with implemented GSSI Supplementary Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

D.2 09 01 ECOSYSTEM STRUCTURE, PROCESSES AND FUNCTION

GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT

The standard requires that in setting management objectives for the fishery of which the unit of certification is part all the economic, social and environmental aspects of the fishery are considered to ensure that important issues or sub-issues are not overlooked, as required for comprehensive EAF.

Rationale: This Supplementary Component covers the need for the standard to require objectives addressing a range of specific topics (non-target species, habitat, food web, etc.). These are required at the Essential Component level, but this Supplementary Component reinforces and goes beyond those specific, individual Components by requiring that they are not dealt with in isolation but as part of a comprehensive economic, social and environmental analysis.

GUIDANCE

To meet this Supplementary Component the standard must require management objectives addressing a range of specific ecosystem topics (non-target species, habitat, food web, etc.) that have been developed through a comprehensive and integrated economic, social and environmental analysis.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the overarching remit of the G.U.L.F. RFM Scheme includes due regard for social responsibility and economic viability of the fishery and the Standard requires the consideration of economic, social and environmental aspects of the fishery in the following relevant clauses:
The remit of the G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Scheme: Maintaining fishery resources for long-term use, including the use of enhancement practices, up to the point of landing, with the main objective being the biological sustainability of the stock(s) under consideration, with consideration for conservation, biodiversity and ecosystem integrity, and due regard to social responsibility and the economic viability of the fishery.

Fundamental Clauses-
C5. "A suitable mechanism shall exist to allow the harvest to be increased or decreased in accordance with the objectives for achieving maximum sustainable yield (or a suitable proxy) or optimal yield, depending on the nature and state of the resource(s) and taking into consideration environmental, social and economic factors."
E7. "Adverse impacts of the fishery on the ecosystem shall be appropriately assessed and effectively addressed. Assessment shall be based on best available science, local knowledge where it can be objectively verified and using a suitable risk based management approach appropriate to the data available for determining most probable adverse impacts and taking into account the relevant environmental, economic, technological, social, and cultural aspects."

Supporting Clauses-
1.11 The economic, social and institutional dimensions under which fisheries operate shall be monitored.
3.9 The nominated scientific institutions shall use best available scientific evidence, advice,
and/or objectively verified information as a basis to inform stock assessment and provide
advice on the objectives of fisheries management including:
i. Management targets consistent with achieving maximum sustainable yield (MSY) (or a suitable proxy) on average, or a lesser fishing mortality if that is optimal in the circumstances of the fishery (e.g. multispecies fisheries) or to avoid severe adverse impacts on dependent predators, taking into consideration relevant economic, social, or ecological factors.
4.6 The determination of suitable conservation and management measures shall take account of:
1) Total fishing mortality from all sources, including discards, unobserved mortality, incidental mortality, unreported catches and catches in other fisheries either within or outside of the jurisdiction of the management system of the stock (s) under consideration.
2) The size and health (structure and resilience to fishing pressure) of the stock(s) under consideration.
3) Relevant environmental, biological, technological, economic, cultural, social, and commercial aspects.

The Standard further includes requirements for a range of ecosystem topics (non-target species, habitat, food web, etc.) through the clauses of Section E including Clauses 7.1-7.7.
Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for these clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 1.11- p. 29, Clause 3.9(i)- p. 43, Clause 4.6- p. 56-57 and Clauses 7.1-7.7- p. 69-83. (text below)

7.1 The most probable adverse impacts of the fishery on the ecosystem shall be considered, evaluated and effectively addressed. Evaluation shall be based on best available scientific evidence, advice and/or objectively verified information; including traditional, fisher and community knowledge.
7.2 In the absence of specific information on the ecosystem impacts of fishing, generic evidence based on similar fishery situations can be used for fisheries with low risk of severe adverse impact using a suitable risk management approach.
7.3 Where risk is considered greater, more specific evidence of the impacts of the fishery on the ecosystem and its components is required.
7.4 With regard to non-target catches; including discards of fish stocks other than the stock(s) under consideration:
i. Non target stocks shall be monitored to determine the impact exerted by the fishery.
ii. The fishery under consideration shall not threaten these non-target stocks with recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible and if such impacts arise, effective remedial action shall be taken.
iii. The monitoring procedures and activities shall allow for objective and scientific verification of the risks and outcomes.
7.5 With regard to the habitat interaction of the fishery either through direct contact or other indirect effects:
i. Habitats that are vulnerable to damage by the fishing gear(s) under consideration shall be monitored to determine the risk that the fishery exerts upon their long term viability.
ii. Impacts on habitats vulnerable to damage by the fishing gear or are protected by legislation must be avoided or minimized through mitigation measures.
iii. The monitoring procedures and activities shall allow for objective and scientific verification of the risks and outcomes, including prior to introduction of new fishing gear, and in assessing fishery impacts, the full spatial range of the relevant habitat shall be considered, not just the part of the spatial range that is potentially affected by fishing.
7.6 With regard to species that have been recognized as endangered, threatened or protected:
i. Consistent with A1, fishery management systems shall give formal recognition of populations of species identified as endangered, threatened and/or protected (ETP) in the geographic location of the fishery by international, national or state authorities within the context of the likely risk posed by the fishery under consideration.
ii. The fishery management system shall act to avoid adverse impact on the populations of ETP species.
iii. Evaluation and monitoring procedures and activities shall be implemented to determine both the current status of the impact on ETP's caused by the fishery and to monitor the effectiveness of avoidance and mitigation measures that are implemented to minimize further impact on the mortality of those populations of ETP species.
iv. Monitoring procedures and activities shall be robust enough to allow for objective and scientific verification of the risks and outcomes.
7.7 The role of the stock(s) under consideration in the food web shall be considered, and if it is a key prey species in the ecosystem, management measures shall be in place to avoid severe adverse impacts on dependent predators.
Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 1.11- p. 56-57, Clause 3.9(i)- p. 88-93, Clause 4.6- p. 102-104, and Clauses 7.1-7.7- p. 138-153.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 1.11, p. 9; Clause 3.9(i), p. 12; Clause 4.6, p. 14; Clauses 7.1-7.7, p. 16-18.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 1.11, p. 29; Clause 3.9(i), p. 43; Clause 4.6, p. 56-57; Clauses 7.1-7.7, p. 69-83.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 1.11, p. 56-57; Clause 3.9(i), p. 88-93; Clause 4.6, p. 102-104; Clauses 7.1-7.7, p. 138-153.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.3 *Evidence of alignment with implemented GSSI Supplementary Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

MANAGEMENT APPROACHES, STRATEGIES AND PLANS

▶ STOCK UNDER CONSIDERATION

D.3 01 01 DOCUMENTED MANAGEMENT APPROACH

GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT

The standard requires that the documented management approaches or other management framework covering the unit of certification and the stock under consideration includes the provision of advice that contributes to the attainment of objectives for the management of bycatch and reduction of discards in the fishery of which the Unit of Certification is a part.

Rationale: There is a cumulative element to this in that it is asking for the management organization or arrangement to advise on the management of bycatch and reduction of discards in the fishery of which the Unit of Certification is a part, not just the Unit of Certification itself. This addresses the concern that several Units of Certification might have an adverse impact in the aggregate, but might not individually.

GUIDANCE

This Supplementary Component is seeking to ensure that the documented management approach or other management framework for the fishery of which the Unit of Certification is a part specifically includes management of bycatch and reduction of discards.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the Standard includes the following clauses:

4.1 For the stock(s) under consideration, documented management approaches and objectives shall be available, with the intent that management will be successful at delivering objectives for the long-term conservation of the stock(s).

3.2 Data review and analysis shall consider all fishery removals of the target stock(s) including retained catch and discards in target and non-target fisheries.

3.3 Data review and analysis shall consider catches and discards of other commercial and non-commercial species associated with fishing activity to the extent that impacts on these species can be understood.

4.5 Accordingly, for the stock under consideration, there shall be defined objectives or goals for the fishery and its long-term sustainable use. Stock management objectives may vary and include additional economic and social aspects but must include the following:
ii. Minimize the negative impacts of fishing on the physical environment and on non-target species (bycatch) and associated dependent species.

7.4 With regard to non-target catches; including discards of fish stocks other than the stock(s) under consideration:
i. Non-target stocks shall be monitored to determine the impact exerted by the fishery.
ii. The fishery under consideration shall not threaten these non-target stocks with recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible and if such impacts arise, effective remedial action shall be taken.
iii. The monitoring procedures and activities shall allow for objective and scientific verification of the risks and outcomes.

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for these clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 4.1, p. 49; Clause 3.2, p. 36; Clause 3.3, p. 37; Clause 4.5(ii), p. 55; Clause 7.4, p. 72-75. Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 4.1- p. 94-96, Clause 3.2- p. 70-75, Clause 3.3- p. 76-78, Clause 4.5(ii)- p. 101, and Clause 7.4(i-iii)- p. 138-141.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 4.1, p. 13; Clause 3.2, p. 11; Clause 3.3, p. 11; Clause 4.5(ii), p. 13; Clause 7.4, p. 16.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 4.1, p. 49; Clause 3.2, p. 36; Clause 3.3, p. 37; Clause 4.5(ii), p. 55; Clause 7.4, p. 72-75.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 4.1, p. 94-96; Clause 3.2, p. 70-75; Clause 3.3, p. 76-78; Clause 4.5(ii), p. 101; Clause 7.4, p. 138-141.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.3 *Evidence of alignment with implemented GSSI Supplementary Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

MANAGEMENT APPROACHES, STRATEGIES AND PLANS

D.3 04 01 DECISION RULES

GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT

The standard requires that management measures specify the actions to be taken in the event that the status of the DSF stock in the high seas under consideration drops below levels consistent with achieving management objectives that allow for the restoration of the stock to such levels within a reasonable time frame. The standard requires specific management and operational precautionary actions before and after the establishment regional management arrangements and during the development phase of a fishery as well as once it established.

Rationale: This Supplementary Component is seeking decision rules specifically applicable to DSF stocks on the high seas.

GUIDANCE

This Supplementary Component is seeking decision rules specifically applicable to DSF stocks on the high seas.

CONCLUSION

This GSSI Supplementary Component is not applicable to the G.U.L.F. RFM Program because the certification is only available to fisheries operating within U.S. Gulf of Mexico waters and does not include deep-sea fisheries in the high seas. This is evidenced by the following statement in the Standard: 'The purpose of the G.U.L.F. Certification Scheme is to provide U.S. Gulf State fisheries with a "Certification of Responsible Fisheries Management" to an internationally recognized standard.'

This is also clearly stated in the Guidance to Assessment document: The Audubon Nature Institute (hereafter Audubon) Gulf United for Lasting Fisheries Responsible Fisheries Management (hereafter G.U.L.F. RFM) Certification Standard (hereafter the Standard) is a tool for use in the evaluation of United States fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico to an eco-certification program developed and owned by Audubon.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Forward, page 3.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): General Introduction, page 7.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

D.3 *Evidence of alignment with implemented GSSI Supplementary Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

MANAGEMENT APPROACHES, STRATEGIES AND PLANS

▶ ECOSYSTEM EFFECTS OF FISHING

D.3 06 01 NON-TARGET CATCHES

GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT

Where species subject to bycatch and/or discarding in the Unit of Certification are taken in both areas under national jurisdiction and adjacent areas beyond national jurisdiction, the standard requires that states and RFMOs/As collaborate in assessing bycatch and discard issues throughout the entire range of the bycatch species of concern where applicable.

Rationale: This is a step up from the Essential Component in that it requires that states and RFMOs/As collaborate in assessing bycatch and discard issues throughout the entire range of the bycatch species.

GUIDANCE

This is addressing the specific case where bycatch and/or discarding in the Unit of Certification is occurring in both areas under national jurisdiction and adjacent areas beyond national jurisdiction. In this case, the standard must require that the relevant management authorities (i.e. the coastal state or states and RFMO/As) collaborate in assessing bycatch and discard issues throughout the entire distribution range of the species of concern where applicable.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the Standard requires that the management system collaborate and be compatible with requirements of relevant regional fisheries management organizations in Clause 1.4 and also requires management objectives and measures minimizing impacts on non-target stocks and discards in clauses 4.5(ii) and 7.4(i-iii).

1.4 (i) Institutions that make up the management system shall consult with other U.S. State, Federal, relevant regional/international fisheries management organizations, relevant to the stock(s) under consideration and;
(ii) Where the applicant fishery is based on a shared, straddling, high seas or highly migratory stock(s), its management shall be compatible with any requirements set out by applicable regional fisheries management organization(s)."

4.5 Accordingly, for the stock under consideration, there shall be defined objectives or goals for the fishery and its long-term sustainable use. Stock management objectives may vary and include additional economic and social aspects but must include the following:
ii. Minimize the negative impacts of fishing on the physical environment and on nontarget species (bycatch) and associated dependent species.

7.4 With regard to non-target catches; including discards of fish stocks other than the stock(s) under consideration:
i. Non target stocks shall be monitored to determine the impact exerted by the fishery.
ii. The fishery under consideration shall not threaten these non-target stocks with recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible and if such impacts arise, effective remedial action shall be taken.
iii. The monitoring procedures and activities shall allow for objective and scientific verification of the risks and outcomes.

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for these clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 1.4, p. 21-22; Clause 4.5(ii), p. 55; Clause 7.4, p. 73-75. Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 1.4- p. 42-43, Clause 4.5(ii)- p. 101, Clause 7.4(i-iii)- p. 138-141.

REFERENCES

1) G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.1 (March 2016): Clause 1.4- p. 8; Clause 4.5(ii); p. 13; Clause 7.4, p. 16.
http://audubongulf.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Standard-V1.1-CLEAN-11.30.16.pdf

2) G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.1 (September 2016): Clause 1.4, p. 21-22; Clause 4.5(ii), p. 55; Clause 7.4, p. 73-75.
http://audubongulf.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-CLEAN-11.30.16.pdf

3) G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 1.4, p. 42-43; Clause 4.5(ii), p. 101; Clause 7.4, p. 138-141.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.3 *Evidence of alignment with implemented GSSI Supplementary Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

MANAGEMENT APPROACHES, STRATEGIES AND PLANS

D.3 06 02 NON-TARGET CATCHES

GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT

The Standard requires a review of the effectiveness of existing initiatives that address bycatch and discard problems in ensuring that non-target stocks (i.e. stocks/species in the catch that are other than the stock under consideration) are not threatened with recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible.

Rationale: This is a step up from the Essential Component in that a review of the effectiveness of existing initiatives to address problems identified in the risk assessment of bycatch and discards is required. It addresses primarily sub-paragraph (iii) of paragraph 4.1.2. Other parts of paragraph 4.1.2 are taken up in Supplementary Components D.3.06.03, D.3.06.04 and D.3.07.04.

GUIDANCE

The bycatch and discard problems referred to in this Supplementary Component would be identified through a risk assessment to identify the specific nature and extent of bycatch and discard problems in the fishery as a basis for prioritization and planning. This could be undertaken, for example, as part of the analysis of the effects of the unit of certification, including any enhancement activities, on ecosystem structure, processes and function, as per Essential Component D.5.07. The existing initiatives that address the bycatch and discard problems would include the management measures designed to achieve management objectives (see D.2.07) referred to in the parent Essential Component D.3.06.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because Clause 7.4 of the Standard requires that non-target stocks be monitored to determine the impact of the fishery, that fishery impacts do not threatened non-target stocks with recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible, and that monitoring activities be robust enough to allow for objective scientific verification of risks and outcomes. Additionally, the standard requires that the management system, management measures and outputs go through periodic review and improvement based on best available science in clauses 1.5 and 1.6.

7.4 With regard to non-target catches; including discards of fish stocks other than the stock(s) under consideration:
i. Non target stocks shall be monitored to determine the impact exerted by the fishery.
ii. The fishery under consideration shall not threaten these non-target stocks with recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible and if such impacts arise, effective remedial action shall be taken.
iii. The monitoring procedures and activities shall allow for objective and scientific verification of the risks and outcomes.

1.5 The management system, its institutional arrangements and their legal basis, regulations and other instruments, and management measures and outputs shall be subject to periodic review through identifiable review procedures and mechanisms.

1.6 The review process shall be clearly linked to improvement of the management system under clause 1.2 for the applicant fishery, and use the best available scientific advice and/or objectively verified information from recognized institutions and other sources, including fisheries and external bodies.

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for these clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 7.4, p. 73-75; Clause 1.5- p. 23; and Clause 1.6, p. 24. Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 7.4(i-iii)- p. 138-141,Clause 1.5- p. 44-46, and Clause 1.6- p. 47-48.

REFERENCES

1) G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.1 (March 2016): Clause 7.4, p. 16; Clause 1.5, p. 8; and Clause 1.6, p. 9. http://audubongulf.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Standard-V1.1-CLEAN-11.30.16.pdf

2) G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.1 (September 2016): Clause 7.4, p. 73-75; Clause 1.5- p. 23; and Clause 1.6, p. 24.
http://audubongulf.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-CLEAN-11.30.16.pdf

3) G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 7.4, p. 138-141, Clause 1.5, p. 44-46; and Clause 1.6, p. 47-48.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.3 *Evidence of alignment with implemented GSSI Supplementary Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

MANAGEMENT APPROACHES, STRATEGIES AND PLANS

D.3 06 03 NON-TARGET CATCHES

GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT

The Standard requires a review of the potential effectiveness of alternative methods that address the bycatch and discard problems identified in the risk assessment (see D.5.07.01).

Rationale: This is a step up from the Essential Component in that a review of the potential effectiveness of alternative methods to address problems identified in the risk assessment of bycatch and discards is required.

GUIDANCE

This Supplementary Component considers the potential effectiveness of alternative methods that address the bycatch and discard problems. It is a companion Supplementary Component to D.3.06.02, which addresses the effectiveness of existing initiatives. The risk assessment is required under D.5.07.01.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because Clauses 1.5 and 1.6 of the Standard require that the management system, measures and outputs be subject to periodic review, based on best available scientific evidence or advice; that this review is linked to improvements in management, and that response to reviews is timely. The Standard also requires management objectives and measures for non-target stocks in Clause 7.4(i-iii). These objectives and measures, as part of the management system, fall within the requirements of Clauses 1.5 and 1.6 for periodic review and response.

1.5 The management system, its institutional arrangements and their legal basis, regulations and other instruments, and management measures and outputs shall be subject to periodic review through identifiable review procedures and mechanisms.

1.6 The review process shall be clearly linked to improvement of the management system under clause 1.2 for the applicant fishery, and based on the use of best available scientific evidence, advice and/or objectively verified information by the management system from recognized institutions and other sources, including fisheries and external bodies and shall respond in a timely manner.

7.4 With regard to non-target catches; including discards of fish stocks other than the stock(s) under consideration:
i. Non target stocks shall be monitored to determine the impact exerted by the fishery.
ii. The fishery under consideration shall not threaten these non-target stocks with recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible and if such impacts arise, effective remedial action shall be taken.
iii. The monitoring procedures and activities shall allow for objective and scientific verification of the risks and outcomes.

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for these clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 1.5, p. 23; Clause 1.6, p. 24; Clause 7.4, p. 73-75. Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 1.5- p. 44-46, Clause 1.6- p. 47-48, and Clause 7.4(i-iii)- p. 138-141.

REFERENCES

1) G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.1 (March 2016): Clause 1.5, p. 8; Clause 1.6, p. 9; Clause 7.4, p. 16.
http://audubongulf.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Standard-V1.1-CLEAN-11.30.16.pdf

2) G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.1 (September 2016): Clause 1.5, p. 23; Clause 1.6, p. 24; Clause 7.4, p. 73-75.
http://audubongulf.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-CLEAN-11.30.16.pdf

3) G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 1.5, p. 44-46; Clause 1.6, p. 47-48; Clause 7.4, p. 138-141.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.3 *Evidence of alignment with implemented GSSI Supplementary Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

MANAGEMENT APPROACHES, STRATEGIES AND PLANS

D.3 06 04 NON-TARGET CATCHES

GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT

The Standard requires an assessment of the impacts of bycatch management and discard reduction measures on fishing operations and, in the case of States, on livelihoods to ascertain the potential effects of their implementation and the support necessary to facilitate their uptake.

Rationale: This is a step up from the Essential Component in that it requires an assessment of the impacts of bycatch management and discard reduction measures on livelihoods and hence consideration of the uptake of these measures.

GUIDANCE

This is related to Supplementary Component D.3.06.02. It addresses the issue of uptake of initiatives (measures) that address bycatch and discard problems, and is hence related to their effectiveness.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the Standard includes the following relevant clauses:

1.11 The economic, social and institutional dimensions under which fisheries operate shall be monitored.

4.6 The determination of suitable conservation and management measures shall take account of:
1) Total fishing mortality from all sources, including discards, unobserved mortality, incidental mortality, unreported catches and catches in other fisheries either within or outside of the jurisdiction of the management system of the stock(s) under consideration.
2) The size and health (structure and resilience to fishing pressure) of the stock(s) under consideration.
3) Relevant environmental, biological, technological, economic, cultural, social, and commercial aspects.

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for these clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 1.11- p. 29, and Clause 4.6- p. 56-57.

Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 1.11- p. 56-57, and Clause 4.6- p. 102-104.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 1.11, p. 9; Clause 4.6, p. 14.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 1.11, p. 29; Clause 4.6, p. 56-57.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 1.11, p. 56-57; Clause 4.6, p. 102-104.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.3 *Evidence of alignment with implemented GSSI Supplementary Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

MANAGEMENT APPROACHES, STRATEGIES AND PLANS

D.3 08 01 ENDANGERED SPECIES

GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT

The standard requires the existence of management measures, where appropriate, to reduce interactions with particularly vulnerable bycatch (e.g. juveniles and rare, endangered, threatened or protected species) through identifying and establishing areas where the use of all or certain gears is limited or prohibited, based on the best scientific evidence available and consistent with international law.

Rationale: The Essential Component aims to protect endangered species from adverse impacts. This Supplementary Component builds on this, requiring management measures, where necessary, to reduce interactions with particularly vulnerable bycatch.

GUIDANCE

To meet this Supplementary Component, the standard must require management measures, where necessary, to reduce interactions with particularly vulnerable bycatch. The Supplementary Component provides examples of categories of bycatch that are particularly vulnerable. The measures envisaged are areas where use of certain gears is limited or prohibited. Endangered and threatened are described in the Glossary. “Protected” refers generally to any plant or animal that a government declares by law to warrant protection; most protected species are considered either threatened or endangered. A species that is recognised by national legislation, affording it legal protection due to its population decline in the wild. The decline could be as a result of human or other causes.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the Standard requires, in Clause 7.6, that the fishery management system must act to avoid impact to ETP species and monitoring procedures shall be implemented to determine effectiveness of mitigation measures.
7.6 With regard to species that have been recognized as endangered, threatened or protected:
i. Consistent with A1, fishery management systems shall give formal recognition of populations of species identified as endangered, threatened and/or protected (ETP) in the geographic location of the fishery by international, national or state authorities within the context of the likely risk posed by the fishery under consideration.
ii. The fishery management system shall act to avoid adverse impact on the populations of ETP species.
iii. Evaluation and monitoring procedures and activities shall be implemented to determine both the current status of the impact on ETP's caused by the fishery and to monitor the effectiveness of avoidance and mitigation measures that are implemented to minimize further impact on the mortality of those populations of ETP species.
iv. Monitoring procedures and activities shall be robust enough to allow for objective and scientific verification of the risks and outcomes.

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for these clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 7.6- p. 79-82.

Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 7.6- p. 146-147.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 7.6, page 17.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 7.6, pages 79-82.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 7.6, pages 146-147.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.3 *Evidence of alignment with implemented GSSI Supplementary Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

MANAGEMENT APPROACHES, STRATEGIES AND PLANS

D.3 09 01 HABITAT

GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT

The standard requires the existence of management measures designed to achieving management objectives (D.2.07.01) that seek to prevent significant adverse impacts of the unit of certification on VMEs.

Rationale: The parent Essential Component does not exclude impacts on VMEs, but nor are they explicitly included. This Supplementary Component also seeks prevention of significant adverse impacts on VMEs rather than to avoid, minimize or mitigate impacts on habitat.

GUIDANCE

This Supplementary Component is related to D.2.09.01 which establishes the requirement for management objectives specifically for preventing significant adverse impacts of the unit of certification on VMEs. This Supplementary Component establishes the requirement for management measures to meet the management objectives for preventing significant adverse impacts of the unit of certification on VMEs. The FAO International Guidelines for the Management of Deep Sea Fisheries in the High Seas provide detail on what is regarded as a VME and what is a significant adverse impact in this context. This document also provides an extensive list of management measures that could be applied.

CONCLUSION

This GSSI Supplementary Component is not applicable to the G.U.L.F. RFM Program because the certification is only available to fisheries operating within U.S. Gulf of Mexico waters and does not include deep-sea fisheries in the high seas. This is evidenced by the following statement in the Standard: 'The purpose of the G.U.L.F. Certification Scheme is to provide U.S. Gulf State fisheries with a "Certification of Responsible Fisheries Management" to an internationally recognized standard.'

This is also clearly stated in the Guidance to Assessment document: The Audubon Nature Institute (hereafter Audubon) Gulf United for Lasting Fisheries Responsible Fisheries Management (hereafter G.U.L.F. RFM) Certification Standard (hereafter the Standard) is a tool for use in the evaluation of United States fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico to an eco-certification program developed and owned by Audubon.

VMEs are defined by the FAO Guidelines on the Management of Deep Sea Fisheries on the High Seas (2008), dealing with Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ; i.e. outside of the 200nm EEZ). This component, therefore, is interpreted to relate only to the High Seas /ABNJ and does is not applicable to the G.U.L.F. RFM Scheme

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Forward, page 3.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): General Introduction, page 7.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

D.3 *Evidence of alignment with implemented GSSI Supplementary Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

MANAGEMENT APPROACHES, STRATEGIES AND PLANS

▶ FISHERY MANAGEMENT DOCUMENTATION

D.3 13 01 CONTINUOUS REVIEW

GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT

The standard requires a regular assessment through periodic review of plans and management measures addressing bycatch, reduction of discards and reduction of post-released mortality to ensure that they continue to meet goals and objectives and for adjustment, as appropriate.

Rationale: This is a step up from the Essential Component in that it specifically requires periodic review of the efficacy of management measures that minimize unwanted catch and discards and adjustment as necessary.

GUIDANCE

To meet this Supplemental Component, the standard must require review of all plans relating to bycatch management and discard reduction measures.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the Standard requires the management system to have objectives and measures for non-target species (Clause 7.4) and also requires, through Clauses 1.5 and 1.6, that the management system, regulations, measures and outputs go through regular review based on best available science.

7.4 With regard to non-target catches; including discards of fish stocks other than the stock(s) under consideration:
i. Non target stocks shall be monitored to determine the impact exerted by the fishery.
ii. The fishery under consideration shall not threaten these non-target stocks with recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible and if such impacts arise, effective remedial action shall be taken.
iii. The monitoring procedures and activities shall allow for objective and scientific verification of the risks and outcomes

1.5 The management system, its institutional arrangements and their legal basis, regulations and other instruments, and management measures and outputs shall be subject to periodic review through identifiable review procedures and mechanisms.

1.6 The review process shall be clearly linked to improvement of the management system under clause 1.2 for the applicant fishery, and based on the use of best available scientific evidence, advice and/or objectively verified information by the management system from recognized institutions and other sources, including fisheries and external bodies and shall respond in a timely manner.

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for these clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 7.4, p. 73-75; Clause 1.5, p. 23; Clause 1.6- p. 24.

Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 7.4- p. 138-141, Clause 1.5- p. 44-46 and Clause 1.6- p. 47-48.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 7.4- p. 16, Clause 1.5- p. 8 and Clause 1.6- p. 9. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 7.4, p. 73-75; Clause 1.5, p. 23; Clause 1.6- p. 24. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 7.4, p. 138-141; Clause 1.5, p. 44-46; Clause 1.6, p. 47-48. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.3 *Evidence of alignment with implemented GSSI Supplementary Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

MANAGEMENT APPROACHES, STRATEGIES AND PLANS

D.3 13 02 CONTINUOUS REVIEW

GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT

The standard requires a review of the systems for the regular monitoring of the effectiveness of management measures for bycatch management and reduction of discards, assessed against the management objectives.

Rationale: This adds specificity to the parent Essential Component, focussing specifically on the review of systems for the regular monitoring of the effectiveness of management measures for bycatch management and reduction of discards.

GUIDANCE

To meet this Supplementary Component, the standard must require review of the systems for the regular monitoring of the effectiveness of management measures for bycatch management and reduction of discards. This review must be relative to the management objectives for bycatch management and reduction of discards.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the Standard requires the management system to have monitoring procedures and activities for non-target species (Clause 7.4) and also requires, through Clauses 1.5 and 1.6, that the management system, regulations, measures and outputs go through regular review based on best available science.

7.4 With regard to non-target catches; including discards of fish stocks other than the stock(s) under consideration:
i. Non target stocks shall be monitored to determine the impact exerted by the fishery.
ii. The fishery under consideration shall not threaten these non-target stocks with recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible and if such impacts arise, effective remedial action shall be taken.
iii. The monitoring procedures and activities shall allow for objective and scientific verification of the risks and outcomes

1.5 The management system, its institutional arrangements and their legal basis, regulations and other instruments, and management measures and outputs shall be subject to periodic review through identifiable review procedures and mechanisms.

1.6 The review process shall be clearly linked to improvement of the management system under clause 1.2 for the applicant fishery, and based on the use of best available scientific evidence, advice and/or objectively verified information by the management system from recognized institutions and other sources, including fisheries and external bodies and shall respond in a timely manner.

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for these clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 7.4, p. 73-75; Clause 1.5, p. 23; Clause 1.6- p. 24.

Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 7.4- p. 138-141, Clause 1.5- p. 44-46 and Clause 1.6- p. 47-48.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 7.4- p. 16, Clause 1.5- p. 8 and Clause 1.6- p. 9. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 7.4, p. 73-75; Clause 1.5, p. 23; Clause 1.6- p. 24. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 7.4, p. 138-141; Clause 1.5, p. 44-46; Clause 1.6, p. 47-48. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.4 *Evidence of alignment with implemented GSSI Supplementary Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

DATA AND INFORMATION

▶ STOCK UNDER CONSIDERATION

D.4 01 01 TARGET STOCK STATUS

GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT

The standard requires the collection and maintenance of adequate, reliable and current data and/or other information about the state and trends of the DSF stock in the high seas under consideration in accordance with applicable international standards and practices. Data collection programmes developed by States and competent RFMO/As should cover all stages of fishery development and should include, as far as practicable, data on historical stages of the fishery or on past fisheries in the area.

Rationale: This Supplementary Component addresses the particular challenges regarding the collection and maintenance of adequate, reliable and current data and/or other information on fisheries on DSF stocks in the high seas.

GUIDANCE

There are particular challenges with the collection and maintenance of adequate, reliable and current data and/or other information on fisheries on DSF stocks in the high seas. To meet this Supplemental Component the standard must require the fishery to acknowledge and explain these challenges with respect to DSF and data collection and maintenance to cover all stages of DSF development, in accordance with applicable international standards and practices.

CONCLUSION

This GSSI Supplementary Component is not applicable to the G.U.L.F. RFM Program because the certification is only available to fisheries operating within U.S. Gulf of Mexico waters and does not include deep-sea fisheries in the high seas. This is evidenced by the following statement in the Standard: 'The purpose of the G.U.L.F. Certification Scheme is to provide U.S. Gulf State fisheries with a "Certification of Responsible Fisheries Management" to an internationally recognized standard.'

This is also clearly stated in the Guidance to Assessment document: The Audubon Nature Institute (hereafter Audubon) Gulf United for Lasting Fisheries Responsible Fisheries Management (hereafter G.U.L.F. RFM) Certification Standard (hereafter the Standard) is a tool for use in the evaluation of United States fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico to an eco-certification program developed and owned by Audubon.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Forward, page 3.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): General Introduction, page 7.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

D.4 *Evidence of alignment with implemented GSSI Supplementary Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

DATA AND INFORMATION

D.4 03 01 NON-TARGET CATCHES

GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT

The Standard requires, where necessary, a level and scope of observer programs sufficient to provide quantitative estimates of total catch, discards, and incidental takes of living aquatic resources.

Rationale: The parent Essential Component specifies the collection and maintenance of adequate, reliable and current data and/or other information on non-target catches and discards in the unit of certification. This Supplementary Component is more specific in explicitly requiring observer programs to collect data on total catch, discards, and incidental takes.

GUIDANCE

This Supplemental Component identifies observer programs as an important means to provide quantitative estimates of total catch, discards, and incidental takes of living aquatic resources. To meet this Supplemental Component the standard would need to explicitly state that, where necessary, a suitable level and scope of observer programs is needed for this purpose.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because of the following relevant clauses:

2.1 Effective mechanisms shall be established for fisheries monitoring, surveillance, control and enforcement measures including, where appropriate, observer programs, inspection schemes and vessel monitoring systems, to ensure compliance with the conservation and management measures for the fishery in question.

7.4 With regard to non-target catches; including discards of fish stocks other than the stock(s) under consideration:
i. Non target stocks shall be monitored to determine the impact exerted by the fishery.
ii. The fishery under consideration shall not threaten these non-target stocks with recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible and if such impacts arise, effective remedial action shall be taken.
iii. The monitoring procedures and activities shall allow for objective and scientific verification of the risks and outcomes.

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for these clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 2.1, page 31; Clause 7.4, p. 73-75.

Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 2.1- p. 60-61 and Clause 7.4- p. 138-141.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 2.1, page 10; Clause 7.4, p. 16.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 2.1, page 31; Clause 7.4, p. 73-75.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 2.1, p. 60-61; Clause 7.4, p. 138-141.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.4 *Evidence of alignment with implemented GSSI Supplementary Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

DATA AND INFORMATION

D.4 03 02 NON-TARGET CATCHES

GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT

The Standard requires that where information is insufficient to conduct a risk assessment to identify the specific nature and extent of bycatch and discard problems in the fishery of which the unit of certification is part (see D.5.07.01), additional research should be conducted on the biology of species taken as bycatch, the performance of fishing gears and mitigation measures and the social and economic consequences of measures and techniques to manage bycatch and reduce discard mortality.

Rationale: The parent Essential Component specifies the collection and maintenance of adequate, reliable and current data and/or other information on non-target catches and discards in the unit of certification. This Supplementary Component is more specific in requiring research on a range of named topics to fill gaps should the data be insufficient to undertake a risk assessment to identify the nature and extent of bycatch and discard problems in the fishery.

GUIDANCE

This Supplementary Component lists a range of topics for additional research that should be conducted in the event that there is insufficient information to conduct a risk assessment to identify the nature and extent of bycatch and discard problems in the fishery. This is related to Supplementary Component D.3.06.02 which makes reference (in the Guidance to Auditors) to this same risk assessment. The risk assessment is required under D.5.07.01. To meet this Supplementary Component, the standard would need to require this research to be undertaken, or for there to be sufficient information already available for the risk assessment.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the remit of the G.U.L.F. RFM Certification Scheme is: Maintaining fishery resources for long-term use, including the use of enhancement practices, up to the point of landing, with the main objective being the biological sustainability of the stock(s) under consideration, with consideration for conservation, biodiversity and ecosystem integrity, and due regard to social responsibility and the economic viability of the fishery, and Clause 7.4 of the Standard requires that non-target stocks shall be monitored and that monitoring procedures be robust enough to allow for scientific verification of the risks and outcomes.

7.4 With regard to non-target catches; including discards of fish stocks other than the stock(s) under consideration:
i. Non target stocks shall be monitored to determine the impact exerted by the fishery.
ii. The fishery under consideration shall not threaten these non-target stocks with recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible and if such impacts arise, effective remedial action shall be taken.
iii. The monitoring procedures and activities shall allow for objective and scientific verification of the risks and outcomes.

Scoring guidance for Clause 7.4(i) specifically states: 'Information and data collected is sufficiently reliable so as to allow appropriate evaluation of the state of the relevant non-target stock. Describe the outputs of the most recent assessments or evaluations of relevant non-target species in relation to the established objectives for their management, as appropriate. Determine if the monitoring system in place is robust enough to ensure that potential impacts of the fishery on non-target stocks are detectable and allows for objective and scientific verification of the risks and outcomes.' Therefore, this clause would trigger a non-conformance if information was insufficient to conduct a risk assessment to identify the specific nature and extent of bycatch and discard problems in the fishery.

Additionally, the following clause requires the management system to identify research priorities and provide resources to execute them:
1.9 The management system shall identify and document research priorities for the fishery and stock(s) under consideration and allocate resources to execute these.

In summary, the GULF program is concerned for the social and economic viability of the fishery, and that includes all aspects of the fishery including non-target species (bycatch) and and the social and economic consequences of measures and techniques to manage bycatch and reduce discard mortality. While not explicitly stated in clause 7.4, it is impled it is impled given the overall remit of the GULF program. Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for these clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 7.4- p. 73-75 and Clause 1.9- p. 27. Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 7.4- p. 138-141 and Clause 1.9- p. 51-53.

REFERENCES

1) G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.1 (March 2016): Clause 7.4- p. 16 and Clause 1.9- p. 9.
http://audubongulf.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Standard-V1.1-CLEAN-11.30.16.pdf

2) G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.1 (September 2016): Clause 7.4- p. 73-75 and Clause 1.9- p. 27.
http://audubongulf.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-CLEAN-11.30.16.pdf

3) G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 7.4, p. 138-141 and Clause 1.9, p. 51-53.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.4 *Evidence of alignment with implemented GSSI Supplementary Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

DATA AND INFORMATION

D.4 03 03 NON-TARGET CATCHES

GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT

The Standard requires that the management system implements data collection procedures and protocols appropriate to the scale and type of fishery and taking into account the results of a risk assessment (see D.5.07.01), including the use of observers, standardized logbooks and vessel position monitoring systems to ensure effective monitoring of non-target catches and discards in the unit of certification, including catch handling on board the fishing vessel and landings at ports.

Rationale: The parent Essential Component specifies the collection and maintenance of adequate, reliable and current data and/or other information on non-target catches and discards in the unit of certification. This Supplementary Component requires collection of data to ensure effective monitoring of non-target catches and discards in the unit of certification taking into account the results of the risk assessment.

GUIDANCE

While D.4.03.02 requires research (where necessary) to enable the undertaking of a risk assessment to identify the nature and extent of bycatch and discard problems in the fishery, this Supplementary Component requires data collection to ensure effective monitoring of non-target catches and discards in the unit of certification taking into account the results of the risk assessment. The risk assessment is the same one as referred to in the Guidance to Auditors for Supplementary Component D.3.06.02 and required under Supplemental Component D.5.07.01.

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because the Standard requires data review and analysis of all catches and discards (Clause 3.3) and requires the management system to have monitoring procedures and activities specifically for non-target species (Clause 7.4) that allow for scientific verification of risks and outcomes. Additionally, Clause 2.1 requires, where appropriate, the use of observer programs, inspection schemes and vessel monitoring systems.

3.3 Data review and analysis shall consider catches and discards of other commercial and non-commercial species associated with fishing activity to the extent that impacts on these species can be understood.

7.4 With regard to non-target catches; including discards of fish stocks other than the stock(s) under consideration:
i. Non target stocks shall be monitored to determine the impact exerted by the fishery.
ii. The fishery under consideration shall not threaten these non-target stocks with recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible and if such impacts arise, effective remedial action shall be taken.
iii. The monitoring procedures and activities shall allow for objective and scientific verification of the risks and outcomes

2.1 Effective mechanisms shall be established for fisheries monitoring, surveillance, control and enforcement measures including, where appropriate, observer programs, inspection schemes and vessel monitoring systems, to ensure compliance with the conservation and management measures for the fishery in question.

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for these clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 3.3, p. 37; Clause 7.4, p. 73-75; Clause 2.1, p. 31. Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 3.3- p. 76-78, Clause 7.4- p. 138-141 and Clause 2.1- p 60-61.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 3.3, p. 11; Clause 7.4, p. 16; Clause 2.1- p. 10. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 3.3, p. 37; Clause 7.4, p. 73-75; Clause 2.1, p. 31. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 3.3, p. 76-78; Clause 7.4, p. 138-141; Clause 2.1, p 60-61. https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.4 *Evidence of alignment with implemented GSSI Supplementary Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

DATA AND INFORMATION

D.4 05 01 HABITAT

GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT

The standard requires that there is knowledge within the fishery management system of the essential habitats for the DSF stock in the high seas under consideration and VMEs that are highly vulnerable to damage by the fishing gear of the unit of certification. This includes knowledge of the full spatial range of the relevant habitat, not just that part of the spatial range that is potentially affected by fishing.

Rationale: This Supplementary Component provides an expansion of its parent Essential Component by establishing an explicit recognition that DSF stocks in the high seas and VMEs represent a special case, and carry with them particular challenges with respect to collection and maintenance of data.

GUIDANCE

This Supplementary Component is similar to its parent Essential Component, except it is specific to DSF stocks in the high seas and VMEs. These might be expected to be covered by the parent Essential Component by default, but the Supplementary Component requires an explicit recognition that DSF stocks in the high seas and VMEs represent a special case, and carry with them particular challenges with respect to collection and maintenance of data.

CONCLUSION

This GSSI Supplementary Component is not applicable to the G.U.L.F. RFM Program because the certification is only available to fisheries operating within U.S. Gulf of Mexico waters and does not include deep-sea fisheries in the high seas. This is evidenced by the following statement in the Standard: 'The purpose of the G.U.L.F. Certification Scheme is to provide U.S. Gulf State fisheries with a "Certification of Responsible Fisheries Management" to an internationally recognized standard.'

This is also clearly stated in the Guidance to Assessment document: The Audubon Nature Institute (hereafter Audubon) Gulf United for Lasting Fisheries Responsible Fisheries Management (hereafter G.U.L.F. RFM) Certification Standard (hereafter the Standard) is a tool for use in the evaluation of United States fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico to an eco-certification program developed and owned by Audubon.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Forward, page 3.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): General Introduction, page 7.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

D.4 *Evidence of alignment with implemented GSSI Supplementary Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

DATA AND INFORMATION

D.4 05 02 HABITAT

GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT

The standard requires the collection and maintenance of adequate, reliable and current data and/or other information about the effects of the unit of certification on VMEs in accordance with standards and practices in the FAO Guidelines on Deep-sea Fisheries in the High Seas.

Rationale: This Supplementary Component provides an expansion of its parent Essential Component in terms of requiring a current data on the effects of the unit of certification on VMEs.

GUIDANCE

The focus of this Supplementary Component is on the collection of data about the effects of the unit of certification on VMEs. To meet this Supplementary Component, the standard would need to take into consideration the standards and practices in the FAO Guidelines on Deep-sea Fisheries in the High Seas.

CONCLUSION

This GSSI Supplementary Component is not applicable to the G.U.L.F. RFM Program because the certification is only available to fisheries operating within U.S. Gulf of Mexico waters and does not include deep-sea fisheries in the high seas. This is evidenced by the following statement in the Standard: 'The purpose of the G.U.L.F. Certification Scheme is to provide U.S. Gulf State fisheries with a "Certification of Responsible Fisheries Management" to an internationally recognized standard.'

This is also clearly stated in the Guidance to Assessment document: The Audubon Nature Institute (hereafter Audubon) Gulf United for Lasting Fisheries Responsible Fisheries Management (hereafter G.U.L.F. RFM) Certification Standard (hereafter the Standard) is a tool for use in the evaluation of United States fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico to an eco-certification program developed and owned by Audubon.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Forward, page 3.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): General Introduction, page 7.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

D.5 *Evidence of alignment with implemented GSSI Supplementary Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGIES

▶ STOCK UNDER CONSIDERATION

D.5 01 01 STOCK ASSESSMENT

GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT

The standard requires management decisions by the fishery management organization or arrangement (D.1.02) to be based on an assessment of the current status and trends of the DSF stock in the high seas under consideration, using adequate, reliable and current data and/or other information. In light of data limitations regarding many deep-sea species, lower cost or innovative methods based on simpler forms of monitoring and assessment need to be developed. Such techniques should quantify uncertainty in stock assessments, including that resulting from such data limitations and simplified approaches.

Rationale: This Supplementary Component provides an expansion of its parent Essential Component by establishing an explicit recognition that DSF stocks in the high seas represent a special case, and carry with them particular challenges with respect to stock assessment.

GUIDANCE

This Supplementary Component is similar to its parent Essential Component, except it is specific to the assessment of DSF stocks in the high seas. These might be expected to be covered by the parent Essential Component by default, but the Supplementary Component requires an explicit recognition that DSF stocks in the high seas represent a special case, and carry with them particular challenges with respect to undertaking assessments in data limited situations.

CONCLUSION

This GSSI Supplementary Component is not applicable to the G.U.L.F. RFM Program because the certification is only available to fisheries operating within U.S. Gulf of Mexico waters and does not include deep-sea fisheries in the high seas. This is evidenced by the following statement in the Standard: 'The purpose of the G.U.L.F. Certification Scheme is to provide U.S. Gulf State fisheries with a "Certification of Responsible Fisheries Management" to an internationally recognized standard.'

This is also clearly stated in the Guidance to Assessment document: The Audubon Nature Institute (hereafter Audubon) Gulf United for Lasting Fisheries Responsible Fisheries Management (hereafter G.U.L.F. RFM) Certification Standard (hereafter the Standard) is a tool for use in the evaluation of United States fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico to an eco-certification program developed and owned by Audubon.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Forward, page 3.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): General Introduction, page 7.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

D.5 *Evidence of alignment with implemented GSSI Supplementary Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGIES

▶ ECOSYSTEM EFFECTS OF FISHING

D.5 06 01 NON-TARGET CATCHES

GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT

The standard requires a risk assessment to identify the specific nature and extent of bycatch and discard problems in the fishery of which the unit of certification is part as a basis for prioritization and planning.

Rationale: This Supplementary Component expands on its parent Essential Component by requiring a risk assessment specifically to identify the specific nature and extent of bycatch and discard problems in the fishery.

GUIDANCE

The parent Essential Component requires an analysis of the effects of the unit of certification, including any enhancement activities, on ecosystem structure, processes and function. This Supplementary Component focuses on the requirement for a risk assessment to identify the specific nature and extent of bycatch and discard problems in the fishery. Several other Supplementary Components make reference to this risk assessment, and either require data collection activity based on its results (D.4.03.03), or additional research to make it possible (D.4.03.02).

CONCLUSION

The G.U.L.F. RFM Program is in alignment because Fundamental Clause E7 specifically requires that ecosystem impacts be appropriately assessed and effectively addressed through the use of a risk-based management approach. The most relevant clause under Fundamental Clause E7 is Clause 7.4, which specifically requires monitoring activities of non-target species such that risks and outcomes can be verified.

E7 Adverse impacts of the fishery on the ecosystem shall be appropriately assessed and effectively addressed. Assessment shall be based on best available science, local knowledge where it can be objectively verified and using a suitable risk based management approach appropriate to the data available for determining most probable adverse impacts and taking into account the relevant environmental, economic, technological, social, and cultural aspects.

7.4 With regard to non-target catches; including discards of fish stocks other than the stock(s) under consideration:
i. Non target stocks shall be monitored to determine the impact exerted by the fishery.
ii. The fishery under consideration shall not threaten these non-target stocks with recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible and if such impacts arise, effective remedial action shall be taken.
iii. The monitoring procedures and activities shall allow for objective and scientific verification of the risks and outcomes.

Additional details on the evaluation parameters and scoring requirements for these clauses can be found in the G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment document: Clause 7.4- 73-75.

Examples of these clauses in use can be found in the Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (2016): Clause 7.4- p. 138-141.

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Clause 7.4, page 16.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): Clause 7.4, page 73-75.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

3) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Louisiana Blue Crab Assessment Report (Global Trust, Oct. 2016): Clause 7.4, pages 138-141.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/GULF-Blue-Crab-Full-Assessment-Report-Final.pdf

D.6 *Evidence of alignment with implemented GSSI Supplementary Components for Fisheries Certification Standards*

STOCK AND ECOSYSTEM STATUS AND OUTCOMES

▶ ECOSYSTEM EFFECTS OF FISHING

D.6 07 01 HABITAT

GSSI SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT

The standard requires the existence of outcome indicator(s) consistent with achieving management objectives (D.2.09.01) that seek to prevent significant adverse impacts of the unit of certification on VMEs.

Rationale: The parent Essential Component does not explicitly exclude impacts on VMEs, but nor are they explicitly included. This Supplementary Component also seeks outcome indicators for the prevention of significant adverse impacts rather than to avoid, minimize or mitigate impacts.

GUIDANCE

This Supplementary Component is related to D.2.09.01 and D.3.09.01 which establish the requirement for management objectives and management measures, respectively, specifically for preventing significant adverse impacts of the unit of certification on VMEs. This Supplementary Component establishes the requirement for outcome indicators to demonstrate when the objectives have been achieved. The FAO International Guidelines for the Management of Deep Sea Fisheries in the High Seas provide detail on what is regarded as a VME and what is a significant adverse impact in this context.

CONCLUSION

This GSSI Supplementary Component is not applicable to the G.U.L.F. RFM Program because the certification is only available to fisheries operating within U.S. Gulf of Mexico waters and does not include deep-sea fisheries in the high seas. This is evidenced by the following statement in the Standard: 'The purpose of the G.U.L.F. Certification Scheme is to provide U.S. Gulf State fisheries with a "Certification of Responsible Fisheries Management" to an internationally recognized standard.'

This is also clearly stated in the Guidance to Assessment document: The Audubon Nature Institute (hereafter Audubon) Gulf United for Lasting Fisheries Responsible Fisheries Management (hereafter G.U.L.F. RFM) Certification Standard (hereafter the Standard) is a tool for use in the evaluation of United States fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico to an eco-certification program developed and owned by Audubon.

VMEs are defined by the FAO Guidelines on the Management of Deep Sea Fisheries on the High Seas (2008), dealing with Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ; i.e. outside of the 200nm EEZ). This component, therefore, is interpreted to relate only to the High Seas /ABNJ and does is not applicable to the G.U.L.F. RFM Scheme

REFERENCES

1) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Standard v. 1.2 (2018): Forward, page 3.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Standard-V1.2-CLEAN-1.10.18-1.pdf

2) Audubon G.U.L.F. RFM Guidance to Assessment v.1.2 (2018): General Introduction, page 7.
https://www.audubongulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GULF-RFM-Guidance-Doc-V-1.2-CLEAN-1.12.18.pdf

GLOSSARY AND REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

GSSI GLOSSARY

TERM	SECTION A	SECTION B	SECTION D	DEFINITION	REFERENCE
Accreditation	●	●		A process by which an authoritative body gives formal recognition of the competence of a certification body to provide certification services against an international standard.	GFSI (2013) Guidance Document Version 6.3 Part IV: Glossary of Terms.
Accreditation body	●	●		An agency having jurisdiction to formally recognise the competence of a certification body to provide certification services.	GFSI (2013) Guidance Document Version 6.3 Part IV: Glossary of Terms
Accreditation remediation procedure	●	●		A process which is in place to specify how certification bodies are required to address non-compliances.	GFSI (2013) Guidance Document Version 6.3 Part IV: Glossary of Terms
Accreditation system	●	●		System that has its own rules of procedure and management for carrying out accreditation.	FAO (2011) Technical Guidelines for Aquaculture Certification Paragraph 12. (ISO Guide 2, 17.1)
Adverse Impact			●	The term "adverse impacts" is used in the FAO Ecolabelling Guidelines in a general sense (e.g. "adverse impacts of the fishery on the ecosystem") but also in the specific context of dependent predators, where it is qualified as "severe adverse impacts". The severity of adverse impacts is related to their potential reversibility. Severe adverse impacts can be regarded as those that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible (see separate entry in this Glossary). The term "significant adverse impacts" (note: "significant" not "severe") is used in the FAO Deep Sea Guidelines with respect to Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems (VMEs). Significant adverse impacts are those that compromise ecosystem integrity (i.e. ecosystem structure or function) in a manner that: (i) impairs the ability of affected populations to replace themselves; (ii) degrades the long-term natural productivity of habitats; or (iii) causes, on more than a temporary basis, significant loss of species richness, habitat or community types. Impacts should be evaluated individually, in combination and cumulatively. When determining the scale and significance of an impact, the following six factors should be considered: i. the intensity or severity of the impact at the specific site being affected; ii. the spatial extent of the impact relative to the availability of the habitat type affected; iii. the sensitivity/vulnerability of the ecosystem to the impact; iv. the ability of an ecosystem to recover from harm, and the rate of such recovery; i. the extent to which ecosystem functions may be altered by the impact; and ii. the timing and duration of the impact relative to the period in which a species needs the habitat during one or more of its lifehistory stages.	GSSI; FAO International Guidelines for the Management of Deep Sea Fisheries in the High Seas (adopted 2008)

(continued on next page)

While terms are not limited to a specific section, the color coding indicates in which section the term is used most.

GSSI GLOSSARY

TERM	SECTION A	SECTION B	SECTION D	DEFINITION	REFERENCE
Adverse Impact *(continued from previous page)*			●	The term "significant negative impacts" (note: "negative" rather than "adverse")is used in the FAO Ecolabelling Guidelines only in relation to enhanced fisheries. This was specifically intended to be different from "severe adverse impacts" on dependent predators (see above). The FAO consultation that resulted in the drafting of the Inland Guidelines considered that avoidance of only "severe adverse impacts" only would not be consistent with a management obligation to manage enhancement in ways that would not impact the productivity and abundance of the natural reproductive stock component of the stock under consideration, hence the term "significant negative impacts" was used to capture more than just "severe adverse impacts".	
Agreement	●	●		An arrangement between parties as to the proposed course of action.	GSSI
Alignment	●	●		An arrangement in having similar relative positions.	GSSI
Appeal	●	●		A request by a scheme owner for reconsideration of a decision made by the GSSI Steering Board, GSSI employee or person contracted to GSSI. (adapted from GFSI)	GFSI (2013) Guidance Document Version 6.3 Part IV: Glossary of Terms
Application	●	●		A document confirming a scheme owner's intention to seek recognition by the GSSI for a scope of recognition.	GSSI
Area of distribution (of a species or stock)			●	Area of distribution is defined (by CITES) as the area contained within the shortest continuous imaginary boundary which can be drawn to encompass all the known, inferred or projected sites of occurrence, excluding cases of vagrancy (though inferring and projecting area of occurrence should be undertaken carefully, and in a precautionary manner) . The area should, however, exclude significant areas where the species does not occur, and account should be taken of discontinuities or disjunctions in the spatial distribution of species. For migratory species, the area of distribution is the smallest area essential at any stage for the survival of that species (e.g. colonial nesting sites, feeding sites for migratory taxa, etc.).	CITES (1994): Criteria for amendment of Appendices I and II. Conference Resolution 9.24 Adopted at the 9th Conference of the Parties, Fort Lauderdale (USA).
Arrangement	●	●		A cooperative mechanism established by two or more parties be they governmental, private or non-governmental entities.	GSSI
Assessment	●	●		The act of judging or deciding the amount, value, quality, or importance of something, or the judgment or decision that is made.	Cambridge dictionaries online *http://dictionary.cambridge.org*
Audit	●	●		A systematic and functionally independent examination to determine whether activities and related results comply with a conforming scheme.	FAO (2011) Technical Guidelines for Aquaculture Certification Paragraph 12. (Codex Alimentarius, Principles for Food Import and Export Certification and Inspection, CAC/GL 20)
Auditor	●	●		A person qualified to carry out audits for or on behalf of a certification body.	GSSI

While terms are not limited to a specific section, the color coding indicates in which section the term is used most.

GSSI GLOSSARY

TERM	SECTION A	SECTION B	SECTION D	DEFINITION	REFERENCE
Balanced decision-making	●	●		A decision making process which ensures proportionate representation of interested parties in the standard development, revision and approval process.	GSSI
Balanced participation	●	●		The participation by proportionate representation of interested parties in the standard development, revision and approval process.	GSSI
Benchmark committee	●	●		A team of technical experts who have been appointed by GSSI to undertake the benchmarking process of a seafood certification scheme applying for recognition.	GFSI (2013) Guidance Document Version 6.3 Part IV: Glossary of Terms
Benchmark committee member	●	●		A person who has the required qualifications and experience and has undergone selection for the membership of a Benchmark Committee.	GFSI (2013) Guidance Document Version 6.3 Part IV: Glossary of Terms
Benchmark process	●	●		A mechanism by which a seafood certification scheme can be objectively assessed, against a series of defined requirements laid down in the GSSI Framework Document, to determine if formal recognition by the GSSI Steering Board can be gained.	GSSI
Best scientific evidence available			●	(1) The "best scientific evidence available" is required by UNCLOS as the basis for management decision-making, including for the application of the precautionary approach. In the context of the GSSI Benchmark, the "best scientific evidence available" can include traditional, fisher or community knowledge, provided its validity can be objectively verified. Objective verification of validity implies that the knowledge has been collected and analysed though a systematic, objective and well-designed process , and is not simply hearsay. Publication of results in the peer-reviewed literature could be one form of objective verification. What is actually the best scientific evidence available in any given fishery or for any given stock under consideration will vary between fisheries and stocks and will also vary over time and information levels fluctuate. What is important, therefore, is that the management system is designed in such a way that the mechanism by which it commissions science and solicits scientific advice results in it receiving the best scientific evidence available. Achieving the best scientific evidence available requires inter alia: – questions to be clearly stated, – scientific investigation to be well designed, and – results to be analysed logically, documented clearly, and subjected to peer review. Even science that has been developed through an open, transparent, and well-communicated process may not be fully adequate for addressing management issues. Scientists must often rely on incomplete information in offering their best expert advice.	(1) GSSI (2) Sullivan et. al. (2006) Defining and Implementing Best Available Science for Fisheries and Environmental Science, Policy, and Management Fisheries Vol 31, No 9 September 2006 (3) NRC (2004) Improving the Use of the "Best Scientific Information Available" Standard, National Academies Press

(continued on next page)

While terms are not limited to a specific section, the color coding indicates in which section the term is used most.

GSSI GLOSSARY

TERM	SECTION (A B D)	DEFINITION	REFERENCE
Best scientific evidence available *(continued from previous page)*	●	(2) To adequately implement the best available science, it is essential that policymakers clearly articulate the purpose of regulations and laws, clearly specify who is responsible for interpreting and enforcing them, endeavour to identify and reduce conflicts of interest, and recognize differences in the knowledge base and values of scientists, managers, and other stakeholders. (3) Scientific information includes, but is not limited to, factual input, data, models, analyses, technical information, or scientific assessments. Scientific information includes data compiled directly from surveys or sampling programs, and models that are mathematical representations of reality constructed with primary data. The complexity of the model should not be the defining characteristic of its value; the data requirements and assumptions associated with a model should be commensurate with the resolution and accuracy of the available primary data. Scientific information includes established and emergent scientific information. Established science is scientific knowledge derived and verified through a standard scientific process that tends to be agreed upon often without controversy. Emergent science is relatively new knowledge that is still evolving and being verified, therefore, may potentially be uncertain and controversial. Emergent science should be considered more thoroughly, and scientists should be attentive to effective communication of emerging science. Science is a dynamic process, and new scientific findings constantly advance the state of knowledge. Best scientific information is, therefore, not static and ideally entails developing and following a research plan with the following elements: Clear statement of objectives; conceptual model that provides the framework for interpreting results, making predictions, or testing hypotheses; study design with an explicit and standardized method of collecting data; documentation of methods, results, and conclusions; peer review, as appropriate; and communication of findings. Criteria to consider when evaluating best scientific information are relevance, inclusiveness, objectivity, transparency and openness, timeliness, verification and validation, and peer review, as appropriate. i. Relevance. Scientific information should be pertinent to the current questions or issues under consideration and should be representative of the fishery being managed. In addition to the information collected directly about the fishery being managed, relevant information may be available about the same species in other areas, or about related species. For example, use of proxies may be necessary in data-poor situations. Analysis of related stocks or species may be a useful tool for inferring the likely traits of stocks for which stock-specific data are unavailable or are not sufficient to produce reliable estimates.	

continued on next page)

While terms are not limited to a specific section, the color coding indicates in which section the term is used most.

GSSI GLOSSARY

TERM	SECTION A	SECTION B	SECTION D	DEFINITION	REFERENCE
Best scientific evidence available *(continued from previous page)*			●	Also, if management measures similar to those being considered have been introduced in other regions and resulted in particular behavioral responses from participants or business decisions from industry, such social and economic information may be relevant. ii. Inclusiveness. Three aspects of inclusiveness should be considered when developing and evaluating best scientific information: a. The relevant range of scientific disciplines should be consulted to encompass the scope of potential impacts of the management decision. b. Alternative scientific points of view should be acknowledged and addressed openly when there is a diversity of scientific thought. c. Relevant local and traditional knowledge (e.g., fishermen's empirical knowledge about the behavior and distribution of fish stocks) should be obtained, where appropriate, and considered when evaluating the BSIA. iii. Objectivity. Scientific information should be accurate, with a known degree of precision, without addressable bias, and presented in an accurate, clear, complete, and balanced manner. Scientific processes should be free of undue nonscientific influences and considerations. iv. Transparency and openness. There should be broad public and stakeholder access to the fishery conservation and management process, including access to the scientific information upon which the process and management measures are based. Public comment should be solicited at appropriate times during the review of scientific information. Communication with the public should be structured to foster understanding of the scientific process.	
CCRF	●	●	●	FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries	FAO(1995)
Central focal point	●	●		A person, location or address that is put in place to ensure standards-related enquiries and for submission of comments are gathered.	GSSI
Certification	●	●		Procedure by which certification body or entity gives written or equivalent assurance that a product, process or service conforms to specified requirements. Certification may be, as appropriate, based on a range of audit activities that may include continuous audit in the production chain.	FAO (2011) Technical Guidelines for Aquaculture Certification Paragraph 12. (Modified from ISO Guide 2, 15.1.2; Principles for Food Import and Export Certification and Inspection, CAC/GL 20; Ecolabelling Guidelines)
Certification body	●	●		A provider of certification services, accredited to do so by an accreditation body.	GFSI (2013) Guidance Document Version 6.3 Part IV: Glossary of Terms Page 135
Certification decision	●	●		The granting, continuing , expanding the scope of, reducing the scope of, suspending, restoring, withdrawing or refusing of certification by a certification body.	GFSI (2013) Guidance Document Version 6.3 Part IV: Glossary of Terms Page 135

While terms are not limited to a specific section, the color coding indicates in which section the term is used most.

GSSI GLOSSARY

TERM	SECTION A	SECTION B	SECTION D	DEFINITION	REFERENCE
(Seafood) Certification Scheme	●	●		An organisation in the seafood sector, which is responsible for the processes, systems, procedures and activities related to standard setting, accreditation and implementation of certification.	Adapted from FAO (2011) Technical Guidelines for Aquaculture Certification Paragraph 12. (Adapted from the Report of the First Expert Workshop on Aquaculture Certification held in Bangkok, Thailand. March 2007)
Chain of custody	●	●		The set of measures that verify that a certified product originates from a certified aquaculture production chain, and is not mixed with non-certified products. Chain of custody verification measures should cover the tracking/ traceability of the product all along the production, processing, distribution and marketing chain, the tracking of documentation, and the quantity concerned.	FAO. (2005a) Guidelines for the Ecolabelling of Fish and Fishery Products from Marine Capture Fisheries. Rome, FAO, Page 90
Competence	●	●		The demonstrated ability to apply knowledge and skills to achieve intended results.	GFSI (2013) Guidance Document Version 6.3 Part IV: Glossary of Terms Page 135
Complaint	●	●		Expression of dissatisfaction, other than appeal (6.4), by any person or organization to a conformity assessment body (2.5) or accreditation body (2.6), relating to the activities of that body, where a response is expected	ISO/IEC 17000:2004 6.5
Conflict of interest	●	●		Where either a Certification Body or an individual is in a position of trust requiring them to exercise judgement on behalf of others and also have interests or obligations (whether financial or otherwise) of the sort that might interfere with the exercise of that judgment.	GFSI (2013) Guidance Document Version 6.3 Part IV: Glossary of Terms Page 135
Conformity assessment	●	●		Demonstration that specified requirements (3.1) relating to a product (3.3), process, system, person or body are fulfilled.	ISO/IEC 17000:2005 2.1
Conformity assessment program				A defined and documented program by which the Scheme Owner monitors the performance of Accreditation Bodies, Certification Bodies and participating organisations against defined criteria.	GSSI
Consensus	●	●		General agreement, characterised by the absence of sustained opposition to substantial issues by any important concerned party and by a process that involves seeking to take into account the views of all parties concerned and to reconcile any conflicting arguments. Consensus need not imply unanimity. (adapted from ISO)	ISO/IEC Guide 2:2004.
Corrective action	●	●		An action to eliminate the cause of a detected non conformity or other undesirable matters.	GFSI (2013) Guidance Document Version 6.3 Part IV: Glossary of Terms

While terms are not limited to a specific section, the color coding indicates in which section the term is used most.

GSSI GLOSSARY

TERM	SECTION A B D	DEFINITION	REFERENCE
Data (information): adequate, reliable, current	●	(1) Data are facts that result from measurements or observations. (2) In the context of the GSSI Benchmark, assessment of the adequacy of data for different purposes would generally be part of an assessment against the certification standard. Adequate, reliable and current data and/or other information are those which are fit for purpose and commensurate with the development and delivery of the best scientific evidence available. This may include traditional, fisher or community knowledge, provided that their validity can be objectively verified. Applicable international standards and practices for fisheries data and statistics include the output of the Coordinating Working Party on Fishery Statistics (CWP): *http://www.fao.org/fishery/cwp/en* and the FAO Guidelines for the routine collection of capture fishery data (1998) FAO Fisheries Technical Paper. No. 382. The adequacy of data relates primarily to the quantity and type of data collected (including sampling coverage) and depends crucially on the nature of the systems being monitored and purposes to which the data are being put. Some analysis of the precision resulting from sampling coverage would normally be part of an assessment of adequacy. The reliability of data relates to the quality of the data collected, and also the level and representativeness of sampling coverage. Inadequate sampling can lead to high uncertainty and hence poor reliability, however, high sampling coverage does not necessarily mean the data collected are of high quality and hence reliable. Bias can result from a poorly designed survey plan (e.g. if the gear and seasons of a fishery are not well sampled). Reliability depends on the design and execution of an effective data collection program. The currency of data relates to how recently the data were collected relative to the application of the conclusions that are being drawn from them. Catch data generally need to be of the highest currency in order for management to function effectively (e.g. to close fisheries when catch limits are reached) and for assessments to provide a reliable estimate of current stock size. A survey conducted several years in the past for assessing abundance of a short lived species with highly variable stock size may not be regarded as current. Data from surveys of longer lived species with less variability may have greater longevity for drawing conclusions about current abundance. (3) The FAO has recently developed the Quality Assurance Framework for the FAO Statistics system (FAO SQAF). It consists of a quality framework and a mechanism to ensure the compliance of FAO statistics to the quality framework itself. The document includes the FAO SQAF definition of Quality, including accuracy, reliability and comparability.	(1) FAO (1998): Guidelines for the routine collection of capture fishery data. FAO Fish. Tech. Pap, 382: 113 p. (2) GSSI (3) FAO (2014) The FAO Statistics Quality Assurance Framework. *http://www.fao.org/docrep/019/i3664e/i3664e.pdf*

(continued on next page)

While terms are not limited to a specific section, the color coding indicates in which section the term is used most.

GSSI GLOSSARY

TERM	SECTION A B D	DEFINITION	REFERENCE
Data (information): adequate, reliable, current *(continued from previous page)*	● ●	FAO SQAF definition of Quality Quality is a multi-faceted and subjective concept. The International Organisation for Standardization (ISO) defines quality as "the totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bears on its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs" (ISO No 8402; 1986, 3.1). The most important quality characteristics depend on user perspectives, needs and priorities, which vary across groups of users. For this reason the major challenge is to achieve a compromise among the needs of the various possible users (current and potential) in order to produce and disseminate statistical outputs that satisfy the most important needs given constraints concerning available resources. Taking stock of the work already done by several international organizations3 (Eurostat, ECB, IMF and OECD) in this area, the definition of quality in statistics, which has been tailored to the FAO framework, encompasses five quality dimensions, as described below. FAO defines quality in statistics as the degree to which its statistical outputs fulfill requirements and the following quality dimensions are taken into account: • Relevance - degree to which statistics meet the current and potential user needs. • Accuracy and Reliability – refers to the closeness of estimates, to the true values that statistics were intended to measure. • Reliability – refers to the closeness of the initial estimates to the subsequent or final estimates. • Timeliness – the speed of dissemination of statistical outputs – i.e. the lapse of time between the end of a reference period (or a reference date) and the dissemination of the statistical outputs. • Punctuality – refers to the possible time lag existing between the actual delivery date of statistical outputs and the target date when they should have been delivered, for instance, with reference to dates announced in an official release calendar or previously agreed among partners. • Coherence – the adequacy of the statistical outputs to be meaningfully combined in different ways and for various uses. • Comparability – refers to the extent to which differences between different geographical areas, non-geographical domains, or over time, can be attributed to differences between the true values of the statistical characteristics. • Accessibility – defined as the ease, the set of conditions and the modalities by which users can obtain data. • Clarity – refers to the availability of adequate documentation: whether data are accompanied with appropriate metadata, illustrations such as graphs and maps, whether information on their quality are also available (including limitation in use), and the extent to which additional assistance is provided.	

While terms are not limited to a specific section, the color coding indicates in which section the term is used most.

GSSI GLOSSARY

TERM	SECTION A B D	DEFINITION	REFERENCE
Data limited fishery	●	(1) Data-limited fishery – A fishery where limited data are available to inform management, e.g. fisheries for species where baseline biological data such as size at maturity, fishing mortality and growth rates are unknown. (2) Data limited fisheries are those fisheries where stock assessments are not feasible, yet they provide continuing yields for fisheries. (3) Data limited fisheries assessment: • Inputs – Approximate catches, some life history information • Outputs – Incomplete, imprecise status and some MRPs; often as broad probability distributions, with no clear answer (4) The extracts above (1) to (4) refer only to biological data-limitations and stock assessment. The FAO EAF Guidelines highlight that data-limitation on the human and governance dimensions is also a constraint to management. The FAO EAF Guidelines use the term "data-poor" rather than "data limited" and, while they provide no definition, the text provides an indication of what is meant by the term; e.g. on Page 57: "the development of measures and decision rules should ideally be underpinned by rigorous data analyses, including modelling the dynamics of the system or sub-system. However, as stressed throughout (the EAF) guidelines, a lack of this capacity does not preclude the general approach. Even in data-poor situations, the best available information should be objectively analysed and considered. In such cases, an extrapolation based on better studied areas can be used to provide guidance on operational objectives and associated decision rules."	(1) South Africa Department of Primary Industries. (2) Sea Fish Authority *http://www.seafish.org/responsible-sourcing/conserving-fish-stocks/data-limited-fisheries* (3) MacCall, A. NMFS / SWFSC Santa Cruz, CA *http://www.fgc.ca.gov/meetings/subcommittees/052510mrcpresentation MacCallDataPoor.pdf* (4) FAO Technical Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries. 4. Fisheries management. 4.2.The ecosystem approach to fisheries (2003).
Dependent predators	●	A species within the food chain (e.g. a predator) which depends heavily on another (e.g. a prey species) for its maintenance.	FAO Term Portal (fisheries): *www.fao.org/faoterm*
Desktop review	● ●	An assessment carried out on documentation away from the location of the organisation being assessed.	GSSI
Discards	●	(1) Discard – To release or return fish to the sea, dead or alive, whether or not such fish are brought fully on board a fishing vessel. (2) Discarded Catch – That portion of the catch returned to the sea as a result of economic, legal, or personal considerations.	(1) CCRF Technical Guide 4 Fisheries management (2) Alverson, D.L.; Freeberg, M.H.; Pope, J.G.; Murawski, S.A. A global assessment of fisheries bycatch and discards. FAO Fisheries Technical Paper. No. 339. Rome, FAO. 1994. 233p.

While terms are not limited to a specific section, the color coding indicates in which section the term is used most.

GSSI GLOSSARY

TERM	SECTION A B D	DEFINITION	REFERENCE
Ecosystem (structure, processes and function)	●	The FAO EAF Guidelines refer to 'structure, processes and function' in Section 4.1.4.1 and 'ecosystem structure and functions' in the Executive Summary. The three terms structure, processes and function are distinct and different, however, common usage suggests that in terms of the ecosystems features covered under these terms, 'structure, processes and function' is generally regarded to be the same as 'structure and function' and the latter is not intended to exclude processes. This is because ecosystem processes are often listed under the heading of ecosystem functions, as in the description below: Ecosystem: An organizational unit consisting of an aggregation of plants, animals (including humans) and microorganisms, along with non-living components of the environment. Ecosystem Function: An intrinsic ecosystem characteristic related to the set of conditions and processes whereby an ecosystem maintains its integrity (such as primary productivity, food chain, biogeochemical cycles). Ecosystem functions include such processes as decomposition, production, nutrient cycling, and fluxes of nutrients and energy. Ecosystem Structure: Pattern of the interrelations of organisms in time and in spatial arrangements. Attributes related to the instantaneous physical state of an ecosystem; examples include species population density, species richness or evenness, and standing crop biomass.	FAO Technical Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries. The ecosystem approach to fisheries. No. 4, Suppl. 2. Rome, FAO. 2003. 112 p.
Ecosystem effects of fishing *(continued on next page)*	●	(1) "Ecosystem effects of fishing" is used as a Topic within the Fisheries component of the GSSI Benchmark Tool. It is an expression intended to cover all of the direct and indirect impacts of fishing operations on aquatic ecosystems. In the GSSI Benchmark Tool it is further broken down into five Elements: • Non-target catches, • Endangered species; • Dependent predators; • Habitat; and • Ecosystem structure, processes and function Measuring, understanding and managing the ecosystem effects of fishing are part of the implementation of the ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF). (2) "Ecosystem Approach" is described in the FAO Term Portal (fisheries) as a strategy for the integrated management of land, water, and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way. It is based on the application of appropriate scientific methodologies focused on levels of biological organization which encompass the essential processes, functions and interactions among organisms and their environment. It recognizes that humans, with their cultural diversity, are an integral component of ecosystems. The term is usually used in the form of "ecosystem approach to…" as for instance	(1) GSSI (2) FAO Term Portal (fisheries) *www.fao.org/faoterm*

While terms are not limited to a specific section, the color coding indicates in which section the term is used most.

GSSI GLOSSARY

TERM	SECTION A B D	DEFINITION	REFERENCE
Ecosystem effects of fishing *(continued from previous page)*	●	in the ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF) or in ecosystem approach to environmental protection (Gonzalez 1996). In general, the approach is taken as requiring: (1) definition and scientific description of the ecosystem in terms of scale, extent, structure, functioning; (2) assessment of its state in terms of health or integrity as defined by what is acceptable to society; (3) assessment of threats; and (4) maintenance, protection, mitigation, rehabilitation, etc., using (5) adaptive management strategies.	
Endangered (Threatened with extinction)	●	(1) Endangered Species is used as an Element within the GSSI Benchmark Tool and is explained below. The related term "Threatened" appears in the text of two Indicators as an example of bycatch species that are particularly vulnerable. The phrase "threatened…with serious risk of extinction" appears in the FAO Guidelines for the Ecolabelling of Fish and Fishery Products from Marine Capture Fisheries (paragraph 31.1). (2) Endangered: Taxa in danger of extinction and whose survival is unlikely if causal factors continue operating. Included are taxa whose numbers have been drastically reduced to a critical level or whole habitats have been so drastically impaired that they are deemed to be in immediate danger of extinction. Also included are those that possibly are already extinct, in so far as they definitely have not been seen in the wild in the past 50 years. (3) Threatened with extinction: A category of organisms listed in CITES Annex 1. The vulnerability of a species to threats of extinction depends on its population demographics, biological characteristics, such as body size, trophic level, life cycle, breeding structure or social structure requirements for successful reproduction, and vulnerability due to aggregating habits, natural fluctuations in population size (dimensions of time and magnitude) , residency/migratory patterns. This makes it impossible to give numerical values for population size or area of distribution that are applicable to all taxa. "Protected" refers generally to any plant or animal that a government declares by law to warrant protection; most protected species are considered either threatened or endangered. A species that is recognised by national legislation, affording it legal protection due to its population decline in the wild. The decline could be as a result of human or other causes.	(1) GSSI (2) IUCN (1994): IUCN Red List Categories. IUCN Species Survival Commission. The World Conservation Union. (3) CITES (1994): Criteria for amendment of Appendices I and II. Conference Resolution 9.24 Adopted at the 9th Conference of the Parties, Fort Lauderdale (USA).
Enhanced fisheries	●	Fisheries that are supported by activities aimed at supplementing or sustaining the recruitment of one or more aquatic organisms and raising the total production or the production of selected elements of a fishery beyond a level which is sustainable by natural processes. Enhancement may entail stocking with material originating from aquaculture installations, translocations from the wild and habitat modification.	FAO Technical Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries. Inland fisheries. No. 6. Rome, FAO. 1997. 36p.

While terms are not limited to a specific section, the color coding indicates in which section the term is used most.

GSSI GLOSSARY

TERM	SECTION A	SECTION B	SECTION D	DEFINITION	REFERENCE
Enhancement activities			●	See Enhanced Fisheries	
Environmental impacts	●	●		A result of activity which has influence upon or changes the environment.	GSSI
Escapes				A term used to describe specimens of cultured species, which escape from the rearing system into the ambient environment. There are potential impacts through interbreeding with wild conspecifics and through disease transfer. Also termed escapee.	FAO Term Portal – Aquaculture. (*www.fao.org/faoterm/en/)*
Essential habitat (essential fish habitat)			●	(1) Habitat for a fish is the environment in which it lives, including everything that surrounds and affects its life: e.g., water quality; bottom; vegetation; associated species (including food supplies). (2) Essential fish habitat (EFH) is those waters and substrate necessary to fish for spawning, breeding, feeding, or growth to maturity."	(1) FAO Term Portal (fisheries) *www.fao.org/faoterm* (2) Magnuson Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.
Expert	●	●		A person appointed by GSSI who has demonstrable specific knowledge and expertise with respect to the subject at hand.	GFSI (2013) Guidance Document Version 6.3 Part IV: Glossary of Terms
FAO	●	●	●	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	FAO
Field audit	●	●		An audit carried out at the location of a participating organisation.	GSSI
Fish stock			●	The living resources in the community or population from which catches are taken in a fishery. Use of the term fish stock usually implies that the particular population is more or less isolated from other stocks of the same species and hence self-sustaining. In a particular fishery, the fish stock may be one or several species of fish but here is also intended to include commercial invertebrates and plants.	FAO (1997): Fisheries management. FAO Technical Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries, 4: 82 p.)
Fisheries management organisation or arrangement			●	Institution responsible for fisheries management, including the formulation of the rules that govern fishing activities. The fishery management organization, and its subsidiary bodies, may also be responsible for all ancillary services, such as the collection of information, its analysis, stock assessment, monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS), consultation with interested parties, application and/or determination of the rules of access to the fishery, and resource allocation. Also called: Fishery management arrangement.	(FAO (1997): Fisheries management. FAO Technical Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries, 4: 82 p.
Fishery			●	A unit determined by an authority or other entity that is engaged in raising and/or harvesting fish. Typically, the unit is defined in terms of some or all of the following: people involved, species or type of fish, area of water or seabed, method of fishing, class of boats and purpose of the activities.	FAO Term Portal (fisheries): *www.fao.org/faoterm*

While terms are not limited to a specific section, the color coding indicates in which section the term is used most.

GSSI GLOSSARY

TERM	SECTION A	SECTION B	SECTION D	DEFINITION	REFERENCE
Fishing mortality			●	A mathematical expression of the part of the total rate of deaths of fish due to fishing. Fishing mortality is often expressed as a rate that indicates the percentage of the population caught in a year.	FAO Term Portal (fisheries) *www.fao.org/faoterm* Modified from Commonwealth of Australia (1997): *http://www.brs.gov.au/fish/gloss.html*
GSSI	●	●	●	Global Sustainable Seafood Initiative	GSSI
GSSI Essential Component	●	●	●	Criteria grounded in the CCRF and the FAO Guidelines, which a seafood certification scheme needs to meet to be recognised by GSSI.	GSSI
GSSI Supplementary Component	●	●	●	Criteria grounded in the CCRF and related FAO documents, ISO normative standards and ISEAL codes. They show a seafood certification scheme's diverse approach and help stakeholders understand where differences exist. A seafood certification scheme does not need to meet them for GSSI Recognition.	GSSI
Impartiality	●	●		The actual and perceived presence of objectivity.	GFSI (2013) Guidance Document Version 6.3 Part IV: Glossary of Terms
Independence	●	●		A state of being free from outside control and not subject to another's authority.	GSSI
Independent Expert	●	●		A competent trained person, appointed by GSSI, who is assigned to manage the benchmarking process for a specific scheme application.	GSSI
Internal audit	●	●		Internal audits, sometimes called first-party audits, are conducted by, or on behalf of, the organization itself for management review and other internal purposes, and may form the basis for an organization's self-declaration of conformity. In many cases, particularly in smaller organizations, independence can be demonstrated by the freedom from responsibility for the activity being audited.	ISO 19011:2002 3.1, Note 1
Internal review	●	●		An evaluation, undertaken on a regular basis by representatives of a company's management, to assess the suitability, adequacy and effectiveness of the company's management system and to identify improvement opportunities. The evaluation shall also be used to identify and assess any changes needed to policy, objectives, resource needs and improvement to product or services.	GSSI
Introductions			●	Species or races of fish and other aquatic organisms that are intentionally or accidentally transported and released by humans into an aquatic environment outside their natural range set by biogeographic barriers.	FAO (2012) Technical Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries. Recreational fisheries. No. 13. 176 pp.

While terms are not limited to a specific section, the color coding indicates in which section the term is used most.

GSSI GLOSSARY

TERM	SECTION A	SECTION B	SECTION D	DEFINITION	REFERENCE
Irreversible or very slowly reversible			●	(1) Irreversibility is the quality of being impossible or difficult to return to, or to restore to, a former condition (see also Reasonable time frame (for restoration of stocks). (2) Examples of slowly reversible or irreversible effects of fishing are recruitment overfishing (reduced age structure with consequences to the quality of spawning), genetic modification, changed ecological role such as in food-web dynamics, and excessive depletion of very long-lived organisms. (3) Serious or Irreversible Harm: Impacts that compromise ecosystems integrity (i.e. ecosystem structure or function) in a manner that: i. impairs the ability of affected populations to replace themselves; ii. degrades the long-term natural productivity of habitats; or iii. causes, on more than a temporary basis, significant loss of species richness, habitat or community types. (4) "The 1980 Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) is usually considered a precursor of the ecosystem approach to fisheries. Its provisions require that any harvesting and associated activities must be conducted in accordance with the following principles of conservation: (i) prevention of decrease in the size of any harvested population to levels below those which ensure its stable recruitment, and for this purpose, size should not be allowed to fall below a level close to that which ensures the greatest net annual increment; (ii) maintenance of the ecological relationships between harvested, dependent and related populations of Antarctic marine living resources and the restoration of depleted populations to the levels defined in (i) above; and (iii) prevention of changes or minimization of the risk of changes in the marine ecosystem which are not potentially reversible over two or three decades, taking into account the state of available knowledge of the direct and indirect impact of harvesting, the effect of the introduction of alien species, the effects of associated activities on the marine ecosystem and of the effects of environmental changes, with the aim of making possible the sustained conservation of Antarctic marine living resources.	(1) Alcamo, J. et al. (2003) Ecosystem and human well-being. A framework for assessment. Millennium Ecosystem Assessment. Island Press, 245 p. (2) Sainsbury, K. (2008) Best Practice Reference Points for Australian Fisheries. Report to AFMA (3) Fisheries and Oceans Canada Ecological Risk Assessment Framework (ERAF) for Coldwater Corals and Sponge Dominated Communities. Sustainable Fisheries Framework (SFF): Policy to Manage the Impacts of Fishing on Sensitive Benthic Areas *http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/peches-fisheries/fish-ren-peche/sff-cpd/risk-ecolo-risque-eng.pdf* (4) FAO Technical Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries. 4. Fisheries management. 4.2.The ecosystem approach to fisheries (2003) Annex 1. Institutional foundation to the ecosystem approach to fisheries
ISEAL Alliance	●	●		Global membership association for sustainability standards	ISEAL
Key performance indicators	●	●		A series of criteria which are quantifiable measurements, agreed to beforehand, that reflect the critical success factors of an organization.	Crandall, W.J. (2010) Revenue Administration: Performance Measurement in Tax Administration; IMF
Key prey species			●	A species within the food chain (e.g. a prey species) which is depended upon heavily for its maintenance by another (e.g. a predator species). A species within the food chain (e.g. a prey species) which is depended upon heavily for its maintenance by another (e.g. a predator species).	Adapted from 'Dependent Species' as defined in the FAO Term Portal (this being the corollary).

While terms are not limited to a specific section, the color coding indicates in which section the term is used most.

GSSI GLOSSARY

TERM	SECTION A	SECTION B	SECTION D	DEFINITION	REFERENCE
Legal entity	●	●		Any entity recognized by the law, including both juristic and natural persons.	GFSI (2013) Guidance Document Version 6.3 Part IV: Glossary of Terms.
Legal framework (effective)			●	A legal framework is defined as a broad system of rules that governs and regulates decision making, agreements, laws etc. It includes a set of rules, procedural steps, or test, often established through precedent in the common law, through which judgments can be determined in a given legal case. In a fisheries context this can be regarded as the framework of legal instruments required for the exercise of responsible fisheries and to formulate and implement appropriate measures. An "effective" legal framework can be regarded as one that enables outcomes for the fishery consistent with the requirements of the CCRF.	Compilation of dictionary definitions with added context for fisheries.
Likely (likelihood)			●	Likelihood, (see Table 1 from the IPCC report referenced), provides calibrated language for describing quantified uncertainty. It can be used to express a probabilistic estimate of the occurrence of a single event or of an outcome (e.g., a climate parameter, observed trend, or projected change lying in a given range). Likelihood may be based on statistical or modelling analyses, elicitation of expert views, or other quantitative analyses. The categories defined in Table 1 (see report) can be considered to have "fuzzy" boundaries. A statement that an outcome is "likely" means that the probability of this outcome can range from ≥66% (fuzzy boundaries implied) to 100% probability. May also be determined according to expert judgment and/or plausible argument.	Guidance Note for Lead Authors of the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report on Consistent Treatment of Uncertainties. IPCC Cross-Working Group Meeting on Consistent Treatment of Uncertainties Jasper Ridge, CA, USA 6-7 July 2010
Local applicability	●	●		The process of adaptation by a Scheme Owner of standards or rules for direct application at the national or regional level.	GSSI
Management measures			●	Specific controls applied in a fishery to contribute to achieving the objectives, including input controls (fishing effort limitations), output controls (catch quotas), technical measures (gear regulations, closed areas and time closures), and socio-economic incentives (access and use rights).	FAO Technical Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries. Fisheries management. 4. Marine protected areas and fisheries. No. 4, Suppl. 4. Rome, FAO. 2011. 198p.
Management objectives			●	(1) A formally established, more or less quantitative target that is actively sought and provides a direction for management action. (2) According to the Fishery Manager's Guidebook: "the term 'objective' is used to mean the object of an action, or what is intended to be achieved. Describing an objective will typically require a more precise description of the desired end point than for a goal. An objective must include explicit statements against which progress can be measured and it is helpful to think in terms of SMART objectives, that is, objectives should be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound. A goal may therefore be, for example, to harvest a particular stock sustainably. One of the objectives necessary to achieve this goal could be to ensure that fishing mortality does not lead to a reduction in the biomass of the stock below the biomass capable of producing maximum sustainable yield."	(1) FAO Term Portal (fisheries) *www.fao.org/faoterm* (2) A fishery manager's guidebook / edited by Kevern L. Cochrane and Serge M. Garcia — 2nd ed. 2009 Published by The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and Blackwell Publishing.

While terms are not limited to a specific section, the color coding indicates in which section the term is used most.

GSSI GLOSSARY

TERM	SECTION A B D	DEFINITION	REFERENCE
Management system	●	The framework of processes and procedures used to ensure that an organization can fulfil all tasks required to achieve its objectives. (1) Element used to refer to a Management System domain element. It contains the domain elements such as Management authority, Jurisdiction, Fishery Management Unit, which altogether enable positive Referencing of a Management System. Includes, but is not restricted to, agencies or entities involved in the management of the fishery, the legislative framework within which the fishery is undertaken, the management measures implemented and the processes and procedures that enable the collective functioning of the various components.	(1) FAO FIRMS data dictionary. FIRMS Technical Working Group Meeting First Session Rome, Italy, 05-08 December 2005 *ftp://ftp.fao.org/Fi/DOCUMENT/FIGIS_FIRMS/TWG1/4a_e.pdf*
Maximum sustainable yield (MSY)	●	(1) The highest theoretical equilibrium yield that can be continuously taken (on average) from a stock under existing (average) environmental conditions without affecting significantly the reproduction process. Also referred to sometimes as potential yield. (2) It is estimated from surplus production models (e.g. Schaefer model) and other methods. In practice, however, MSY, and the level of effort needed to reach it are difficult to assess. Referred to in UNCLOS, it is an essential fisheries management benchmark but it is also only one of the possible Management reference points, considered also as an international minimum standard for stock rebuilding strategies (i.e. stocks should be rebuilt to a level of biomass which could produce at least MSY).	(1) FAO Term Portal (fisheries) *www.fao.org/faoterm* (2) Indicators for sustainable development of marine capture fisheries. FAO Technical Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries. No. 8. Rome, FAO. 1999. 68p.
Monitoring	● ●	A planned sequence of observations or measurements to assess compliance with requirements.	GFSI (2013) Guidance Document Version 6.3 Part IV: Glossary of Terms
Monitoring, surveillance, control and enforcement (effective and suitable)	●	MCS: Monitoring, control, and surveillance. Activities undertaken by the fishery enforcement system to ensure compliance with fishery regulations. "Enforcement" refers generally to the enforcement of rules and regulations, and can be regarded as part of the overarching term "MCS". (1) – Monitoring – The continuous requirement for the measurement of fishing effort characteristics and resource yields. – Control – The regulatory conditions under which the exploitation of the resource may be conducted. This is generally considered to include the juridical component. – Surveillance – The degree and types of observations required to maintain compliance with the regulatory controls imposed on fishing activities. The qualifiers "effective and suitable" need some explanation. With respect to "effective", below there is a relevant extract from Flewwelling et al (2002). "Suitable" is not included in the FAO Guidelines for Marine Capture Fisheries, but was introduced in the drafting of the Guidelines for Inland Capture Fisheries. The important	(1) Flewwelling, P. (1995) An introduction to monitoring, control and surveillance for capture fisheries. FAO Fisheries Technical Paper No. 338. Rome, FAO. 1995. 217 p (2) Flewwelling, P.; Cullinan, C.; Balton, D.; Sautter, R.P.; Reynolds, J.E. Recent trends in monitoring, control and surveillance systems for capture fisheries. FAO Fisheries Technical Paper. No. 415. Rome, FAO. 2002. 200p

(continued on next page)

While terms are not limited to a specific section, the color coding indicates in which section the term is used most.

GSSI GLOSSARY

TERM	SECTION A B D	DEFINITION	REFERENCE
Monitoring, surveillance, control and enforcement (effective and suitable) *(continued from previous page)*	●	element here is that the MCS is appropriate (suitable) to the scale and intensity of the fishery. Hence what is suitable from the perspective of a large scale industrial fishery would not necessarily be the same as for a small scale fishery. (2) Extract from Flewwelling et al (2002): Some view arrests as the only relevant indication of the effectiveness of MCS efforts. The real indicator for MCS is the level of compliance, and this is governed by many factors, e.g. the number of fishers; the number of vessels; effort and area coverage of patrols; results of patrols, increase in voluntary compliance, etc. Effective MCS involves a two-pronged, parallel approach. The preventive approach is to encourage "voluntary compliance" through understanding and support for the management strategies and this includes: a) enhancement of community/fisher awareness and understanding of management practices and MCS through seminars, public awareness and information, education, and communication campaigns; b) participatory management development to promote ownership of the management regime and input into the regulatory/control aspect of management (laws and regulations) in preparation for acceptance by the fishers of their joint "stewardship" role for the management of their fisheries in partnership with government; c) peer pressure towards voluntary compliance and support for the management regime; d) the institution of accurate and verifiable data collection regimes; and e) surveillance and verification for compliance. The parallel approach of deterrent/enforcement MCS is necessary to ensure compliance by fishers who resist the regulatory regime to the detriment of both the fishery and the economic returns to their fellow fishers. Deterrent and enforcement include inspection, investigation, prevention and court proceedings to enforce the law. Voluntary compliance will fail if stakeholders see non-compliant fishers successfully evading the law and receiving economic returns from their illegal activity, at the expense of the fishers who comply with all requirements.	
Multi-site certification	● ●	Certification covering multi-site organisations including several sites and where sampling of these sites may be used by a certification body in its conformity assessment work. The scope of certification covers the actual products and processes as defined in the normative documents describing the scheme in question. Every site covered by this certification is mentioned on the main certificate documentation and every site is entitled to get its own sub-certificate.	GSSI

While terms are not limited to a specific section, the color coding indicates in which section the term is used most.

GSSI GLOSSARY

TERM	SECTION A	SECTION B	SECTION D	DEFINITION	REFERENCE
Multi-site organisation	●	●		An organisation having an identified central office, but not necessarily the headquarters of the organisation at which certain activities are planned, controlled and managed and a network of local offices or branches or sites at which such activities are fully or partially carried out.	GSSI
Natural reproductive stock component of enhanced stocks			●	The survival of fish stocks that are not enhanced depends entirely on their natural reproductive component. Stocks that are enhanced may have a natural reproductive component that contributes to the production of new generations.	FAO (2011) Guidelines for the Ecolabelling of Fish and Fishery Products from Inland Capture Fisheries. 106pp. Paragraph 26.
Non-conformity	●	●		A deviation of product or process from specified requirements, or the absence of, or failure to implement and maintain, one or more required management system elements, or a situation which would, on the basis of available objective evidence, raise significant doubt as to the conformity of what the auditee is supplying.	GSSI
Non-target catch (stock)			●	1) Species for which the gear is not specifically set, although they may have immediate commercial value and be a desirable component of the catch. (2) In the context of fishery certification, the target catch is the catch of stock under consideration by the unit of certification – i.e. the fish that are being assessed for certification and ecolabelling. Anything other than this catch is non-target catch. Hence there may be species for which the gear is set, but that are not being assessed as a target species for certification. In this case these species are non-target catch, even though they may be a target for the fishery according to the OECD definition above	(1) OECD (1996), Synthesis report for the study on the economic aspects of the management of marine living resources. AGR/FI(96)12 (2) GSSI
Normative documents	●	●		A document to which reference is made in the standard in such a way as to make it indispensable for the application of the standard.	European Committee for Standardization
Office audit	●	●		An audit carried out at the office or designated centres of an applicant.	GSSI
Organisation	●	●		A group of people or other legal entity(ies) that is responsible for ensuring that products and processes meet and, if applicable, continue to meet the requirements on which the certification is based.	GSSI
Overfished			●	A stock is considered “overfished” when exploited beyond an explicit limit beyond which its abundance is considered “too low” to ensure safe reproduction. In many fisheries fora the term is used when biomass has been estimated to be below a limit biological reference point that is used as the signpost defining an “overfished condition”.	FAO Term Portal (fisheries) *www.fao.org/faoterm* Mace, P.M. 1998. The status of ICCAT species relative to optimum yield and overfishing criteria recently proposed in the United States, also with consideration of the precautionary approach. ICCAT SCRS/97/074

While terms are not limited to a specific section, the color coding indicates in which section the term is used most.

GSSI GLOSSARY

TERM	SECTION A B D	DEFINITION	REFERENCE
Overfishing (including recruitment overfishing)	●	Overfishing – A generic term used to refer to the state of a stock subject to a level of fishing effort or fishing mortality such that a reduction of effort would, in the medium term, lead to an increase in the total catch. Often referred to as overexploitation and equated to biological overfishing, it results from a combination of growth overfishing and recruitment overfishing and occurs often together with ecosystem overfishing and economic overfishing. Recruitment Overfishing – A situation in which the rate of fishing is (or has been) such that annual recruitment to the exploitable stock has become significantly reduced. The situation is characterized by a greatly reduced spawning stock, a decreasing proportion of older fish in the catch, and generally very low recruitment year after year. Growth Overfishing – Occurs when too many small fish are being harvested too early, through excessive fishing effort and poor selectivity (e.g. too small mesh sizes) and the fish are not given enough time to grow to the size at which the maximum yield-per-recruit from the stock would be obtained. A reduction of fishing mortality on juveniles, or their outright protection, would lead to an increase in yield from the fishery.	FAO Term Portal (fisheries) *www.fao.org/faoterm* Garcia, S.M. (Comp.). 2009. Glossary. In Cochrane, K. and S.M. Garcia. (Eds). A fishery managers' handbook. FAO and Wiley-Blackwell:473-505.
Participatory (fishery management)	●	Participatory is defined in the Merriam-Webster Dictionary as characterized by or involving participation; especially: providing the opportunity for individual participation. (1) A participatory approach to fisheries management requires there to be an opportunity for all interested and affected parties to be involved in the management process. This does not mean that stakeholders are required to have specific decision rights in the fishery, but there should be a consultation process that regularly seeks and accepts relevant information, including traditional, fisher or community knowledge and there is a transparent mechanism by which the management system demonstrates consideration of the information obtained. Consultation processes must be inclusive and provide opportunities for interested and effected parties to be involved. A participatory approach further requires that all major stakeholders have been identified and that the functions, roles and responsibilities of the key organisations and individuals involved in the management process are explicitly defined and well understood. (2) Participatory management. Any form of management involving a degree of stakeholder participation. Co-management is a specifi c form of participatory management in which there is a sharing of decision-making power between the state and the stakeholders.	(1) GSSI (2) Glossary in Cochrane, K.L. and S.M. Garcia (eds). 2009. A Fishery Manager's Guidebook, 2nd Edition. FAO and Wiley-Blackwell Publishers. 518pp.

While terms are not limited to a specific section, the color coding indicates in which section the term is used most.

GSSI GLOSSARY

TERM	SECTION A B D	DEFINITION	REFERENCE
Precautionary approach to fisheries management	●	The precautionary approach involves the application of prudent foresight, taking account of the uncertainties in fisheries systems and the need to take action with incomplete knowledge. It requires, inter alia: i consideration of the needs of future generations and avoidance of changes that are not potentially reversible; ii prior identification of undesirable outcomes and of measures that will avoid them or correct them promptly; iii that any necessary corrective measures are initiated without delay, and that they should achieve their purpose promptly, on a timescale not exceeding two or three decades; iv that where the likely impact of resource use is uncertain, priority should be given to conserving the productive capacity of the resource; v that harvesting and processing capacity should be commensurate with estimated sustainable levels of resource, and that increases in capacity should be further contained when resource productivity is highly uncertain; vi all fishing activities must have prior management authorization and be subject to periodic review; vii an established legal and institutional framework for fishery management, within which management plans that implement the above points are instituted for each fishery, and viii appropriate placement of the burden of proof by adhering to the requirements above (FAO, 1996, para 6).	FAO. 1996. Precautionary Approach to Capture Fisheries and Species Introductions. FAO Technical Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries, 2: 54 p.
Prepackaged	● ●	Prepackaged means packaged or made up in advance in a container, ready for offer to the consumer, or for catering purposes.	Labelling of Prepackaged Foods (CODEX STAN 1-1985)
Process	● ●	A set of interrelated or interacting activities which result in an outcome.	GFSI (2013) Guidance Document Version 6.3 Part IV: Glossary of Terms Page 137
Publicly available	● ●	Obtainable by any person, without unreasonable barriers of access. NOTE – Information that is published on an organisation's website and can be found through a basic and quick search is considered to be publicly available. 'Available on request' is not the same as publicly available.	ISEAL (2014) Impacts Code v2

While terms are not limited to a specific section, the color coding indicates in which section the term is used most.

GSSI GLOSSARY

TERM	SECTION A B D	DEFINITION	REFERENCE
Reasonable time frames (for restoration of overfished stocks)	●	The time period for ending overfishing and rebuilding an overfished stock should be as short as possible, taking into account the status and biology of the overfished stock, the needs of fishing communities, recommendations by international organizations exercising jurisdiction over the overfished stock, and the interaction of the overfished stock within the marine ecosystem. In any event is should not exceed 10 years, except in cases where the biology of the stock, other environmental conditions, or management measures under an applicable international agreement dictate otherwise.	Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act; 104-297 (e) REBUILDING
Re-benchmarking	● ●	The process of benchmarking a scheme that was previously recognised by the GSSI and that is seeking renewed recognition.	GFSI (2013) Guidance Document Version 6.3 Part IV: Glossary of Terms Page 137
Reference point (limit)	●	(1) Reference Point: An estimated value derived from an agreed scientific procedure and/or model, which corresponds to a specific state of the resource and of the fishery, and that can be used as a guide for fisheries management. Reference points may be general (applicable to many stocks) or stock-specific. (2) Limit Reference Point (LRP) indicates the limit beyond which the state of a fishery and/or a resource is not considered desirable. Fishery development should be stopped before reaching it. If an LRP is inadvertently reached, management action should severely curtail or stop fishery development, as appropriate, and corrective action should be taken. Stock rehabilitation programmes should consider an LRP as a very minimum rebuilding target to be reached before the rebuilding measures are relaxed or the fishery is re-opened. (3) LRP indicates the limit beyond which the state of a fishery and / or a resource is not considered desirable. Fishery development should be stopped before reaching it. If a LRP is inadvertently reached, management action should severely curtail or stop fishery development, as appropriate, and corrective action should be taken. Stock rehabilitation programmes should consider and LRP as a very minimum rebuilding target to be reached before the rebuilding measures are relaxed or the fishery is re-opened". If a LRP is well established, the probability to reach inadvertently is very low and indeed below a formally agreed level. (3) Indicates that the state of a fishery and / or a resource is approaching a target reference point (TRP) or a limit reference point (LRP), and that a certain type of action (usually agreed beforehand) needs to be taken. Fairly similar to a LRP in their utility, the ThRp specific purpose is to provide an early warning, reducing further the risk the the LRP or TRP are inadvertently passed due to uncertainty in the available information or inherent inertia of the management and industry systems. Adding precaution to the management set-up, they might be necessary only for resources or situations involving particularly high risk.	(1) Garcia S.M. (1996). The precautionary approach to fisheries and its implications for fishery research, technology and management: An updated review. FAO Fish. Tech. Paper, 350.2: 1-76 (2) + (3) FAO Term Portal (fisheries) *www.fao.org/faoterm* (2) Fish Stock Assessment Manual, FAO Fisheries Technical Paper 393, Fisheries Department, FAO, 2000. (3) Garcia S.M. (1996). The precautionary approach to fisheries and its implications for fishery research, technology and management: An updated review. FAO Fish. Tech. Paper, 350.2: 1-76

While terms are not limited to a specific section, the color coding indicates in which section the term is used most.

GSSI GLOSSARY

TERM	SECTION A B D	DEFINITION	REFERENCE
Reference point (target)	D	(1) Reference Point: An estimated value derived from an agreed scientific procedure and/or model, which corresponds to a specific state of the resource and of the fishery, and that can be used as a guide for fisheries management. Reference points may be general (applicable to many stocks) or stock-specific. (2) Corresponds to a state of a fishery and / or a resource which is considered desirable. Management action, whether during a fishery development or a stock rebuilding process should aim at bringing and maintaining the fishery system at this level. In most cases a TRP will be expressed in a desired level of output for the fishery (e.g. in terms of catch) or of fishing effort or capacity and will be reflected as an explicit management objective for the fishery.	(1) Garcia S.M. (1997) Indicators for sustainable development in fisheries. In: FAO (1997). Land Quality indicators and their use in sustainable agriculture and rural development: 131-162. (2) FAO Term Portal (fisheries) *www.fao.org/faoterm* (2) Fish Stock Assessment Manual, FAO Fisheries Technical Paper 393, Fisheries Department, FAO, 2000. (2) Garcia S.M. (1996) The precautionary approach to fisheries and its implications for fishery research, technology and management: An updated review. FAO Fish. Tech. Paper, 350.2: 1-76
Regional fisheries management organization (RFMO)	D	Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) have a management mandate and play a unique role in facilitating international cooperation for the conservation and management of fish stocks. These organizations present the only realistic means of governing fish stocks that occur either as straddling or shared stocks between zones of national jurisdiction or between these zones and the high seas, or exclusively on the high seas. RFMOs adopt fisheries conservation and management measures that are binding on their members.	FAO Fisheries websites: *www.fao/fishery/topic/16800/en* and *www.fao/fishery/topic/16810/en*
Register of benchmark committee members	A B	A document containing the names of experts selected by GSSI, who may carry out benchmarking activities on their behalf.	GFSI (2013) Guidance Document Version 6.3 Part IV: Glossary of Terms Page 137
Resilience	D	Resilience is the capacity of a system to absorb disturbance and reorganize while undergoing change, so as to still retain essentially the same function, structure, identity and feedbacks of regulation mechanisms.	FAO Technical Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries. Fisheries management. 4. Marine protected areas and fisheries. No. 4, Suppl. 4. Rome, FAO. 2011. 198p.
Review	A B	Verification of the suitability, adequacy and effectiveness of selection and determination activities, and the results of these activities, with regard to fulfilment of specified requirements (3.1) by an object of conformity assessment.	ISO/IEC 17000:2004, 5.1
Risk based programme	A B	A documented programme developed by a competent person(s) based on risk assessment principles.	GSSI
Seafood Certification Scheme	A B	See Certification Scheme.	
Seed		Meaning eggs, spawn, offspring, progeny or brood of the aquatic organism (including aquatic plants) being cultured. At this infantile stage, seed may also be referred to or known as fry, larvae, postlarvae, spat, and fingerlings. They may originate from two principal sources: from captive breeding programmes (e.g., hatcheries) or caught from the wild.	Adapted from FAO Term Portal – Aquaculture *(www.fao.org/faoterm/en/)*

While terms are not limited to a specific section, the color coding indicates in which section the term is used most.

GSSI GLOSSARY

TERM	SECTION A	SECTION B	SECTION D	DEFINITION	REFERENCE
Scheme Owner	●	●		An organisation, which is responsible for the development, management and maintenance of a certification scheme.	GFSI (2013) Guidance Document Version 6.3 Part IV: Glossary of Terms Page 137
Scope	●	●		The extent of the area or subject matter that a scheme applies to or to which it is relevant	GSSI
Senior management	●	●		A person or persons who have the authority and accountability to develop, implement or amend organisational policies and procedures	GSSI
Site	●	●		A permanent location where an organisation carries out work or activity'	GFSI (2013) Guidance Document Version 6.3 Part IV: Glossary of Terms
Small scale fisheries			●	(1) Small-scale fisheries are social units with porous boundaries that individual fishers can cross. In fact, fishers can unconsciously or deliberately blur the boundaries between the various fisheries. (2) Small-scale fisheries represent a diverse and dynamic subsector, often characterized by seasonal migration. The precise characteristics of the subsector vary depending on the location; indeed, small-scale fisheries tend to be strongly anchored in local communities, reflecting often historic links to adjacent fishery resources, traditions and values, and supporting social cohesion. For many small-scale fishers and fish workers, fisheries represent a way of life and the subsector embodies a diverse and cultural richness thatis of global significance. Many small-scale fishers, fish workers and their communities – including vulnerable and marginalized groups – are directly dependent on access to fishery resources and land. Tenure rights to land in the coastal/waterfront area are critical for ensuring and facilitating access to the fishery, for accessory activities (including processing and marketing), and for housing and other livelihood support. The health of aquatic ecosystems and associated biodiversity are a fundamental basis for their livelihoods and for the subsector's capacity to contribute to overall well-being. (3) These Guidelines recognize the great diversity of small-scale fisheries and that there is no single, agreed definition of the subsector. Accordingly, the Guidelines do not prescribe a standard definition of small-scale fisheries nor do they prescribe how the Guidelines should be applied in a national context. These Guidelines are especially relevant to subsistence small-scale fisheries and vulnerable fisheries people. To ensure transparency and accountability in the application of the Guidelines, it is important to ascertain which activities and operators are considered small-scale, and to identify vulnerable and marginalized groups needing greater attention. This should be undertaken at a regional, subregional or national level and according to the particular context in which they are to be applied. States should ensure that such identification and application are guided by meaningful and substantive participatory, consultative, multi-level and objective-oriented processes so that the voices of both men and women are heard. All parties should support and participate, as appropriate and relevant, in such processes.	1) Wilson, D. C. and Delaney, A.E. (2005) Scientific knowledge and participation in the governance of fisheries in the North Sea. In: Participation in fisheries governance, Gray, T.S. (Ed.). Review: Methods and Technologies in Fish Biology and Fisheries, 4. Springer. Netherlands: 319-341 (2) FAO (2014) Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication. Preface (3) (2014) FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication. Paragraph 2.4

While terms are not limited to a specific section, the color coding indicates in which section the term is used most.

GSSI GLOSSARY

TERM	SECTION A	SECTION B	SECTION D	DEFINITION	REFERENCE
Stakeholder	●	●		An individual or group of individuals, whether at institutional or personal level, who has an interest or claim that has the potential of being impacted by or having an impact on a given activity. This interest or claim can be stated or implied and direct or indirect. Stakeholders and stakeholder groups can be at the household, community, local, regional, national, or international levels.	ISO 26000, Working Draft 3 (Rev), definition 3.17.
Standard	●	●		Document approved by a recognized organization or arrangement, that provides, for common and repeated use, rules, guidelines or characteristics for products or related processes and production methods, with which compliance is not mandatory under international trade rules. It may also include or deal exclusively with terminology, symbols, packaging, marking or labelling requirements as they apply to a product, process or production method.	WTO (1995) Technical Barriers to Trade agreement, Annex 1,2
Steering Board Liaison	●	●		An appointed member of GSSI's Steering Board assigned to support and monitor the Benchmark Process on behalf of the Steering Board.	GSSI
Stock			●	See Fish Stock	
Stock assessment			●	The process of collecting and analysing biological and statistical information to determine the changes in the abundance of fishery stocks in response to fishing, and, to the extent possible, to predict future trends of stock abundance. Stock assessments are based on resource surveys; knowledge of the habitat requirements, life history, and behaviour of the species; the use of environmental indices to determine impacts on stocks; and catch statistics. Stock assessments are used as a basis to assess and specify the present and probable future condition of a fishery.	FAO Term Portal (fisheries *www.fao.org/faoterm*
Stock structure and composition			●	The structure of a particular stock, in terms of its size or age composition or in terms of its species composition (for a multispecies stock) or its separate genetic structure.	Adapted from FAO Term Portal (fisheries) *www.fao.org/faoterm*
Stock under consideration			●	The "stock under consideration" exploited by the unit of certification may be one or more biological stocks as specified by the stakeholders for certification. The certification applies only to products derived from the "stock under consideration". In assessing compliance with certification standards, the impacts on the "stock under consideration" of all the fisheries utilizing that "stock under consideration" over its entire area of distribution are to be considered. See also "Unit of Certification"	FAO (2009) Guidelines for the Ecolabelling of Fish and Fishery Products from Marine Capture Fisheries, revision 1
Subcontracting	●	●		A firm, company or individual carrying out a process on products on the behalf of the site audited and is under contract to do so.	GSSI
Supplier	●	●		An organisation supplying food, feed or a service.	GFSI (2013) Guidance Document Version 6.3 Part IV: Glossary of Terms Page 138

While terms are not limited to a specific section, the color coding indicates in which section the term is used most.

GSSI GLOSSARY

TERM	SECTION A	SECTION B	SECTION D	DEFINITION	REFERENCE
Surveillance	●	●		Follow-up audit(s) to assess compliance with the specific requirements of a scheme's standard and to verify the validity of an issued certificate.	GFSI (2013) Guidance Document Version 6.3 Part IV: Glossary of Terms Page 138
Suspension	●	●		The process by which a scheme is temporarily not recognised by GSSI.	GFSI (2013) Guidance Document Version 6.3 Part IV: Glossary of Terms Page 138
Systematic non-compliance			●	Fishery regulations and/or controls are being regularly and repeatedly violated to an extent that threatens the effective implementation of the management strategy (see Management Measures). Non-compliance is closely related to the commonly used term illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. See also "Monitoring, surveillance, control and enforcement (effective and suitable)"	FAO International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing. *http://www.fao.org/docrep/003/y1224e/y1224e00.htm*
Tamper-proof (packaging)	●	●		Made so that one is able to see if anything has been changed, opened, removed, or damaged.	Cambridge dictionaries
Third party	●	●		A person or body that is independent of the organization or person that provides the object of conformity assessment.	(ISO/IEC 17000, 2004, Definition 2.4)
Traceability	●	●		The ability to follow the movement of a product of fisheries or aquaculture or inputs such as feed and seed, through specified stage(s) of production, processing, transport and distribution. (Adapted for GSSI)	FAO (2011) Technical Guidelines for Aquaculture Certification. Paragraph 12.
Transition period for compliance	●	●		A defined period of time by which an organisation shall comply to a series of requirements or standard.	GSSI
Unit of certification (Fisheries)			●	The "unit of certification" is the fishery for which ecolabelling certification is sought, as specified by the stakeholders who are seeking certification. The certification could encompass: the whole fishery, where a fishery refers to the activity of one particular gear-type or method leading to the harvest of one or more species; a sub-component of a fishery, for example a national fleet fishing a shared stock; or several fisheries operating on the same resources. The "stock under consideration" exploited by this fishery (unit of certification) may be one or more biological stocks as specified by the stakeholders for certification. The certification applies only to products derived from the "stock under consideration". In assessing compliance with certification standards, the impacts on the "stock under consideration" of all the fisheries utilizing that "stock under consideration" over its entire area of distribution are to be considered. (2) The "unit of certification" is the fishery for which ecolabelling certification is called for. The certification could encompass: the whole fishery, where a fishery refers to the activity of one particular gear-type or method leading to the harvest of one or more species; a sub-component of a fishery, for example a national fleet	(1) FAO (2009) Guidelines for the Ecolabelling of Fish and Fishery Products from Marine Capture Fisheries, Revision 1. (2) FAO Term Portal (fisheries) www.fao.org/faoterm

(continued on next page)

While terms are not limited to a specific section, the color coding indicates in which section the term is used most.

GSSI GLOSSARY

TERM	SECTION A B D	DEFINITION	REFERENCE
Unit of certification (Fisheries) *(continued from previous page)*		fishing a shared stock; or several fisheries operating on the same resources. The certification applies only to products derived from the "stock under consideration" In assessing compliance with certification standards, the impacts on the "stock under consideration" of all the fisheries utilizing that stock or stocks over their entire area of distribution are to be considered.	
Unscheduled audit	● ●	Audits planned within a defined programme, but without the allocation of a specified programme date.	GFSI (2013) Guidance Document Version 6.3 Part IV: Glossary of Terms
Validation	● ●	An activity to obtain evidence that a requirement is controlled effectively.	GFSI (2013) Guidance Document Version 6.3 Part IV: Glossary of Terms
Verification	● ●	A confirmation, through the review of objective evidence that requirements have been fulfilled.	GFSI (2013) Guidance Document Version 6.3 Part IV: Glossary of Terms
Work program	● ●	A defined series of activities to be carried out within a defined time period.	GSSI

While terms are not limited to a specific section, the color coding indicates in which section the term is used most.

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

www.ourgssi.org

secretariat@ourgssi.org