



POLICY MANUAL

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Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute

Accounting Policy

1. Purpose

- The purpose of this Accounting Policy is to establish guidelines for the accurate and consistent recording, reporting, and management of financial transactions for the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute. This policy is intended to ensure the financial integrity of the organization and compliance with relevant accounting standards and regulatory requirements

2. Scope

- This policy applies to all employees, board members, officers, and contractors involved in the financial management of the organization. The policy covers all financial activities, including budgeting, revenue recognition, expense management, reporting, and audits.

3. Accounting Method

- The Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute will use cash basis of accounting, in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) for nonprofits. Revenues and expenses will be recorded when cash is received or disbursed.

4. Revenue Recognition

- **Grants and Contributions:** Revenue from grants and contributions will be recognized when the organization has an unconditional right to the funds. Conditional grants will be recognized as revenue only when the conditions are substantially met.
- **Program Revenue and Fees:** Revenue from program services and fees will be recognized when fees are received for services performed or delivered.
- **In-Kind Contributions:** Non-cash contributions, such as donated goods or services, will be recognized as revenue and expensed at fair market value at the time of the donation.

5. Expense Management

- **Approval and Authorization:** All expenses must be approved by the Executive Director or authorized designee prior to incurring any obligation. Competitive bids are required for expenses exceeding \$1,500.00 as detailed in the Procurement of Goods and Services Policy.
- **Expense Documentation:** All expenses must be supported by appropriate documentation, such as invoices, receipts, or contracts, and coded to the appropriate expense account.
- **Reimbursement of Expenses:** Employees and board members must submit expense reports within 30 days of incurring expenses, using the organization's Travel & Expense Reimbursement Form.

6. Financial Reporting

- **Monthly Reporting:** The Chief Financial Officer or her/his designee will prepare monthly financial statements, including a Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet) and Statement of Activities (Income Statement), to be reviewed by the Executive Director and Finance Committee.

- **Annual Reporting:** Annual financial statements will be prepared and presented to the Board of Directors for approval for presentation to the Membership. An independent audit or financial review will be conducted triannually or more frequently if required by funding sources or regulatory bodies.
- **Grant Reporting:** The Chief Financial Officer will prepare Financial Reports as required by individual funders, to be reviewed and approved by the Executive Director prior to submission.

7. Budgeting

- **Annual Budget Preparation:** The Chief Financial Officer, in collaboration with the Chief Executive Officer (Executive Director) and cognizant program managers, will prepare an annual budget that outlines projected revenues and expenses. The budget must be reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors and subsequently by the Membership at the annual Membership meeting.
- **Budget Monitoring:** The Finance Committee will review budget-to-actual comparisons on a semi-annual basis and provide recommendations for any necessary adjustments.

8. Internal Controls

- **Segregation of Duties:** Responsibilities for authorizing, recording, and reviewing financial transactions will be separated among different individuals to reduce the risk of errors or fraud.
- **Bank Reconciliations:** All bank accounts will be reconciled on a monthly basis by the Chief Financial Officer or her/his designee. Reconciliations will be forwarded to the Executive Director and GCFI Chair for review and approval.
- **Asset Management:** A fixed asset register will be maintained, and all assets will be tagged and tracked to ensure accountability.

9. Document Retention

- Financial documents, including receipts, invoices, bank statements, and contracts, will be retained for a minimum of seven years, in compliance with regulatory requirements. All documents will be securely stored to ensure confidentiality and data integrity.

10. Compliance and Review

- The Accounting Policy will be reviewed annually by the Finance Committee and updated as necessary to ensure compliance with current laws and best practices. Any changes must be approved by the Board of Directors.

Document History:

*Date: 24 October 2024: Authorized by: Robert Glazer, GCFI Executive Director
Effective: 24 October 2024*

*Date: 1 July 2025: Authorized by Fadilah Ali, GCFI Interim Executive Director
Effective: 1 July 2025*

Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute

Code of Conduct Policy

1. Purpose: The Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI) is committed to advancing sustainable fisheries, healthy marine ecosystems, and inclusive, science-based collaboration across the Gulf of Mexico, Caribbean Sea, and adjacent regions. This Code of Conduct sets out the ethical standards, professional expectations, and behavioral principles that guide all individuals acting on behalf of GCFI.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Promote integrity, professionalism, respect, and accountability;
- Ensure a safe, inclusive, and harassment-free environment;
- Protect the reputation, credibility, and mission of GCFI; and
- Provide clear guidance on acceptable conduct and reporting concerns.

2. Scope: This Policy applies to all individuals associated with GCFI, including but not limited to the individuals listed below. The Policy is applicable during all GCFI-related activities, including conferences, workshops, fieldwork, travel, meetings, online platforms, and communications.

- Board of Directors, Staff and Officers;
- Employees, consultants and volunteers;
- Conference participants, speakers, exhibitors, sponsors, and partners;
- Contractors and representatives acting on behalf of GCFI.

3. Core Values: All Covered Persons are expected to uphold GCFI's core values:

- **Scientific Integrity:** Commitment to accuracy, transparency, and evidence-based decision-making.
- **Respect & Professionalism:** Valuing diverse perspectives, cultures, and experiences.
- **Equity & Inclusion:** Fostering inclusive participation and fair treatment.
- **Collaboration:** Encouraging constructive dialogue and cooperation across sectors.
- **Accountability & Stewardship:** Responsible use of resources and authority.

4. Standards of Professional Conduct: Individuals representing GCFI must:

- Act honestly, ethically, and in good faith;
- Comply with all applicable laws, regulations, and GCFI policies;
- Conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times;
- Avoid actions that could undermine trust in GCFI or its mission;
- Respect cultural norms across the Gulf and Caribbean while adhering to this Code.

5. Respectful, Inclusive & Harassment-Free Environment: GCFI is committed to providing an environment free from harassment, discrimination, bullying, intimidation, or retaliation.

Prohibited conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Discrimination based on race, color, ethnicity, nationality, language, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, marital status, socioeconomic status, or any other protected characteristic;

- Sexual harassment, including unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or inappropriate verbal, non-verbal, or physical conduct;
- Verbal abuse, threats, stalking, intimidation, or sustained disruption of meetings or events;
- Inappropriate physical contact or unwelcome attention.

6. Conferences, Events & Field Activities: During GCFI related events and activities, participants must:

- Follow event-specific guidelines and instructions from organizers;
- Engage in respectful dialogue, even when expressing disagreement;
- Refrain from disruptive, aggressive, or unsafe behavior;
- Respect local communities, fishers, Indigenous peoples, and host-country regulations;
- Adhere to all health, safety, and safeguarding requirements.

7. Health, Safety & Wellbeing: Covered Persons are responsible for:

- Following applicable health, safety, and security protocols;
- Avoiding actions that may endanger themselves or others;
- Reporting hazards, incidents, or injuries promptly;
- Refraining from excessive alcohol consumption or substance use during GCFI activities.

8. Conflicts of Interest: Covered Persons must disclose any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest that could influence—or appear to influence—their judgment or actions on behalf of GCFI. Examples include:

- Financial interests in organizations seeking to influence GCFI decisions;
- Personal, professional, or familial relationships that may affect impartiality.

Disclosed conflicts will be managed in accordance with GCFI's Conflict of Interest Policy.

9. Gifts, Hospitality & Anti-Bribery

- Gifts, hospitality, or favors must not be offered or accepted if they could improperly influence decisions or compromise independence;
- Bribery, kickbacks, facilitation payments, or improper inducements are strictly prohibited;
- Any permitted gifts or hospitality must comply with GCFI policies and applicable laws.

10. Use of GCFI Resources: GCFI funds, equipment, data, intellectual property, logos, and time must be used responsibly and solely for authorized purposes.

Misuse, theft, fraud, or unauthorized use of GCFI resources or information is prohibited.

11. Confidentiality, Data Protection & Intellectual Property: Covered Persons must:

- Protect confidential, sensitive, and proprietary information;
- Comply with applicable data protection and privacy laws;
- Respect intellectual property rights, including proper citation of scientific work;
- Not disclose confidential information without authorization, during or after their association with GCFI.

12. Communications, Media & Social Media

- Public statements on behalf of GCFI must be accurate and authorized;
- Communications should reflect professionalism, respect, and cultural sensitivity;
- Social media use must not misrepresent GCFI, disclose confidential information, or harass others;
- Personal opinions related to GCFI topics must be clearly identified as personal.

13. Environmental & Social Responsibility: Consistent with its mission, GCFI expects Covered Persons to:

- Minimize environmental impacts during activities and events;
- Promote sustainable practices and responsible resource use;
- Respect coastal and marine ecosystems and dependent communities.

14. Reporting Concerns & Whistleblower Protection

- Suspected violations of this Code should be reported promptly to the GCFI Executive Director, Board Chair, or designated reporting mechanism;
- Reports may be made confidentially and, where permitted by law, anonymously;
- Retaliation against individuals who raise concerns in good faith is strictly prohibited.

15. Investigation & Enforcement

- All reported concerns will be reviewed promptly, fairly, and confidentially;
- GCFI will take appropriate corrective action when violations are substantiated;
- Consequences may include warnings, removal from events, termination of contracts or roles, board action, or legal remedies.

16. Acknowledgment & Compliance: All individuals covered by this Code are expected to read, understand, and comply with its provisions. Failure to comply may result in disciplinary or corrective action.

Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute

Conflict of Interest Policy

Purpose of Policy

This conflict of interest policy is designed to help directors, officers, and employees of the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI), Inc. identify situations that present potential conflicts of interest and to provide GCFI with a procedure that, if observed, will allow a transaction to be treated as valid and binding even though a director, officer, or employee has or may have a conflict of interest with respect to the transaction. In the event there is an inconsistency between the requirements and procedures prescribed herein and those in federal or state law, the law shall control. All capitalized terms are defined in Part 2 of this policy.

1. History

- a. v1.1
- b. v1.2
 - i. Added section on History
 - ii. Improved readability
 - iii. Added stand-alone acknowledgement form
 - iv. Added Interested party to applicable individuals and companies who may have a potential conflict of interest
 - v. Adds definition of Board Meeting to include in-person or virtual meetings
- c. v1.3
 - i. Added option to include conflict in stand-alone acknowledgement form

2. Definitions

- a. Conflict of Interest: any circumstance described in Part 4 of this Policy.
- a. Interested or Responsible Person: Any director, officer, employee, contractor or member of a committee with governing board-delegated powers who has a direct or indirect financial interest, as defined below.
- b. Financial Interest: A person has a financial interest if they have, directly or indirectly, through business, investment, or family:
- c. Family Member: a spouse, domestic partner, parent, child, or spouse of a child, brother, sister, or spouse of a brother or sister, of a Responsible Person.
- d. Material Financial Interest: a financial interest of any kind that, in view of all the circumstances, is substantial enough that it would, or reasonably could, affect a Interested or Responsible Person's or Family Member's judgment with respect to transactions to which the entity is a party. This includes all forms of compensation.
- e. Agreement or Transaction: any agreement or relationship involving the sale or purchase of goods, services, or rights of any kind, the providing or receipt of a loan or grant, or the establishment of any other type of pecuniary relationship by GCFI. The making of a gift to
- f. Ownership or investment interest: any entity with which the Organization has a transaction or arrangement.
- g. Compensation arrangement: associations with the Organization or with any entity or individual with which the Organization has a transaction or arrangement; or

- h. A potential ownership or investment interest in, or compensation arrangement with, any entity or individual with which the Organization is negotiating a transaction or arrangement.
- i. Board Meeting: A Board meeting refers to any meeting of the Board of Directors and may be either in-person or virtual

3. Purpose of this Policy

The purpose of this policy is to protect the interests of The Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute ("the Organization") when the Organization or a director, officer, or employee of the Organization is contemplating entering into a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interest of a director, officer, or related party. Additionally, this policy will assist directors, officers, and employees of the Organization to identify situations that may present potential conflicts of interest and to provide GCFI with procedures that will allow a transaction to be evaluated with respect to potential conflicts of interest (see Section 4. Conflict of Interest defined). In the event there is an inconsistency between the requirements and procedures prescribed herein and those in federal or state law, the federal or state law shall supersede.

4. Conflict of Interest Defined

For purposes of this policy, the following circumstances shall be deemed to create a Conflict of Interest:

- a. Outside Interests.
 - i. An Agreement or Transaction between GCFI and an Interested or Responsible Person or Family Member.
 - ii. An Agreement or Transaction between GCFI and an entity in which an Interested or Responsible Person or Family Member has a Material Financial Interest or of which such person is a director, officer, agent, partner, associate, trustee, personal representative, receiver, guardian, custodian, conservator, or other legal representative.
- b. Outside Activities.
 - i. An Interested or Responsible Person competing with GCFI in the rendering of services or in any other Agreement or Transaction with a third party.
 - ii. An Interested or Responsible Person's having a Material Financial Interest in; or serving as a director, officer, employee, agent, partner, associate, trustee, personal representative, receiver, guardian, custodian, conservator, or other legal representative of, or consultant to; an entity or individual that competes with GCFI in the provision of services or in any other Agreement or Transaction with a third party.
- c. Gifts, Gratuities and Entertainment. An Interested or Responsible Person accepting gifts, entertainment, or other favors from any individual or entity that:
 - i. does or is seeking to do business with, or is a competitor of GCFI; or
 - ii. has received, is receiving, or is seeking to receive a loan or grant, or to secure other financial commitments from GCFI;
 - iii. is a charitable organization;
 - iv. under circumstances where it might be inferred that such action was intended to influence or possibly would influence the Interested or Responsible Person in the performance of his or her duties. This does not preclude the acceptance of

items of nominal or insignificant value or entertainment of nominal or insignificant value that are not related to any particular transaction or activity of GCFI.

5. Procedures

- a. Before a Board, committee action, agreement, or transaction is acted upon that may involve a Conflict of Interest, a director or committee member having a potential Conflict of Interest shall disclose all facts material to the Conflict of Interest to the Chair of the Board of Directors of the GCFI. If such disclosure occurs during a formal meeting of the Board or one of its committees, such disclosure shall be reflected in the minutes of the meeting.
- b. A director or committee member who plans not to attend a meeting at which he or she has reason to believe that the board or committee will act on a matter in which the person has a Conflict of Interest shall disclose to the chair of the meeting all facts material to the Conflict of Interest. The chair shall report the disclosure at the meeting and the disclosure shall be reflected in the minutes of the meeting.
- c. A person who has a Conflict of Interest shall not participate in or be permitted to hear, the board's or committee's discussion of the matter except to disclose material facts and to respond to questions. Such person shall not attempt to exert his or her personal influence with respect to the matter, either at or outside the meeting.
- d. A person who has a Conflict of Interest with respect to an Agreement or Transaction that will be voted on at a meeting shall not be counted in determining the presence of a quorum for purposes of the vote. The person having a conflict of interest may not vote on the Agreement or Transaction and shall not be present in the meeting room when the vote is taken, unless the vote is by secret ballot. Such person's ineligibility to vote shall be reflected in the minutes of the meeting. For purposes of this paragraph, a member of the board of directors of GCFI has a Conflict of Interest when he or she stands for election as an officer or for re-election as a member of the board of directors.
- e. Interested or Responsible Persons who are not members of the board of directors of GCFI, or who have a Conflict of Interest with respect to an Agreement or Transaction that is not the subject of board or committee action, shall disclose to the Chair or the Chair's designee any Conflict of Interest that such Interested or Responsible Person has with respect to an Agreement or Transaction. Such disclosure shall be made as soon as the Conflict of Interest is known to the Interested or Responsible Person. The Interested or Responsible Person shall refrain from any action that may affect GCFI's participation in such Agreement or Transaction.
- f. In the event it is not entirely clear that a Conflict of Interest exists, the individual with the potential conflict shall disclose the circumstances to the Chair or the Chair's designee, who shall determine whether there exists a Conflict of Interest that is subject to this policy.

6. Confidentiality

Each Interested or Responsible Person shall exercise care not to disclose confidential information acquired in connection with such status or information the disclosure of which might be adverse to the interests of GCFI. Furthermore, an Interested or Responsible Person shall not disclose or use information relating to the business of GCFI for the personal profit or advantage of the

Interested or Responsible Person or a Family Member or the Interested or Responsible Person's company.

7. Review of Policy

- a. Each new Interested or Responsible Person shall be required to review a copy of this Policy and to acknowledge in writing that he or she has done so.
- b. Each Interested or Responsible Person shall annually complete a disclosure form identifying any relationships, positions, or circumstances in which the Interested or Responsible Person is involved that he or she believes could contribute to a Conflict of Interest arising. Such relationships, positions, or circumstances might include service as a director of or consultant to a not-for-profit organization, or ownership of a business that might provide goods or services to GCFI. Each Interested or Responsible Person should also disclose to the board of directors any potential Conflict of Interest that may arise during the course of the year between the submission of annual disclosure forms. Any such information regarding business interests of a Interested or Responsible Person or a Family Member shall be treated as confidential and shall generally be made available only to the Chair, the Executive Director, and any committee appointed to address Conflicts of Interest, except to the extent additional disclosure is necessary in connection with the implementation of this Policy.
- c. This policy shall be reviewed annually by each member of the board of directors. Any changes to the policy shall be communicated immediately to all Interested or Responsible Persons.

Document History:

Date: 24 October 2024: Authorized by: Robert Glazer, Executive Director, Effective: 24 October 2024 (v1.1)

Date: 5 February 2025: Authorized by Robert Glazer, Executive Director, Effective: 5 February 2025 (v1.2)

Date: 1 July 2025: Authorized by Fadilah Ali, Interim Executive Director, Effective: 1 July 2025 (v1.2)

Date: 5 August 2025: Authorized by Fadilah Ali, Interim Executive Director, Effective: 5 August 2025 (v1.3)

Conflict of Interest Declaration Form: No Conflict to Declare

I, _____ (Print Full Name) hereby declare that I am aware of my obligations as outlined in the GCFI Conflict of Interest Policy and have have no current professional, financial or other interest which could: i) significantly impair my objectivity in carrying out my duties for the GCFI Board of Directors, or ii) create an unfair advantage for any person or organization.

Subject to my responsibilities as a GCFI Board member, I shall not disclose any confidential or proprietary information which is made available at GCFI Board meetings or any other confidential information coming to my knowledge.

Signature (Declarant)

Date

Conflict of Interest Declaration Form: Conflict to Declare

I, _____ (Print Full Name) hereby declare that I am aware of my obligations as outlined in the GCFI Conflict of Interest Policy and have have current professional, financial or other interest which could: i) significantly impair my objectivity in carrying out my duties for the GCFI Board of Directors, or ii) create an unfair advantage for any person or organization.

Subject to my responsibilities as a GCFI Board member, I shall not disclose any confidential or proprietary information which is made available at GCFI Board meetings or any other confidential information coming to my knowledge.

I have the following conflict/s of interest to declare:

Description of conflict/s of interest:

Action/s to avoid or manage a conflict/s of interest

The following action/s is proposed to avoid or manage the declared conflict/s of interest:

| | |
|--|---|
| <p><i>I hereby declare that:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>the above details are correct to the best of my knowledge;</i> • <i>I undertake to immediately inform the GCFI Chair of any changes to my circumstances that could affect the contents of this declaration and to provide an amended declaration/s using this declaration form; and</i> • <i>I make this declaration in good faith and commit to the implementation of any agreed management action.</i> | <p><i>I hereby declare that:</i></p> <p><i>I have received and appropriately noted this declaration and confirm the agreed management actions.</i></p> |
| <p><i>Signature (Declarant)</i></p> <p><i>Date:</i></p> | <p><i>Signature (GCFI Chair)</i></p> <p><i>Date:</i></p> |

Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute

Credit Card Policy

1. Purpose of Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide employees and contractors with information about the GCFI credit card program and to provide a guide for the use of their GCFI issued credit card in a manner which is consistent and fair to each employee or contractor, while managing costs and ensuring compliance with Federal and State regulations and GCFI policies. The policy is also meant to ensure that accounts are managed in a timely manner to allow GCFI's accounting system to maintain an accurate and current picture of the status of accounts. The GCFI credit card is a privilege and not a right and can be revoked at any time as articulated subsequently in this document.

In an effort to provide employees and contractors with an efficient, cost-effective method for making small-dollar purchases of goods or services as required during the normal course of their duties, or when traveling for approved business purposes, the GCFI has established a credit card program with American Express and Capital One.

As a card holder, the employee or contractor will have: 1) a flexible and convenient way to pay for goods, services, and travel-related expenses, 2) reduced need to request purchase orders and check requests, 3) reduced need to use personal funds and request reimbursement.

2. Definitions

- a) Corporate headquarters – the collective officers of the corporation as defined in Senior Officer. This may or may not include a physical address or location.
- b) Chief Compliance Officer – a Senior Officer overseeing compliance with the policies and procedures of GCFI. This will be the GCFI CFO or his/her designee.
- c) Senior Officer(s) – this is any Officer of the corporation which may include the Executive Director, Assistant Executive Director, Treasurer, Chief Financial Officer, Executive Secretary, Chief Compliance Officer, or any of their designees
- d) Procurement Officer – a GCFI senior officer(s) overseeing procurement activities.
- e) Shoebox – the cloud-based location where receipts and other financial documents related to transactions are stored. Each credit card holder will have access to the Shoebox.
- f) Supervisor – this is the person to whom you directly report. In the case of Project Managers, this is the Executive Director or their designee

3. How to request a GCFI Credit Card

All employees or contractors conducting business or making purchases on behalf of the GCFI or its subsidiaries are eligible to request a GCFI-issued credit card. A Credit Card should be requested for an employee or contractor who will be traveling or conducting other business on behalf of the GCFI, and a credit card should be requested when the employee or contractor is responsible to make payments for goods and services purchased on behalf on the GCFI. Please note that personal expenses are not to be paid for with GCFI issued credit cards. Any violation will be subject to disciplinary action which may include revocation of the card or dismissal.

Cards are issued in the employee or contractor's name and are paid by the GCFI, but safekeeping the card is the responsibility of the card holder.

Sharing of the card is prohibited, even between members of the same department or division within GCFI.

Transaction and monthly limits will be authorized by your Supervisor and the appropriate GCFI corporate officer.

Card holders and their supervisors will be expected to adhere to the guidance set forth in this policy.

Any violator may be subject to disciplinary action, including but not limited to credit card revocation or dismissal, and/or the requirement to reimburse the GCFI for any unauthorized charges.

4. Guidelines, Responsibilities, and Expectations of the Cardholder

- a) Prior Approvals. Card holders *must* obtain prior approval for expenses incurred on behalf of the GCFI and paid for with a GCFI credit card, including but not limited to travel and lodging accommodations, conference registration, professional license and membership subscriptions, annual dues, etc. Please note that the approval process requires that the GCFI charge code must be submitted when requesting approval of a credit card charge.
- b) Itemized receipts. Card holders must obtain an itemized receipt for each purchase. Card holders should be especially mindful of this when purchasing meals, as some restaurants will only return the summary receipt with the total and the tip. In this case, a detailed receipt which lists the meals and drinks purchased must be requested and retained.
- c) Verifying receipts. All card holders must verify their Credit Card charges or create expense reports for their Credit Card charges even if the transaction is a credit (refund) or fraud. Verification means providing receipts, invoices, or similar documentation to provide evidence of the transaction.
 - i. All credit card charge verifications must be submitted within 30 days of the charge or the charge may be disallowed and the credit card holder may be responsible for incurred charges. Furthermore, Credit Card Charges that have not been verified within 30 days of the date of purchase will result in the card being effectively deactivated. GCFI corporate staff will immediately alert the employee or contractor and their supervisor that this has been done. The credit card can be reactivated once all transactions have been reconciled. If a cardholder falls more than 30 days behind in reconciling their credit card transactions twice in a fiscal year, reactivation of the card will be up to the cardholder's supervisor or GCFI senior officer.
- d) All credit card activity, expense reports, and verifications, for all card holders, will be reviewed each month and audited when determined to be appropriate and allowable to ensure that card holders are following the guidelines as set forth in this policy. A report of findings will be prepared and distributed to each Senior Officer at the conclusion of any audit.
- e) For those receipts not included in an expense report, all receipts must be uploaded to the Shoebox in the GCFI Dropbox folder with the following information in the title of the uploaded

file: [Vendor] [Date] [Amount] [Item] [GCFI Charge Code] [Mechanism of Payment]. The mechanism of payment, for example, may be AMEX, CapitalOne, etc.

- f) Lost receipt. In the event that a receipt is lost, card holders must complete a Missing Receipt Affidavit and upload the Affidavit along with the information detailed in the preceding paragraph. In this instance, the title of the file should also include the word “Affidavit” at the beginning of the file name.

For more information on all procedures, please contact your supervisor of the GCFI corporate office.

5. Procurement Guidelines for Credit Card Use

The credit card program is intended for GCFI business, therefore GCFI issued credit cards may not be used for personal expenses. If a card holder accidentally uses their GCFI credit card for personal expenses, they should alert their manager and contact the Procurement Department (procurement@gcfi.org) on how to reimburse the GCFI for the expense. Documentation of reimbursement should be either uploaded to the Shoebox or attached to the transaction in the expense report.

- a) Single Procurement Guidelines. Each single purchase may be comprised of multiple items, but the total cannot exceed the single purchase dollar limit defined in the Procurement Policy.
- b) Exceeding limits. When purchases exceed the limit established by GCFI’s Procurement Policy, the normal procedures of using purchase orders, contracts, or alternative purchasing methods must be followed.
- c) Cost of items or services. The least expensive item that meets your basic needs must be sought except if a compelling argument is made using the procedures described in the procurement policy.
- d) Alignment with the procurement policy. Cardholders must follow the GCFI administrative procedures as defined in the Procurement Policy to ensure that sufficient appropriations are available prior to making a purchase.
- e) Procurement planning. Use of the GCFI Credit Card is not intended to replace effective procurement planning which may enable volume discounts. (Refer to Prohibited Uses for card restrictions.)
- f) Splitting purchases for the same vendor. Purchases must not be split to circumvent procurement regulations.
- g) Conflicts of Interest. The GCFI Credit Card must not be used for purchases when the Cardholder has a personal interest, or knowledge, regarding any vendor which would create a conflict of interest. An example is buying from a relative or close friend. For more detailed information, please review and make sure you understand the guidelines in the Travel and Entertainment Policy, prior to making travel and entertainment purchases on your card.

For more information on Procurement Guidelines and Procedures, please refer to the GCFI Procurement Guidelines policy.

6. Prohibited and Restricted Uses

Certain purchases are generally prohibited including but not limited to:

- a) Weapons

- b) Gift Cards: Gift cards are considered taxable income to the recipient and in some circumstances are viewed as additional compensation when given to regular or student employees or contractors. In the unusual circumstance that the purchase of gift cards is approved by a Senior Officer, card holders must contact Accounting Services to discuss the purchase and the appropriate process necessary to collect any required tax information and supporting documentation.
- c) Bulk Alcohol Purchases: Bulk purchases of alcohol (i.e. alcohol purchases in excess of the amount allowable with a business meal, as noted in the GCFI's Travel and Entertainment Policy) are prohibited without prior written approval of a Senior Officer for GCFI-sponsored events, in which case cannot be paid for with a GCFI issued credit card. When the GCFI is hosting an event where alcohol will be served, a reputable third-party caterer, holding a valid liquor license, must be hired for any alcohol service. Distribution or service by any GCFI employee or contractor exposes the GCFI and the employee or contractor to substantial legal and financial risks and is strictly prohibited. Violators will be subject to disciplinary action. Please refer to the Travel and Entertainment Policy for guidelines related to alcohol purchases.
- d) Charitable Contributions: GCFI's not-for-profit status is specific to the fulfillment of the GCFI's mission. Regulations prohibit GCFI from making contributions to other not-for-profit entities that are outside of GCFI's mission. Contributions made to such organizations could jeopardize the GCFI's not-for-profit status.
- e) Hazardous Chemicals and Radioactive Materials: Purchase of these materials require pre-approval by the Director of Environmental Health and Safety in addition to card holder's Senior Officer. There are strict federal regulations surrounding such purchases.
- f) Political Contributions: Contributions to political candidates and political parties are strictly prohibited for 501(c)3 organizations. Making contributions would jeopardize GCFI's not-for-profit status. Paying for a plate or table at a political dinner or other similar engagement is viewed as a contribution when the cost of the dinner is lower than the amount paid, therefore is also prohibited.
- g) Prescription Drugs
- h) Gifts or flowers for individual employees or contractor for celebrations or condolences
- i) Gifts or prizes to students unless there is a programmatic purpose
- j) Travel Insurance (without prior approval)
- k) IT Hardware and Software: Purchase of IT hardware, software, and other services requires pre-approval by the Chief Information Officer in addition to the card holder's Senior Officer, to ensure compatibility with existing systems as well as agreement on future replacement requirements.
- l) Cash Advances (without prior approval)
- m) Traffic and/or parking violations fines, and towing
- n) Repairs to personal vehicles when used for GCFI travel
- o) Gasoline purchases when mileage is being reimbursed
- p) Celebratory events where there is no business purpose, including employee or contractor or student birthdays, baby or wedding showers or gifts. For annual office holiday or end of year function, a nominal amount, (a reasonable amount) may be covered by a departmental budget but must be approved in advance by the appropriate Senior Officer.
- q) Personal Entertainment expenses (movies, spa visits, golf outings, optional conference activities not included in the general conference fee)

Any exception to these prohibitions requires the advance approval of the appropriate Corporate Officer and, in some cases, outside authorities such as funding entities, legal counsel, or independent auditors.

Contact Procurement (procurement@gcfi.org) if you have any questions about the allowability of a particular purchase or about this policy.

7. Fraudulent Use of the Credit Card

The term “fraudulent use” refers to the use of the card with a deliberately planned purpose and intent to deceive and thereby gain a wrongful advantage for oneself or others. In addition to the GCFI receiving reimbursement from the cardholder, any or all of the following actions may occur when fraudulent use of the card occurs:

- a) Immediate suspension of card privileges.
- b) Removal of cardholder’s purchasing authority.
- c) Formal disciplinary action, which may result in the termination of employment.
- d) Any actions deemed appropriate by the GCFI, including criminal prosecution.

Lost credit cards or Fraudulent Activity. Lost credit cards and fraudulent activity must be reported immediately to the GCFI Financial Office.

8. Policy History

- a. V 1.1
- b. V 1.2. (January 2025)
 - i. Reformatted to improve usability, and
 - ii. Added section on Intention of this Policy,
 - iii. Added section on Guidelines, Responsibilities, and Expectations of the Cardholder
 - iv. Added section on Procurement Guidelines for Credit Card Use
 - v. Added section on Lost credit cards or Fraudulent Activity
- c. V 1.3. (January 2025)
 - i. Added section on History
 - ii. Added section on Definitions
- d. V1.4 (February 2025)
 - i. Included both Employees and Contractors as individuals who this policy is relevant to.

Credit Card Policy Acknowledgement Form

I, _____ (Print Full Name) acknowledge that I have read the GCFI Credit Card Policy and agree to adhere without exceptions to its standards and provisions. I recognize that non-compliance may result in disciplinary actions.

Signature

Date

Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute

Fraud Detection and Prevention Policy

9. Purpose

The purpose of this Fraud Detection and Prevention Policy is to safeguard the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute's assets, ensure financial integrity, and establish mechanisms for the prevention, detection, and response to fraudulent activities. This policy is applicable to all staff, board members, volunteers, and contractors of the organization.

2. Scope

This policy covers all forms of fraud, including but not limited to, financial misrepresentation, theft, embezzlement, forgery, corruption, and any other act intended to defraud or harm the organization. It applies to all programs, operations, and activities of the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute.

3. Definition of Fraud

Fraud is defined as any intentional act or omission designed to deceive others, resulting in the victim suffering a loss and/or the perpetrator achieving a gain. Examples of fraudulent activities include, but are not limited to:

- **Misappropriation of Assets:** Theft of funds, property, or supplies.
- **Financial Misstatement:** Intentional misreporting of financial information.
- **Expense Reimbursement Fraud:** Submitting false or inflated expense claims.
- **Vendor Fraud:** Engaging in kickbacks, false billing, or conflicts of interest in procurement activities.
- **Misuse of Resources:** Using organization resources for personal benefit without authorization.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

1. **Board of Directors:** The Board has overall responsibility for monitoring the risk of fraud and ensuring the organization has appropriate systems in place to detect and prevent fraud.
2. **Executive Director:** The Executive Director is responsible for implementing and maintaining this policy, promoting a culture of honesty and ethical behavior, and ensuring appropriate internal controls are in place.
3. **Chief Financial Officer:** The Chief Financial Officer is responsible for monitoring financial transactions, conducting reconciliations, and reviewing financial reports for signs of fraud or irregularities.
4. **Employees and Volunteers:** All staff and volunteers have a duty to report any suspicious activities or concerns about possible fraud and to comply with established internal controls.

10. Internal Controls for Fraud Prevention

1. **Segregation of Duties:** Key financial responsibilities such as authorizing payments, processing transactions, and reconciling bank accounts will be segregated among different individuals to reduce the risk of fraud.
2. **Approval Hierarchies:** All expenses and financial transactions must be approved in accordance with established limits and by authorized personnel only.
3. **Bank Reconciliations:** Bank reconciliations will be performed monthly by an individual who does not have check-signing authority or record-keeping responsibilities.

4. **Vendor Management:** A vendor approval process will be established to ensure all vendors are legitimate. Periodic reviews of vendor activity will be conducted.
5. **Asset Protection:** A register of the organization's physical and financial assets will be maintained, and access to these assets will be restricted to authorized personnel.

11. Fraud Detection and Monitoring

1. **Audits:** Regular audits of financial and operational processes will be conducted to identify any potential irregularities.
2. **Whistleblower Mechanism:** A confidential reporting system will be established, allowing employees, volunteers, and stakeholders to report suspicious activities without fear of retaliation.
3. **Red Flags:** Employees will be trained to identify potential indicators of fraud, such as unexplained discrepancies in financial records, missing documentation, or irregular vendor activity.

12. Reporting Fraud

1. **Reporting Process:** Any suspected fraud must be reported immediately to the Executive Director or the Chair of the Finance Committee. If the Executive Director is implicated, reports should be made directly to the Chairman of the Board of Directors.
2. **Confidentiality:** All reports will be treated confidentially to the extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct an adequate investigation.
3. **Whistleblower Protection:** The Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute will protect whistleblowers from retaliation or adverse consequences as a result of reporting suspected fraud in good faith.

13. Investigation Procedures

1. **Preliminary Assessment:** The Executive Director or Board of Directors will conduct a preliminary assessment to determine the credibility of the report and decide if a formal investigation is warranted.
2. **Formal Investigation:** If warranted, a formal investigation will be conducted, which may involve internal auditors, external accountants, or legal counsel, depending on the nature and severity of the alleged fraud.
3. **Disciplinary Action:** If fraud is confirmed, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken, which may include termination of employment, legal action, or reporting to law enforcement authorities.

14. Training and Awareness

- **Employee Training:** All employees and volunteers will receive periodic training on fraud prevention, detection, and reporting.
- **Fraud Detection and Prevention Policy:** The organization's Fraud Detection and Prevention Policy will be communicated to all employees and reinforced regularly to promote a culture of integrity and transparency.

15. Review and Updates

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Finance Committee and updated as necessary to reflect changes in the operating environment or applicable laws. Any significant changes must be approved by the Board of Directors.

Document History:

*Date: 24 October 2024: Authorized by: Robert Glazer, GCFI Executive Director
Effective: 24 October 2024*

*Date: 1 July 2025: Authorized by Fadilah Ali, GCFI Interim Executive Director
Effective: 1 July 2025*

Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute

Grievance Policy

This Grievance Policy, and the language contained herein, does not create a contract between Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (the “Institute”) and any third party, including without limitation, any employee, volunteer, contractor, stakeholder, or member of the institute. This document does not create any contractual rights or entitlements. The Institute reserves the right to revise the contents of this document, in whole or in part, consistent with applicable law. No promises or assurances, whether written or oral, which are contrary or inconsistent with the terms of this paragraph create any contract of employment or other type of contract.

1. Introduction

This Grievance Policy is established to provide a fair and transparent process for addressing grievances within the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute. We recognize the importance of fostering a respectful and inclusive work environment where everyone feels heard and valued. This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, contractors, stakeholders, and members of our organization.

2. Scope

This policy covers grievances related to any aspect of employment or involvement with the Institute, including but not limited to:

- a) Harassment or discrimination based on race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, or any other protected class under applicable law.
- b) Workplace conflicts or disputes.
- c) Violations of Institute policies and/or procedures.
- d) Any other concerns affecting the well-being of individuals within the Institute.
- e) Confidentiality and non-retaliation
- f) Informal Resolution

We encourage individuals to resolve grievances informally whenever possible. This may involve discussing the issue with the person(s) directly involved or seeking guidance from a supervisor, manager, or the Executive Director.

3. Formal Grievance Procedure

- a) Submission of Grievance

If an individual (the “Grievant”) is unable to resolve the matter informally or if the nature of the grievance requires a formal process, the Grievant may submit a written grievance to their immediate supervisor or, if the grievance involves their supervisor, to the next level of management or to the Executive Director of the Institute. If the grievance involves the Executive Director, the Grievant may submit the grievance to the Chair of the Board of Directors of the Institute. Any grievance must be submitted no later than one hundred and twenty days following the incident giving rise to the grievance.

The written grievance must include the following information:

- i. Name and contact information and relationship to the Institute.
- ii. Date of the incident(s) giving rise to the grievance.
- iii. Detailed description of the incident(s) or concern(s) including relevant dates, times, and individuals involved.

iv. Any supporting documentation or evidence, if available.

b) Investigation and Resolution

Upon receipt of a formal written grievance, the Institute will promptly initiate an investigation. The investigation will be conducted by a three person ad-hoc grievance review committee (2 members of the BOD and 1 voting member of the Institute), who have no direct involvement in the matter being investigated (the "Grievance Committee"). The Grievance Committee will be appointed by the Executive Director with guidance from the Chair. The investigation may involve gathering information, conducting interviews, reviewing relevant documents, or any other methods the Grievance Committee deems appropriate.

c) Timelines

The Executive Director will appoint the ad-hoc Grievance Committee no later than 10 business days after receipt of the completed written grievance. The Grievant will be notified that their grievance has been received by the grievance committee no later than 20 business days after receipt of the completed written grievance. The Grievant will also be notified of the ad-hoc Grievance Committee members responsible for reviewing their case. To the extent possible, the Institute will aim to make a first resolution of the issue within 45 days after notice of receipt to the Grievant. The Institute will provide the findings of the investigation in writing and corrective actions to be taken by the Institute (if any) to the Grievant. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary herein, the time required under this policy may be extended depending on the complexity of the grievance or other relevant circumstances. The Institute will communicate the anticipated timeframe and any extension of the timeframe for resolution to the Grievant.

Based on the Grievance Committee's findings of the investigation, the Institute will take any appropriate actions to address the grievance, as determined in the Institute's sole discretion. This may include disciplinary measures (including expulsion or suspension from the Institute), training, or any other action deemed appropriate by the ad-hoc Grievance Committee to resolve the matter.

d) Appeal Process

If the Grievant is dissatisfied with the outcome, they may appeal the decision of the Grievance Committee. The appeal should be submitted in writing to the Executive Director, or the Chair if the Executive Director is the subject of the grievance, no later than 15 days after the Grievant's receipt of the decision of the Grievance Committee. The appeal should clearly state the grounds for the appeal and any additional information or evidence.

The Executive Committee of the Institute will review the appeal and may conduct additional investigations, as determined necessary in the Executive Committee's sole discretion. The decision of the Executive Committee will be final and will be communicated in writing to the Grievant.

e) Confidentiality and Prohibition of Retaliation.

The Institute will keep any grievance confidential to the extent possible, but confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where it may interfere with the Institute's ability to conduct a thorough investigation. Nothing in this policy is intended to interfere with an employee's right to discuss the terms and conditions of employment with others and/or to report conduct to a government agency charged with enforcement of laws.

The Institute prohibits any form of retaliation against individuals who bring forth grievances in good faith and/or who participate in the investigation of a grievance. Retaliation means any discrimination or adverse action, such as intimidation, threats, or coercion taken against an employee because he or she submits a grievance under this policy or assists in an investigation of a grievance. Retaliation is a serious violation of this policy and should be reported immediately as set forth above. Any person who engages in retaliatory conduct may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or expulsion from the Institute, as applicable.

4. Record Keeping

Records of all grievances, including informal and formal processes, will be maintained in a confidential manner. These records will be retained for 3 years following the resolution of grievance.

5. Policy Review

This grievance policy will be reviewed periodically by the Executive Committee to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with applicable laws and regulations. Any necessary revisions will be made by the Institute's Board of Directors, or the Board's designee, and communicated to all individuals within the scope of this policy. The Executive Director has the authority and discretion to interpret this policy except with regard to any grievance of which the Executive Director is the subject.

By implementing this grievance policy, we aim to foster a culture of respect, fairness, and open communication within our non-profit conservation organization.

Document History:

Date: 24 October 2024: Authorized by: Robert Glazer, GCFI Executive Director

Effective: 24 October 2024

Date: 1 July 2025: Authorized by Fadilah Ali, GCFI Interim Executive Director

Effective: 1 July 2025

Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute

Procurement of Goods and Services Policy

1. Purpose

This policy sets forth the procedures for obtaining competitive quotes for the procurement of goods and services to ensure transparency, cost-effectiveness, and fairness in purchasing decisions.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees and contractors involved in the procurement of goods and services on behalf of the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI). This policy applies to hotels used as meeting venues, contractors whose contract value exceeds prescribed thresholds, as well as vendors of any other goods and services whose value exceeds prescribed thresholds.

3. General Guidelines

- a) The least expensive item that meets your basic needs must be sought. Purchasers must follow the GCFI administrative procedures as defined herein to ensure that sufficient appropriations are available prior to making a purchase.
- b) Use of the GCFI Credit Card is not intended to replace effective procurement planning which may enable volume discounts. (Refer to Prohibited Uses for card restrictions.)
- c) Purchases must not be split to circumvent procurement regulations.
- d) Procurement guidelines must not be circumvented must for purchases when the purchaser has a personal interest, or knowledge, regarding any vendor which would create a conflict of interest. An example is buying from a relative or close friend.

4. Thresholds for Quotes

- a) Purchases under USD 1,500

Purchases under USD 1,500 do not require multiple quotes. Nevertheless, principles identifying the best value for money must be followed.

- b) Purchases Between USD 1,500 and USD 5,000

For any purchase of goods or services where the total value is greater than \$1,500 but less than \$5,000, a minimum of two email quotations must be obtained and provided PRIOR to purchasing the goods/services. Authorization is required by a GCFI Financial Officer before purchases may be completed. The GCFI Email Quote Form must be used to submit the request for approval to the GCFI Financial Officer.

- c) Purchases Above USD 5,000

For any purchase of goods or services where the total value is USD 5000 or more, a minimum of three written quotations must be obtained. and provided PRIOR to purchasing the goods/services. Authorization is required by a GCFI Financial Officer before purchases may be completed. The GCFI

Written Quotation Form must be used to submit the request for approval to the GCFI Financial Officer. Documentation must be attached to the form from the proposed vendors to substantiate the bids.

5. Procedures for Obtaining Quotes

1. Email or Telephone Quotes (for purchases between USD 1,500 and USD 5,000)

- i. Contact at least two suppliers via telephone or email to obtain price quotes. Screenshots of online vendors will serve as approved documentation.
- ii. Document the following details for each supplier on the GCFI Quotation form :
 - Name of the supplier.
 - Name of the individual providing the quote.
 - Date of the call or email.
 - Detailed description of the goods or services. (Note that insufficient details will result in rejection of the purchase or delay in authorization.)
 - Quoted price.
- iii. The documented telephone/email quotes must be recorded and submitted with the purchase requisition for review and approval.

2. Written Quotes (for purchases of USD 5,000)

- i. Solicit written quotes from at least three different suppliers.
- ii. Each supplier bidding on the goods or services must provide a letter detailing their bid specifications and pricing on their letterhead.
- iii. Document the following details for the three suppliers on the GCFI Purchase Requisition form:
 - Supplier's name and contact information
 - Detailed description of the goods or services. (Note that insufficient details will result in rejection of the purchase or delay in authorization.)
 - Pricing, including any applicable taxes, shipping costs, and other charges.
 - Validity period of the quote.
 - Copy of the original solicitation that includes any specific requirements, qualifications, etc
 - In cases in which factors other than comparative cost should be considered (e.g., geographic location, quality of facilities, specialized knowledge, etc) a Value for Money (VFM) Assessment should be provided that describes these non-monetary considerations. A template for VFM Assessments is appended to this Policy.
- iv. All written quotes should be attached to the purchase requisition for review and approval.

6. Exemptions and Special Circumstances

Sole Source Procurement

In cases where only one supplier is available for the required goods or services, a VFM Assessment must be provided and evidence provided of unique qualifications that justify a sole-source procurement. Approval must be obtained from the procurement manager prior to committing to, and entering into, any transaction.

7. Emergency Purchases

In situations of urgent necessity where the regular procurement process cannot be followed (e.g., equipment failure or safety issues), an exemption may be granted by the GCFI Executive Director, CFO, or Assistant ED. The reason for bypassing the procurement process must be documented and approved by the GCFI Executive Director, CFO, or Assistant ED.

8. Existing Contracts and Framework Agreements

If goods or services are procured under an existing contract or framework agreement, the requirement for obtaining additional quotes may be waived. Nevertheless, any offer to provide goods or services by the Contractor that are outside of the defined goods or services in the existing contract must still follow the procurement guidelines of a new procurement request as defined in the above sections.

9. Approval Process

All procurement requests must be submitted with the required quotes and documentation for review.

Final approval for purchases must be granted by the appropriate financial officer, manager, or other authorized signatory, in line with the organization's procurement approval hierarchy.

10. Record Keeping

All records of telephone and written quotes, along with the associated documentation, will be kept on file for audit purposes. Records will be maintained for a minimum of three years after the date of purchase.

11. Compliance

Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action, including the cancellation of orders, revocation of procurement privileges, or other consequences as determined by GCFI management.

Document History:

Date: 24 October 2024: Authorized by: Robert Glazer, GCFI Executive Director

Effective: 24 October 2024

Date: 1 July 2025: Authorized by Fadilah Ali, GCFI Interim Executive Director

Effective: 1 July 2025

Procurement of Goods and Services Declaration Form

I, _____ (Print Full Name) hereby acknowledge that I have read the GCFI Procurement of Goods and Services Policy and agree to adhere without exceptions to its standards and provisions. I recognize that non-compliance may result in disciplinary actions.

Signature

Date

Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute

Social Media Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear guidelines for activity on social media on company accounts and personal accounts related to work, ensuring brand protection, legal compliance, security, and consistent messaging

2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees and the Board of Directors involved in activities and services of the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI).

3. General Guidelines

- When posting content, be sure that everything being presented is factual and/or from a reputable source
- If any misleading or false content is published, it should be corrected or removed as soon as possible
- Avoid posting any content that is discriminatory or offensive
- Avoid posting any politically related content
- When responding to messages and comments be respectful, polite and patient
- When engaging in conversations on GCFI's behalf be very careful and try to avoid making declarations and promises to stakeholders without consulting with the Executive Director, Program Director or specific member of the Board of Directors

4. Guidelines specifically related to animals (especially endangered animals)

- No photos of invasive research being conducted (tagging, tissue collection, receiver administering)
- No photos of anyone holding/touching species, (unless for specific research purposes e.g. release of animal, treatment of injured animals)
- No photos of an animal being captured or trapped as these may be deemed unethical

5. Guidelines specifically related to habitats/ecosystems

- No photos of persons exhibiting poor environmental practice (e.g. touching the reef, removing ecologically important habitat (e.g. sea-grass, mangrove and coral reef)

6. Guidelines specifically related to individuals

- No photos of members with alcoholic beverages (professionally people might not want these photos to be circulating)
- No photos of members/participants in bathing suits (professionally people might not want these photos to be circulating)

Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute

Sustainability Policy

1. Purpose

The Gulf Caribbean and Fisheries Institute (GCFI) in collaboration with the host country will work to ensure that a sustainable approach is taken during GCFI meeting planning. This will be achieved by adhering to good environmental practices and by working to minimise direct and/or indirect environmental impacts of hosting GCFI meetings.

2. Sustainability at the annual GCFI meeting

- We commit to using energy efficiently and, where possible, maximising the use of renewable energy.
- We commit to reduce, reuse and recycle materials as much as possible.
- We commit to minimising total waste production at our annual meeting.
- We commit to demonstrating best practice by avoiding the use of Styrofoam and plastics (especially single use plastics), presenting materials electronically (to avoid unnecessary paper usage) and providing sustainable options to our members.
- We commit to using water efficiently and to avoiding water-intensive event activities. Where possible, preference will be given to venues that possess water efficiency initiatives.
- We commit to minimising transport-related environmental impacts by encouraging participants to engage in sustainable transport modes (e.g. encouraging carpooling). All transport provided by GCFI will be shared forms (e.g. large buses rather than individual cars).
- We commit to encouraging the purchasing of carbon offsets for conference travel and will be working towards incorporating this as an option at registration.
- We commit to sustainable sourcing of materials and using services that are produced under fair and safe labour conditions. Where possible, preference will be given to locally procured materials.
- We are striving to become “paper free”. We will avoid provision of paper delegate packs and discourage exhibitors from providing paper handouts.
- Participants will have the option at online registration to request a printed program at a nominal fee (\$5)

3. Venue & Accommodation

- Where possible, preference will be given to venues and accommodation that possess sustainability credentials in their construction and/or operations.
- We will give preference to venues that have convenient public transport options.
- We will ask that, where possible, lights and air conditioning in meeting venues are only switched on in areas in use.
- We will avoid unnecessarily cold conference venues and request that cooling is set to an optimal temperature (e.g. 24°C).
- We will promote the use of environmentally-friendly cleaning products by venues and cleaning contractors.

4. Signage & Décor & Giveaways

- Where possible, GCFI will use electronic signage.
- GCFI specific materials will be designed for re-use where possible (i.e. by avoiding printing dates or country specific information or logos).
- We will reclaim signage for either re-use, repurposing, salvaging or recycling.
- When producing signage, we will ensure substrates are made from sustainably produced sources and where possible we will use those made from a single material to enable recycling.
- Lanyards for registration tags will be optional and designed for re-use (i.e. no year or venue specific detail). Lanyards will be collected at the end of each meeting for re-use at subsequent events.
- GCFI will bear sustainability in mind when considering the items that are provided to meeting registrants and an opt-in option will be presented to participants at registration.
- GCFI will utilise and encourage electronic options where possible e.g. online proceedings, registration & ticketing. Alternative options will still be made available to participants to ensure inclusivity.

5. Catering

- GCFI will request where possible that any food served at GCFI events be from locally produced / sourced ingredients.
- GCFI will request where possible that any seafood served at GCFI events be sustainably sourced.
- GCFI will request where possible that Fairtrade certified tea and coffee be served during refreshment breaks.
- GCFI encourages attendees to bring their own water bottles. Where possible, water refill stations and/or water jugs using filtered tap water will be provided. Bottled water will not be provided unless when absolutely necessary (e.g. at venues where potability of water may be a concern).
- Reusable/washable china, service wear, utensils etc. will be used whenever possible. In instances where disposable items must be used, preference will be given to items made from renewable sources or those made from recycled products. Plastics and styrofoam materials will be avoided.
- Sorting of waste for recycling is encouraged and where possible, recycling bins will be provided at the venue where possible.
- Condiments will be provided in bulk.
- GCFI pledges to minimise food waste by carefully planning food quantities/monitoring participant numbers. Where possible we will arrange for a food salvage/distribution service for un-served food.

Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute

Travel Authorization Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines and procedures for the approval and management of travel-related expenses to ensure responsible use of the nonprofit's resources and compliance with organizational objectives.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, board members, and contractors who are authorized to travel on behalf of the organization.

3. General Policy

- a) All travel must be pre-approved by the Executive Director, Assistant Executive Director, Chief Financial Officer, or their designees.
- b) Travel should be necessary and contribute to the fulfillment of the organization's mission.
- c) Employees must exercise cost-effective measures when making travel arrangements.
- d) The organization will reimburse approved, reasonable, and necessary expenses related to business travel.

4. Travel Authorization Procedure

4.1 Pre-Trip Authorization

- a) Travel Request Form: All travelers must complete a Travel Request Form
- b) Approval Process:
 - i. Travel requests must be approved in writing by a direct supervisor.
 - ii. If the travel is international or involves significant expenses, additional approval from the Executive Director or Finance Committee may be required.
- c) Budget Considerations: Supervisors must ensure that funds are available in the approved budget before authorizing travel.

4.2 Travel Arrangements

- a) Air Travel: Travelers should book the lowest logical airfare, with preference given to economy class.
- b) Ground Transportation: Use of public transportation, ride-sharing, or car rental should be determined based on cost-effectiveness.
- c) Lodging: Reasonable accommodations should be selected, preferably at mid-range or business-class hotels.
- d) Per Diem Rates: The organization follows per diem rates for meals and incidental expenses as published by the U.S. Department of State.

5. Reimbursement Policy

5.1 Eligible Expenses

- a) Transportation Costs: Airfare, train tickets, mileage for personal vehicles (at the current organizational reimbursement rate), car rental fees, tolls, and parking fees.
- b) Accommodation: Reasonable hotel costs, with a preference for accommodations that offer corporate or nonprofit rates.
- c) Meals and Incidental Expenses: Reimbursed based on actual receipts or per diem rates.

- d) Other Expenses: Business-related expenses such as internet fees, conference registration fees, or business calls.

5.2 Non-Reimbursable Expenses

- a) Personal items or services (e.g., entertainment, in-room movies, or gym fees)
- b) Alcoholic beverages
- c) Costs incurred by accompanying family members or companions
- d) Fines or penalties (e.g., traffic violations)

6. Expense Reporting

6.1 Documentation Requirements: Travelers must submit an expense report within [number] days of return, attaching all relevant receipts and the original Travel Request Form.

6.2 Receipts: Itemized receipts are required for all expenses over \$50.00, except for per diem allowances.

6.3 Expense Approval: The completed expense report must be reviewed and approved by the traveler's supervisor before reimbursement.

7. Travel Advances

- a) Requests for travel advances must be made at least ten days prior to the departure date.
- b) Advances will be reconciled against the final expense report, and any excess funds must be returned within 30 days.

8. Compliance and Auditing

- a) The organization reserves the right to audit travel expenses to ensure compliance with this policy.
- b) Non-compliance may result in denial of reimbursement and/or disciplinary action.

9. Policy Exceptions

- a) Exceptions to this policy may only be approved by the Executive Director and must be documented in writing.

10. Review and Amendments

- a) This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to reflect changes in operational needs or financial conditions.

Document History:

Date: 24 October 2024: Authorized by: Robert Glazer, GCFI Executive Director

Effective: 24 October 2024

Date: 1 July 2025: Authorized by Fadilah Ali, GCFI Interim Executive Director

Effective: 1 July 2025

Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute

Whistleblower Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Whistleblower Policy is to encourage and enable employees, board members, volunteers, and other stakeholders to report in good faith any suspected illegal, unethical, or improper conduct without fear of retaliation. [Nonprofit Organization Name] is committed to maintaining the highest standards of integrity and accountability in its operations and governance.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees, board members, volunteers, and contractors of [Nonprofit Organization Name]. It covers concerns related to, but not limited to, the following:

- Financial irregularities, such as fraud or misappropriation of funds
- Violations of laws or regulations
- Unethical conduct or serious violations of organizational policies
- Abuse of power or authority
- Endangerment to public health or safety
- Any other illegal or unethical behavior

3. Reporting Procedures

1. **How to Report Concerns:** Reports can be made verbally or in writing. Individuals may submit reports confidentially or anonymously if preferred. Reports should be directed to:
2. **Primary Contact:** The Executive Director
3. **Alternate Contact:** The Chair of the Board or the Chair of the Audit/Finance Committee, especially if the concern involves the Executive Director.
4. **Confidentiality:** Reports will be handled with the highest degree of confidentiality possible, consistent with the need to conduct an adequate investigation and to comply with legal obligations. The identity of the whistleblower will not be disclosed without their consent unless required by law.
5. **Anonymous Reporting:** Individuals who wish to report anonymously may do so by sending a written complaint to the organization's office marked "Confidential" and addressed to the appropriate party listed above.

4. Handling of Reports

1. **Acknowledgement:** The recipient of the report will acknowledge receipt of the concern within 10 business days, if the identity of the whistleblower is known.
2. **Initial Assessment:** The Executive Director or designated official will make a preliminary assessment to determine the credibility of the report and decide whether a full investigation is warranted. If the report implicates the Executive Director, the Board Chair will lead the assessment.
3. **Investigation:** A thorough and objective investigation will be conducted promptly. This may involve internal or external investigators depending on the nature and complexity of the concern. All efforts will be made to complete the investigation in a timely manner.
4. **Outcome:** The whistleblower will be informed of the outcome of the investigation, if they are known, and to the extent appropriate without violating privacy or legal obligations.

5. Protection from Retaliation

- **Non-Retaliation Policy:** No individual who in good faith reports a concern or participates in an investigation shall suffer harassment, retaliation, or any adverse employment consequence. Retaliation against a whistleblower is a serious violation of this policy and will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.
- **Reporting Retaliation:** If a whistleblower believes they have been retaliated against, they should report this to the Board Chair or the Chair of the Audit/Finance Committee. Any reported acts of retaliation will be investigated and addressed promptly.

6. Bad Faith Allegations

Any individual who knowingly makes a false or malicious report will be subject to disciplinary action, which may include termination of employment or relationship with the organization. However, an individual who makes a report in good faith but is later found to be mistaken will not be subject to disciplinary action.

7. Responsibilities

- **Board of Directors:** The Board is responsible for overseeing the implementation of this policy and ensuring that concerns are addressed appropriately.
- **Executive Director:** The Executive Director is responsible for maintaining a culture of transparency and openness, ensuring employees and volunteers are aware of this policy, and for handling concerns that do not involve them directly.
- **Employees and Volunteers:** All employees and volunteers are encouraged to report any concerns or suspected wrongdoing in accordance with this policy.

8. Communication and Training

This Whistleblower Policy will be communicated to all employees, board members, and volunteers. Training on the importance of reporting concerns and understanding the protections offered will be provided during onboarding and periodically thereafter.

9. Review and Updates

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Board of Directors or designated committee and updated as necessary to reflect legal and organizational changes. Any significant amendments must be approved by the Board of Directors.

Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute

Travel Request Form

1. Traveler Information

Name: _____
Email _____ Phone: _____

2. Purpose of the Trip:

Destination: _____
Depart Date: _____ Return Date: _____

3. Estimated Expenses

Transportation _____ Lodging * _____
Ground Transport _____ Meals * _____
Conference Fees _____ Miscellaneous _____
Total _____ * -- U.S. Dept of State rates

For Office Use Only:
Travel Request No: _____
Date Received: _____
Approval Status:
 Approved Denied
Notes: _____

4. Budget Code/Grant Name: _____

5. Travel Arrangements

(To be completed after travel is approved and travel is booked)

- Flight Details
- Hotel Details
- Ground Transportation Details

6. Approvals

Supervisor Approval

- Name: _____
- Signature: _____ Date: _____

Procurement Officer Approval

- Name: _____
- Signature: _____ Date: _____

7. Additional Notes/Comments

Traveler's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please submit this form for approval at least ten days before the proposed travel dates

Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute
Sole-Source Justification Form

Date: [MM/DD/YYYY]

1. Purpose and Overview

Purpose:

To provide a documented justification for the sole-source procurement of [goods/services] from [vendor's name].

Overview:

This document details the reasons for selecting [vendor's name] as the sole-source provider for [goods/services] and explains why alternative vendors are not considered viable for this procurement.

2. Description of Goods/Services

- **Goods/Services Required:** [Briefly describe the specific goods or services]
 - **Scope of Work or Specifications:** [Provide any relevant scope, features, or specifications]
 - **Cost Estimate:** [Include the total estimated cost of the procurement]
-

3. Justification for Sole-Source Selection

Reason for Sole-Source Procurement:

- Unique expertise or specialized experience
- Proprietary technology, product, or process
- Compatibility with existing equipment, services, or programs
- Urgent need that cannot be met by other suppliers within the required timeline
- Other (please explain): [Insert other reasons]

Explanation of Reason(s) Selected Above:

[Provide a detailed explanation for each selected reason. Include evidence supporting the need for the specific provider.]

Additional Supporting Information:

[List any additional information, such as existing contracts, unique provider characteristics, or project requirements that further justify the selection of the sole-source vendor.]

4. Alternative Sources Considered

List of Alternative Vendors:

[List other vendors considered, if any. Include the reason each was deemed unsuitable.]

Explanation of Why Alternatives Were Not Selected:

[Describe the limitations or disadvantages of each alternative considered, and why they cannot meet the organization's needs.]

5. Impact of Not Proceeding with Sole-Source Selection

[Explain any potential risks, disruptions, or delays to the nonprofit's mission if this procurement does not proceed as a sole-source.]

6. Approval

Prepared By:

- Name: [Preparer's Name]
- Title: [Preparer's Title]
- Date: [Date]

Approved By:

- Name: [Approver's Name]
 - Title: [Approver's Title]
 - Date: [Date]
-

Attachment(s):

- [Any supporting documents, quotes, or relevant correspondence]

