



Invitation to join the GCOOS-RA Corporation

Background:

The Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS) is an intergovernmental system of marine observations, data management, analysis, and production and delivery of data, products and services to users for socioeconomic benefit. GOOS is coordinated through a group of United Nations agencies, led by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO. Some 100 coastal nations are participating in the GOOS. The Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS) is the U.S. contribution to the GOOS. IOOS consists of an end-to-end system of observations, data management, and production and delivery of products and services. It is designed to meet the following national needs: detecting and forecasting oceanic components of climate variability; facilitating safe and efficient marine operations; ensuring national security; managing resources for sustainable use; preserving and restoring healthy marine ecosystems; predicting and mitigating against coastal hazards; and ensuring public health.

Establishment of the GCOOS-RA:

Eleven operational regional data information centers have been established as part of the U.S. IOOS. In January 2005 a formal Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was signed by participating parties to establish the Gulf of Mexico Coastal Ocean Observing System Regional Association (GCOOS-RA) as the governance organization for a Gulf of Mexico Coastal Ocean Observing System. The GCOOS-RA is committed to (1) providing integrated, remotely sensed and *in situ* information about the northern Gulf of Mexico coastal region and related ecosystems in real or near real time for use by researchers, managers, military, industry, educators and others seeking to understand this coastal environment, manage ocean and littoral resources, and develop commercial uses of marine resources, data and information; (2) developing new sensor technologies; and (3) stimulating innovation and supporting commerce.

In February 2012, the GCOOS-RA filed to become a non-profit, member-based Texas corporation. The corporation then received non-profit status under Section 501(c)(3) of the U. S. Internal Revenue Code retroactive as of the date of formation. The By-laws for the GCOOS-RA Corporation are based on the MOA, which is incorporated by reference. The By-laws, including Board approved changes thereto, may be viewed on the GCOOSs RA web site at http://gcoos.tamu.edu/?page_id=1861

The By-laws describe the functions and responsibilities to enable the corporation to function as the regional node for integrating and coordinating coastal and ocean observing activities in the Gulf of Mexico. This is accomplished, in part, through collaborative, coordinated efforts by the Members of the Corporation, each of which has an interest in the coasts and oceans of the Gulf of Mexico. The By-laws provide a framework for the Members to work cooperatively to accomplish their individual and common missions and to enhance broad user access to ocean knowledge, data, tools, and products.

Membership of the GCOOS-RA:

The Members of the Corporation consist of those U.S. institutions or individuals who are actively engaged in some aspect of coastal ocean observing system elements in the Gulf of Mexico or are principal end users of data, products, and services from coastal ocean observing system elements in the Gulf of Mexico. A voting Member is a Member who (1) represents a signatory organization and/or (2) provides funding to the GCOOS-RA. Funding is defined here to mean an annual contribution to the GCOOS-RA of at least \$2000 U.S. or an in kind contribution to the GCOOSs RA of personnel or equipment of equivalent or greater value.

For these purposes, an organization is an entity that coordinates and carries out business, academic, governmental, or non-governmental organization activities. An individual Member who does not wish to make an annual contribution is non-voting. The privileges of Membership include the right to vote on Directors of the Corporation, to stand for election as a Director, to suggest members on the GCOOS working/advisory groups, to request letters of support from the GCOOS-RA for their proposals and to attend Association meetings, especially the spring Members' meeting.

Non-U.S. organizations or individuals meeting the same criteria as Members may become Associate Members. Associates are non-voting but may attend meetings of the Members and nominate members to the GCOOS-RA Councils, Committees and Task Teams and so participate in activities of the Corporation.

A Member or Associate Member may resign at any time by giving written notice to the Executive Director of the Corporation.

Invitation to Join the GCOOS-RA:

You are invited to join the GCOOS-RA. To accept this invitation, complete and sign the document below.

I accept Membership in the GCOOS-RA Corporation as affirmed by my signature below.

Signature

Date

Representing (Institution, Company, or Self)

Printed Name

Email address

Telephone number

Mailing Address

Please return a signed copy via scan and send as PDF to the attention of Dr. Jorge Brenner, GCOOS Executive Director (jorge.brenner@gcoos.org).