



# Invitation to Become a GCOOS Member

## 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 participants. In the U.S., the lead participating/coordinating agency in GCOOS is the Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS).

IOOS consists of an end-to-end system of observations, data management and production and delivery of products and services designed to meet these 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 and safety. IOOS helped establish and manage 11 regional associations responsible for meeting those needs. The regional observing system for the Gulf of Mexico is the Gulf of Mexico Coastal Ocean Observing System (GCOOS).

## The GCOOS Regional Association

In January 2005, participants in the ocean observing community in the Gulf of Mexico signed a formal Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to establish GCOOS as the governance organization for a Gulf observing system. 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;
3. Stimulating innovation and supporting commerce.

In February 2012, the GCOOS-RA filed to become a non-profit, member-based Texas corporation, which received nonprofit status under Section 501(c)(3) of the U. S. Internal Revenue Code retroactive as of the date of formation. The organizational bylaws are based on the MOA, which is incorporated by reference. GCOOS bylaws may be viewed on the GCOOS website at [www.GCOOS.org/governance](http://www.GCOOS.org/governance). The bylaws describe the functions and responsibilities and 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 bylaws provide a framework for members to work cooperatively to accomplish their individual and common missions and to enhance broad user access to ocean knowledge, data, tools and products.

In 2018, GCOOS received official certification from the U.S. IOOS and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Certification means that GCOOS implements specific data collection and management practices, including following a thorough vetting and documentation

process that meets federal standards for data gathering and management. It also means that GCOOS operates inclusively, transparently and seeks user input to determine system priorities. In May 2023, GCOOS was recertified for another five-year period.

## GCOOS Membership

GCOOS members come from U.S. institutions or are 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 \$200 (U.S.) or a provides an in-kind contribution 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 considered a non-voting member. The privileges of voting membership include the rights to:

- Vote on Directors of the Corporation, to stand for election as a Director;
- To suggest members to the GCOOS working/advisory groups;
- To request letters of support from the GCOOS-RA for proposals;
- To attend Association meetings, especially the spring and fall members' meetings.
- Non-U.S. organizations or individuals meeting the same criteria as members may become associate members and are non-voting members but invited to attend Members' meetings and to 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.

**Join the GCOOS-RA by completing and signing this form and emailing it to Executive Director Dr. Jorge Brenner at [Jorge.Brenner@GCOOS.org](mailto:Jorge.Brenner@GCOOS.org).**

**Printed Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Representing (Institution, Company, or Self)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone Number** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mailing Address** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_