

## Gulf of Maine Environmental Information Exchange (GOMINFOEX)

### **Constituting Documentation**

*(Development of this document was begun in response to a request from participants at the Out of the Fog II conference in November 2000. It is under active discussion and development. Paragraphs not otherwise identified, have been prepared as a basis for discussion by Paul Boudreau, Chief Info-Nag. The objective of this exercise is to present a well-reviewed document to the Out of the Fog III meeting in the fall of 2002 for final discussion and approval. Comments should be sent to [boudreaup@mar.dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:boudreaup@mar.dfo-mpo.gc.ca).)*

### **Vision:**

To promote effective exchange of available environmental information to maximize the social, cultural and economic benefits to coastal communities of the Gulf of Maine. *(approved November 2000)*

### **STATEMENT OF NEUTRALITY OF PROCESS AND INCLUSIVENESS**

GOMINFOEX seeks to benefit those who are interested in the welfare of the Gulf of Maine region through initiating and strengthening information sharing partnerships. While working toward this goal the Exchange seeks to establish processes and relations that are inclusive, trusted, neutral and nonpartisan in nature. GOMINFOEX recognizes but does not seek to reconcile the many different values, interests, approaches and goals of participating individuals and organizations. The Exchange does not authorize any particular organization or information source. Agreeing to participate in the GOMINFOEX process does not imply endorsement of any other partner's individual or organizational goals. *(approved March 2001)*

### **Principles:**

As a group, GOMINFOEX will:

Promote a participatory exchange of environmental information

Welcome everyone willing to participate and contribute

Promote distributed actions in distributed geographic locations and by appropriate individuals at the most local level

Identify and promote appropriate collaborations among participants.

Work to identify required efforts not being adequately addressed by other initiatives

Attempt to devise innovative solutions and application of appropriate technologies

Work to ensure economic sustainability, environmental integrity

Build capacity in information exchange through education and communication

Participants agree to:

Be Collaborative - success will result from combined efforts among partners

Co-operative - partners working together towards common goals

Minimise duplication - financial and people resources must be used to their maximum effect

### **Participants:**

There are many ways to participate. Participants are all people who ensure their up-to-date contact details are posted in the PeopleFinder ([www.gulfofmaine.org](http://www.gulfofmaine.org)); who subscribe to the GOMINFOEX mailing list; who attend a meeting; who participates in an on-line event, who identify themselves in the Participants map, etc.

**Concept:**

A group of Gulf of Maine citizens to identify and promote effective information exchange among all interested and affected citizens. This group will make use of all available means to affect this exchange, including newspapers, libraries, museums, meetings, etc. A particular interest of this group is to work creatively with Internet web tools to achieve goals.

Conceptual Model 1: Registry of Exchanges - just as the registry of land deeds is a place and a process to document agreements on the exchange of land, GOMINFOEX will play the role of documenting exchanges, activities and process of exchange of environmental information. As with the registry of deed, GOMINFOEX will help minimise conflicts and promote collaboration.

Conceptual Model 2: Stock Exchange - just as the World's financial stock exchanges provide a framework and mechanism for the purchase and selling of stocks, GOMINFOEX will play a role as a central meeting place for people interested in acquiring and or making use of available environmental information. As the World's stock exchanges make use of appropriate technologies from phones, computers, internet, etc. and busy transactions occur around the World, GOMINFOEX will use appropriate technologies to allow exchanges to occur throughout the region using phones, face-to-face meetings, internet, e-mail, etc.

Conceptual Model 3: Waste Materials Market - where byproducts/waste products are redirected to productive processes. The analogy was drawn with the common practice of generating scientific reports, project reports, map products, etc. that neither fully use data/information nor adequately secure it for future use or use to address other needs. GOMINFOEX might act as a broker to "recycle" information from one product stream to another, or as a collector of "intermediate" information products for use by others. It may support a "place" where information can be placed when no longer needed for its primary purpose and where others can look for material useful for their needs. In any case, technologies will have to be applied to efficiently manage the incoming information stream so that minimal burden is placed on the "supplier" and to efficiently realise benefits through its presentation to the "next user". (*suggested and discussed June 2001*)

**Practice:**

It is recognised that although the Internet tools provide great potential to support the actions of GOMINFOEX, those tools are neither sufficient nor adequate. They are not sufficient in terms of the requirement for people to meet face-to-face to present, talk, discuss and agree. They are not adequate in terms of the limits on some citizen's Internet access and limited time, commitment, training and funding to ensure equal participation through the available tools. This group will strive for a proper balance between all of the available communications tools.

The different types of decisions requiring GOMINFOEX attention will determine the balance.

**Out of the Fog Conference:**

For significant organisational decisions, such as the change in this document, the name and the Terms of Reference, decisions will be made at the bi-annual Out of the Fog Conferences of all interested participants.

**On-Line Input and GOMINFOEX Meeting**

To define such organisational decisions, and for decisions on the setting of the priorities, selection of focused GOMINFOEX commitments of people or resources, decisions will be made using a two step process. This process will be carried out at least once in every quarter. The first step will be the posting of a resolution to the website. Resolutions include adding a project to the action list, convening meetings and minor modification of this document. All participants are free to submit resolutions to the CIN (chief info-nag) for posting at any time. Posting will be for no less than 30 days accompanied by a e-mail to the GOMINFOEX mailing group announcing the posting and advising participants to provide their input on-line.

At any point, the CIN (chief info-nag) will accept comments by any and all other means of communication.

The second step of the process will be an open discussion by all interested participants at a meeting to be held no less than 7 days after the final day of posting, nor more than 30 days after the final day of posting. The date, place and time of the meeting will be posted no later than of the beginning of the posting period. Participants in attendance will select a chair for the meeting, make decisions and plans for action by developing a consensus as much as possible.

For issues where 10% of the participants, as registered on the day of posting, have provided input and there are not dissenting opinions, the attendees at the meeting will, without significant consensus and agreed counter views, accept the resolution.

For resolutions with 10% response from participants that includes dissenting or questioning opinions, the participants will discuss and make a decision on appropriate action.

For resolutions with less than 10% input, the participants will attempt to determine the level of interest and possible steps to solicit additional input or to remove the resolution from additional consideration.

All decisions for the meeting will be posted to the web no less than 7 days after the close of the meeting. Dissenting opinions will be posted. The CIN will accept and decide on any significant challenges to the meetings outcome for a period of 7 days following the posting of the results. Upon the decision of the CIN, all attendees may be contacted to consider challenges and revise decisions. Revisions will require approval by all attendees. The final arbitration on any and all challenges will take place at the bi-annual Out of the Fog Conference.

### ***Constitution:***

Not yet developed

### ***Appendix 1 – Other relevant principles:***

Under and within the GOMINFOEX principles, the Geodata Alliance principles (<http://www.geoall.net/6p-principles.htm>) are to be considered.