



Fisheries
Transparency
Initiative

FiTI Board Circular

Board Circular No. 24

ID: BC-24_2025

Requested by: FiTI Chair

Submitted by: FiTI International Secretariat

Submitted on: 13.11.2025

Decided on: 21.11.2025

Preamble

In accordance with Article 15 of the Constitution of the Association of the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (as of May 13th, 2021), *'the FiTI International Board shall make urgent decisions between Board Meetings, based on Board Circulars.'*

Purpose of this Circular

Following the process approved by the FiTI International Board to select its new Chair, as Dr Valeria Merino Dirani is ending her maximum six-year term on the 31st of December of this year, the Selection Committee, comprising the FiTI Chair, Board Members Mr Tony Lazazzara and Dr Ketakandriana Rafitson, and World Bank Observer Ms Kristín Gunnarsdottir von Kistowski is recommending to the Board **to appoint Dr Audun Lem** as the 3rd Chair of the FiTI International Board, starting 01 January 2026, for a first term of three years.

Please note that if the Board's decision is favourable, a reference check process will be conducted. If the referees' feedback does not dispute the FiTI Chair-elect's suitability, the selection process will be considered complete, and the result will be publicly announced.

Board Members and Observers are reminded that confidentiality is crucial to maintaining the integrity of this process and ensuring candidates are treated with respect. All deliberations, candidate identities, and related discussions must remain strictly confidential and limited to those directly involved. This principle protects both the fairness of the process and the dignity of nominees. Upholding confidentiality is a shared responsibility – and a fundamental element of maintaining trust in FiTI's governance. Also, Board Member Hugh Govan has a conflict of interest in this decision-making process and will not participate in it.

If the recommended candidate is approved, and once the reference check process is concluded, the Board Circular will be made publicly available.

Decision required

During its 27th meeting in January 2025, the International Board tasked the current FiTI Chair Dr Valeria Merino to establish a dedicated Board Selection Committee to determine the key parameters for identifying and recommending potential candidates as the FiTI's 3rd Chair of the FiTI International Board.¹

¹ Decision ID BM-27_2025_D-02: https://fiti.global/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/FiTI_BM-27_2025_MM_EN_20250430.pdf

Such a Selection Committee was established shortly after, comprising the FiTI Chair, Board Members Tony Lazazzara and Ketakandriana Rafitoson, and World Bank Observer Kristín Gunnarsdóttir von Kistowski. Furthermore, with Board Circular No. 18 (April 2025) the FiTI International Board approved the procedures and parameters for selecting a new FiTI Chair.²

With Board Circular No. 20 (September 2025), the International Board approved the Selection Committee's shortlist of seven candidates for the position of the next FiTI Chair³, as well as a partial amendment to the process for selecting the next FiTI Chair.

As part of this selection process:

- The shortlisted candidates, that is, all those who fulfilled all the requirements of the profile approved by the Board, were contacted by email and asked if they would be willing to serve as FiTI Chair if appointed by the FiTI Board, following a selection process.
- The Selection Committee conducted interviews with all those who responded and were willing to be considered as candidates for FiTI Chair and who submitted the documentation requested within the stipulated deadline.⁴ Following, the Committee shortlisted three candidates (based on the conducted interviews) and decided on an order of preference.
- The Committee proceeded to conduct a conflict-of-interest analysis and discussion with the preferred candidate, which is a standard procedure in this kind of selection process. The result was entirely satisfactory to the Committee.
- Following, the Committee conducted an in-depth interview with the preferred candidate, Dr Audun Lem. All Committee members, as well as the Executive Director, Sven Biermann, participated in this 1.5-hour interview.

The Selection Committee members unanimously agreed that Dr. Audun Lem demonstrated the personal qualities and professional profile and experience, time availability, commitment, and passion for the FiTI's mission that would provide the type of leadership needed for the next stage of the organization's growth and impact. The Committee unanimously approved to recommend to the Board that Dr Lem be appointed FiTI Chair, effective January 1st, 2026.

Dr Audun Lem is a Norwegian economist and fisheries governance and management expert, and a former senior international civil servant. With more than two decades of distinguished service at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), from which he recently retired, he served in multiple leadership positions in global fisheries governance, aquaculture

² Decision BC-18_2025_D-01: It was decided that this Board Circular will not be made publicly available.

³ Decision BC-20_2025_D-01: In order to ensure the fairness of the process and out of respect for the nominees, this Board Circular was not made publicly available.

⁴ The interviews were based on a list of topics and questions, as well as reading material about the FiTI, which were sent to the candidates in advance, allowing them to interact with the Committee, sharing their thoughts, and showcasing their skills on an equal basis.

policy, and international seafood trade, contributing significantly to advancing sustainable fisheries management worldwide. He began his career with the FAO in 1996 and became Deputy Director of its Fisheries and Aquaculture Division based in Rome. At the FAO, he oversaw the GLOBEFISH programme, which produces standardized, publicly accessible market data – including the FAO Fish Price Index – enhancing transparency and evidence-based decision-making in seafood markets. He contributed to the trade-related implementation of the Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA) by linking port controls with traceability and CDS systems, and by supporting the development of practical technical guidelines to operationalize these measures in trade contexts. Audun also supported FAO’s work on the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries, particularly by integrating small-scale value chains into broader market and governance frameworks, highlighting the role of transparency and equitable market access for small producers. He also served as Secretary of the FAO Sub-Committee on Fish Trade, where he led intergovernmental consultations on fisheries trade, sustainability, and traceability, helping to shape global policy and guide programmes that advance sustainable fisheries and aquaculture. He has published extensively on fisheries trade, value chains, and governance and has been a frequent speaker at high-level events, including the UN Ocean Conference, COFI, and the Seafood Expo Global. His work aligned with global goals on sustainable fisheries and transparency, particularly SDG 14. He brings strong experience in consensus-building, multilateral negotiations, and collaboration with national governments and other stakeholders in the fishing sector, including large- and small-scale fishing businesses and communities, and civil society. His professional experience also includes facilitating working groups and committees, overseeing externally funded projects, and engaging with donor-funded programs. He is fluent in English, Norwegian, Spanish, Italian, German, and has a working knowledge of French and Portuguese

Currently, he is the Chair of the Scientific Advisory Committee of ASSOITTICA and a board member of the European Association of Fisheries Economists (EAFE). In addition, he served on the Steering Committee of the Global Sustainable Seafood Initiative (GSSI), a nonprofit multi-stakeholder organization.

On behalf of the Selection Committee, the FiTI Chair requests a decision from the FiTI International Board on whether to appoint Dr Audun Lem as the next FiTI Chair.

Decision required_#1: Does the FiTI International Board approve the election and designation of Dr Audun Lem as the next Chair of the FiTI International Board, serving a first term from 1 January 2026 to 31 December 2028?

Deadline to reply to this Board Circular

Eligible Board Members must reply to this Board Circular no later than **Thursday, 20 November 2025**, in writing (via email) and cannot assign a proxy.

Decision-making procedures for this Board Circular

In accordance with the constitution of the FiTI, Article 15 (5), “*Decisions requested through Board Circulars are adopted by qualified majority requiring the support of three quarters of the total number of members and must include the support of at least two members from each stakeholder group.*”

The provisions of Article 14 (13-16) apply to the decision-making procedures through Board Circulars. As the current total number of members is not equally distributed among the stakeholder groups stated in Article 8 of the constitution, not every member has one vote. Instead, the voting power is determined on a pro-rated system, ensuring that all stakeholder groups have equal voting power.

Furthermore, any Board member who considers that a conflict of interest would prevent him/her from participating in this decision-making process should notify the Chair and excuse himself/herself from voting on this Circular. **Dr Hugh Govan** will not participate in this decision as he currently has a conflict of interest and therefore will not receive this Circular.

The pro-rated voting powers for this 24th Board Circular of the FiTI International Board are as follows:

Stakeholder group	Approval of Dr Audun Lem as next FiTI Chair	
	Number of voting members	Voting power per member
Government sector	5	1.2
Business sector	4	1.5
Social sector	3	2.0

The Circular is approved if at least 13.5 votes support the decision, including two members from each stakeholder group.

Results protocol: Approval / Denial of Circular

This Board Circular was sent on 13 November 2025 to all eligible Board Members via email. The following results were recorded:

Name:	Stakeholder Group:	Sent on:	Responded on:	Decision: Approval of Dr Audun Lem as next FiTI Chair	Voting power:
Roy Clarisse	Government sector	13.11.2025	20.11.2025	Yes	1.2
Joacim Johannesson	Government sector	13.11.2025	13.11.2025	Yes	1.2
Estelle Jones	Government sector	13.11.2025	17.11.2025	Yes	1.2
Annika Mackensen	Government sector	13.11.2025	19.11.2025	Yes	1.2
Rocío Parra Cortés	Government sector	13.11.2025	20.11.2025	Yes	1.2
Hugh Govan	Business sector	13.11.2025			
Tony Lazazzara	Business sector	13.11.2025	[Not applicable]	Yes	1.5
Néstor Roche	Business sector	13.11.2025	20.11.2025	Yes	1.5
Dawda Foday Saine	Business sector	13.11.2025	18.11.2025	Yes	1.5
Carlos (Cadu) Villaça	Business sector	13.11.2025	18.11.2025	Yes	1.5
Ketakandriana Rafitoson	Social sector	13.11.2025	[Not applicable]	Yes	2.0
Daniel Skerritt	Social sector	13.11.2025	20.11.2025	Yes	2.0
Annie Tourette	Social sector	13.11.2025	18.11.2025	Yes	2.0

Approval of Circular - Rule I:	At least 13.5 votes in favour of supporting the decision:	18.0
Approval of Circular - Rule II:	At least 2x 'Yes' from stakeholder group 'Government':	5
	At least 2x 'Yes' from stakeholder group 'Business':	4
	At least 2x 'Yes' from stakeholder group 'Social':	3

Based on these responses, the following decision has been determined:

Decision [BC-24_2025_D-01]:

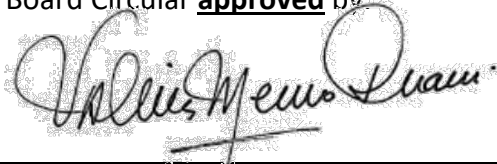
The International Board approved the election and designation of Dr Audun Lem as the next Chair of the FiTI International Board, serving a first term from 1 January 2026 to 31 December 2028.

Board Circular **provided** by:



Mr Sven Biermann
Secretary of the Board Circular; Executive Director of the FiTI International Secretariat

Board Circular **approved** by:



Dr Valeria Merino
Chair of the FiTI International Board