

Marine Stewardship Council - Variation Request

Date submitted to MSC	August 2 nd , 2017
Name of CAB	SCS Global Services
Fishery Name/CoC Certificate Number	Tri Marine Western and Central Pacific Skipjack and Yellowfin purse seine fishery
Lead Auditor/Programme Manager	Jennifer Humberstone/Sian Morgan
Scheme requirement(s) for which variation requested	7.23.3.1 & 7.23.11.1
Is this variation sought in order to fulfil IPI requirements (FCR 7.4.14)?	No

1. Proposed variation

SCS proposes a variation to the combined requirements of 7.23.3.1 and 7.23.11.1, where an on-site "audit involves face to face engagement with the client" and in the initial certification cycle 2 or more auditors shall be appointed to conduct the 'surveillance audit,' based on the understanding that the MSC intends for CABs to interpret these requirements such that the on-site meeting must involve face to face engagement by both auditors in order for it to be considered that the "surveillance audit" has been conducted by 2 auditors.

SCS has conducted the 1st annual surveillance audit for this fishery with 2 auditors, and had the lead auditor attend the Seattle on-site meeting in person (June 7-8, 2017), while the second team member would attend in-person any WCPFC harmonization that may occur for WCPFC tuna. The 2nd auditor also participated remotely in the Seattle on-site portion of the audit, remotely via teleconference.

While SCS did not previously understand that MSC's intent¹ was to require that all auditors attend any portion of an on-site in person in the initial certification cycle (if a reduced surveillance schedule is not applied), we believe the design of this audit satisfies this intent. Therefore we request a retroactive variation: to approve the surveillance methodology employed for the on-site visit in June 7-8, 2017, where the lead auditor attended in-person and the other auditor attended remotely, with additional plans that the second team member would attend any harmonization meeting in 2017/2018.

2. Rationale/Justification

RFMO fisheries challenge the implied intent of the traditional MSC 'on-site' visit, where in the case of this WCPO HMS fishery, science advice/management measures are issued from the South Pacific and fully publicly available, the client and stakeholders may reside on opposite sides of the Pacific relative to team members, and harmonization requires additional communications with CABs across the US and Europe, while an MSC harmonization meeting could occur in Asia or elsewhere TBD.

¹ <http://msc-info.accreditation-services.com/questions/eligible-for-reduction-of-number-of-team-members/>

Here, we provide justification for the audit methodology employed in the Year 1 surveillance and request MSC to grant a variation to these requirements in light of the reality of this RFMO fishery and an audit plan that very much remains in keeping with what we understand to be the fundamental intent of 7.23.3.1 & 7.23.11.1.

The Tri Marine Western and Central Pacific skipjack and yellowfin purse seine fishery was assigned 6 conditions in its initial certification, applying to all three Principles. Therefore, a Normal Surveillance schedule was applied (in accordance with V1.3 requirements). Five out of six conditions on the fishery pertain to WCPFC level considerations (PIs 1.2.1, 1.2.2 and 3.2.3). Four conditions under Principle 1 are subject to ongoing harmonization with other WCPFC skipjack and yellowfin fisheries. The client has submitted documentation in support of progress on these conditions, but progress is primarily being verified through review of publically available documentation from the WCPFC website, direct outreach with PNA and WCPFC representatives, and CAB discussion pursuant to harmonization requirements via email and phone.

The final condition on PI 2.1.2 relates to shark finning, and this is the only condition where fleet specific behaviour, and evidence of Tri Marine's management actions, is a primary consideration in evaluating progress against conditions. To evaluate progress on this and other conditions, SCS submitted a document request list ~1 month ahead of the on-site, and all evidence was submitted electronically prior to, during, or in the two weeks following the on-site. The remote auditor has had direct access to all evidence and was present via teleconference during all on-site discussions with the client.

(SCS reached out to stakeholders with the announcement of the surveillance and received no requests for additional in-person or remote meetings.)

The structure of this audit was based on the logic that there were two main considerations to account for in planning. 1. Issues subject to harmonization, 2. Issues not subject to harmonization (fleet specific). Issues subject to harmonization logically have as their "location", any future WCPFC harmonization meeting convened by MSC (location TBD) and conference calls with other CABs related to harmonization (no singular physical location). Fleet specific issues and updates were best obtained in meetings with TMI, at their Seattle headquarters. We therefore divided in-person professional time and costs to assure the possibility of in-person attendance in both relevant locations. We maintain that prioritizing travel cost/time for our P1 assessor to attend any harmonization meeting in person, and sending the second team member onsite in-person to address fleet specific considerations, satisfies the spirit and intent of these requirements. It also avoids needless international flights (costs, carbon, time, discomfort), because the remote auditor was able to review all client evidence electronically and participated in all on-site meeting discussions with the client via Skype-access.

SCS considers that the surveillance audit designed sought to maximize effectiveness and cost-efficiency in light of the exceptional RFMO context which encompasses a broad geographic expanse of participants, with publicly available science/management outputs (and the necessity for continual harmonization discussions) that render impracticable a traditional 'on-site' where the audit team and client and key information providers would logically convene in a single location, together in-person. Rather, it seems critical in tuna fisheries, to use in-person time strategically in relevant locations, to assure that relevant subject-matter experts are present to contribute to/discuss matters germane to conditions in the locations where such discussion occur.

3. Implications for assessment (required for fisheries assessment variations only)	
<i>None.</i>	
4. Have the stakeholders of this fishery assessment been informed of this request? (required for fisheries assessment variations only)	<i>Stakeholders were already informed by email that Mr. Morison would attend the on-site remotely for the Seattle portion of the audit via the initial surveillance announcement.</i>
5. Further Comments	

6. Inseparable or practicably inseparable (IPI) catches [DELETE IF NOT APPLICABLE]

Is this request to allow fish or fish products from IPI stocks to enter into chains of custody?

No

Is this request to allow an exemption to detailed requirements for IPI stocks?

No