



Dr. Sabine Daume
SCS Global Services

Sent by email

Date: 27 April 2016

Subject: Request for variation to the MSC Certification Requirement CR v1.3 7.5.9 for the Western Australian rock lobster fishery

Dear Sabine,

I write with reference to your submission on 21 April 2016 of a request for variation to the MSC Certification Requirement (CR) to allow a 6 month extension to the fishery certificate.

As you are aware, the CR procedures relating to the validity of the fishery certificate are integral to ensuring all MSC accredited Conformity Assessment Bodies operate in a consistent and transparent manner. The MSC intends that these requirements be met across all fisheries and CoC certificate holders, except in exceptional, well-justified circumstances, as part of the MSC program.

MSC notes the factors presented in your letter supporting your request, including:

- The fishery was first certified in March 2012 and successfully completed their 4th annual surveillance audit in April 2016.
- The re-assessment process is likely to be announced in early June with tentative onsite meeting dates during the week of 18th July 2016. A vital aspect of the re-assessment will be a review of the fishery's latest stock assessment and the quota setting for the coming 2017 season. The stock assessment relies on 12 months of data collected from the fishery up to 15 January 2016. The data has to be received from fishers, which can take up to 6 weeks (i.e. end of February 16). It then has to be checked, corrected and processed before it can be used in the fishery's stock assessment model, by which time it will be mid May 2016. The model outputs then have to be checked and verified, which will be completed by early June 2016. The model results are then presented to the Rock Lobster Industry at the annual management meetings (AMMs) that are held in mid-June. The quota setting process is normally completed within two to three weeks of the AMMs, which takes completion of the process to early/mid-July 2016. Additionally, staff involved with the stock assessment and quota setting will not have time to participate in an onsite visit by SCS Global until about mid-July.



- The Client of the Fishery (the Western Rock Lobster Council) and the Department of Fisheries understands that due to the completion date of the stock assessment (July 2016), there will not be sufficient time to complete the fishery's re-certification within the current certification period.

Given the rationale provided, the MSC is willing to grant a variation to the CR in this case subject to the following conditions:

- The CAB can confirm that it is not aware at this time of any factor (related to either fishery status, or performance against conditions) that could result in the fishery no longer being in compliance with the MSC Fisheries Standard.
- ECert is updated to reflect changes, including providing a certificate covering the period from the end of the current certificate to the date accepted in the variation response.
- Stakeholders are informed.

If you have any questions regarding this response, please do not hesitate to contact Maylynn Nunn, the Fisheries Assessment Manager for this fishery either by email at maylynn.nunn@msc.org or phone on +61 (0)2 9527 6883.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephanie Good'.

Stephanie Good
Senior Fisheries Certification Manager

Marine Stewardship Council
CC: ASI, lead auditor