

Marine Stewardship Council - Variation Request

Date submitted to MSC	8 December 2017
Name of CAB	MRAG Americas
Fishery Name/CoC Certificate Number	AAFA and WFOA North Pacific Albacore AAFA and WFOA South Pacific Albacore
Lead Auditor/Programme Manager	Amanda Stern-Pirlot
Scheme requirement(s) for which variation requested	GCR 7.5.6. The CAB shall issue fisheries certificates with a maximum validity period of 5 years from the issue date
Is this variation sought in order to fulfil IPI requirements (FCR 7.4.14)?	No

1. Proposed variation
The current certificate validity will be extended for six months to allow for the completion of the current assessment process.
2. Rationale/Justification
<p>The current certificates for the AAFA and WFOA North Pacific and South Pacific albacore fisheries are due to expire on December 20th, 2017. The fisheries are currently in re-assessment in client draft report phase. Although the reassessment process has generally been going according to plan, there was a delay of a few months in holding the site visit for these fisheries because the assessment team did not have access to the IATTC draft stock assessment for the North Pacific albacore stock until summer, 2017, and there would have been little reason to base the reassessment on an old stock assessment when a new one was imminent.</p> <p>This action does not alter conformity of the certificate holder with the MSC fisheries standard, as they have achieved certification and are presently under active re-evaluation. The draft reports are already available for client review and there is one Principle 1 condition carried over for the North Pacific fishery and two for the South Pacific fishery (allowed by MSC due to interpretations accompanying reassessment under FCR v2.0 for harmonized tuna fisheries). All other conditions of the previous assessment were closed on time or ahead of time. The CAB does not have any reason to believe the fishery is not currently in compliance with the MSC Fisheries Standard.</p>
3. Implications for assessment (required for fisheries assessment variations only)
MRAG Americas will work as quickly as practicable. Allowing a six-month certificate extension will ensure the fishery certificates do not lapse during the completion of the assessment process. This extension will mean that the current certificates are valid for a total of five years and six months at the most. While the North Pacific fishery does not start up until summer, the South Pacific fishery is active in the (northern) winter. However, the AAFA and WFOA fisheries participate primarily in the North Pacific fishery with only ca 200t annually caught in the South Pacific. According to the current schedule, the PCDR for both fisheries will be published within the next two to three months, and the certificate extension will ensure that products entering the supply chain during the period between the publication of the PCDR and the eventual recertification date do not have to be considered as UMAF—a situation which would considerably complicate Chain of Custody for buyers from this

fishery. If the six-month extension is granted, the actual eligibility date will be set to the date of recertification.	
4. Have the stakeholders of this fishery assessment been informed of this request? (required for fisheries assessment variations only)	No but if the VR is granted we will send a stakeholder notification.
5. Further Comments	
<i>Please include any further relevant information.</i>	

