

MSC Variation Request

Sustainable Western and Central Pacific (SWCP) Yellowfin Tuna and Skipjack 1st Fishery

Marine Stewardship Council variation request

Table 1 – Variation request

1	Date submitted to the MSC
	October 27, 2021
2	CAB
	SCS Global Services
3	Fishery name and certificate number
	Sustainable Western and Central Pacific (SWCP) Yellowfin Tuna and Skipjack 1st Fishery
4	Lead auditor or program manager
	Gabriela Anhalzer, Program Manager
5	Request prepared by
	Holly Rolls
6	Scheme requirement(s) for which variation requested
	A variation is requested against FCP v2.2. 7.16.1 following Derogation 3: Covid-19 Fishery and Chain of Custody Remote Auditing
7	How many times has a variation for this requirement been accepted for the same assessment of the same fishery?
	n/a – first request

Table 2 – Variation justification

1	Proposed variation	
	As permitted through and required by Section 1.3 of Derogation 3: Covid-19 Fishery and Chain of Custody Remote Auditing, SCS wishes to conduct an initial assessment of Sustainable Western and Central Pacific (SWCP) Yellowfin Tuna and Skipjack 1st Fishery remotely.	
2	Additional time requested	
	Original deadline date	n/a
	Modified deadline date requested	n/a
	Length of additional time requested	n/a
3	Justification	
	The variation is requested to accommodate for travel risks related to Covid-19 and travel restrictions in the countries where part of the assessment team members and based (USA) and where the site visit would need to take place (Republic of Korea). The CAB is confident in the capacity and ability for the client, government scientists, and management personnel to support a robust assessment remotely.	
4	Implications for assessment	
	The request to conduct the site visit for this assessment remotely presents a few challenges to gather information from relevant site visit participants. See table 3 below.	
5	Mitigation of the implications for assessment	
	The assessment team has conducted several assessments and surveillance audits remotely on other similar fisheries previously during COVID-19 prior to Derogation 3. Nevertheless, the assessment team will need to conduct additional interviews with relevant scientists and managers to ensure evidence is gathered as effectively as with an on-site visit. See table 3 below.	
6	How many conditions does the fishery have and will their progress be affected (positive or negative)?	
	Currently, the fishery does not have any conditions, but we anticipate several conditions associated with several Performance Indicators in Principles 1, 2, and 3. Whether this assessment is conducted in-person or remotely, the CAB is confident the conditions would be consistent in either scenario. Progress will not be affected.	
7	What is the status of the current assessment or audit?	
	ACDR was announced (September 6 th , 2021) and ACDR public consultation period is open.	

8	Further comments
	n/a
9	If applicable, additional information added after the MSC's request
	n/a

Table 3. Risk Areas, Justification, and Mitigation if applicable.

Risk Area	Level of Risk	Justification	Mitigation (if high)
Client and stakeholder input	Low	<p>Assessment team has worked diligently to reach out to and accommodate stakeholders, and set aside time to meet with stakeholders as needed.</p> <p>There are ample opportunities and mechanisms to engage with clients and stakeholders including electronic forms of communication, such as videoconferencing, phone conferencing, email and phone. The mechanisms are effective in the particular circumstances of the fishery. To ensure robust interview efforts, the CAB has hired an interpreter to help facilitate interviews with Korean-speaking agency officials.</p>	n/a
Fishery reports, government documents, stock assessment reports and/or other relevant reports	Low	<p>Fishery reports and other documented evidence that can be used to assess performance against the MSC Fisheries Standard can be easily and transparently checked remotely, due to such information being available publicly, such as being available on the WCPFC website or having been widely distributed and made publicly available to several stakeholders. The reports can be transmitted electronically, and veracity easily confirmed.</p>	n/a
Information appropriate to determination of Principle 1 and Principle 2 information requirements (see Guidance to the MSC Fisheries Standard)	High	<p>Observer reports and port inspections reports will be critical to demonstrate supporting quantitative evidence demonstrating evidence of management measures implemented with respect to shark finning, ETP species interactions, and other concerns and gaps in information identified by the assessment team in the ACDR.</p>	<p>In addition to observer data and logbook data, assessment team will request copies of observer forms (blank copies and populated copies) required for submission as part of the regional observer program, copies of port inspection forms required under ROK regulations, copies of Port Inspection Standard Operation Procedures (SOPs) administered by MOF, metrics on personnel and assets deployed for Port Inspections in key landing sites</p>

Risk Area	Level of Risk	Justification	Mitigation (if high)
			for the UoA, and other supporting documents that are not publicly available with the purpose of gathering as much information as possible to evaluate fishery performance and scoring against the MSC Standard. All information will be submitted electronically via email.
Transparency of management system	High	<p>The WCPFC has an MCS system that includes an IUU vessel list (https://www.wcpfc.int/wcpfc-iuu-vessel-list), and the FFA maintains a list of vessels in good standing (https://rimf.ffa.int/public/goodstanding). We have checked the UoA vessel IMO #s and have found that they are considered in good standing in the FFA list.</p> <p>The South Korea Fisheries Monitoring Centre (FMC) monitors the activity of Korea's distant-water fishing vessels, including purse seine vessels, tracked via VMS. They maintain a database that covers fishing authorisations, catch data, licences, IUU lists, transshipment/landing authorisations and data and quota exhaustions. The FMC shares catch-related information with relevant organisations and vessel operators. While this information does not appear to be publicly accessible, the assessment team has contacted the FMC to discuss MCS and evidence of sanctions and/or infractions during the site visit.</p> <p>In a 2021 report to US Congress, NMFS issued a Positive IUU Fishing Certification to the Republic of Korea, indicating that the Korean government took appropriate corrective actions in response to identified IUU fishing by Korea flagged vessels. This suggests that the government does collect and provide MCS information to certain parties as requested.</p>	<p>With respect to the Korean management regime, assessment team will request documents including copies of internal compliance report determinations within MOF for the Korean purse seine fleet. The assessment team will request email records and meeting notes to demonstrate consultation as needed. We are confident that MOF will be forthcoming with this information to demonstrate fishery performance accuracy against the MSC Standard.</p> <p>Furthermore, the assessment team will conduct interviews with MOF, FMC, WCPFC, and NGO stakeholders in order to triangulate perceptions and attitudes regarding transparency within the Korean/WCPFC management system, and to ensure adequate evidence is gathered where information gaps have been identified.</p>
Vessels, gear, and other physical aspect of the fishery	Low	In addition to publicly available description of the UoA, assessment team will gather full description of gear specifications, including ETP species mitigation gear deployed from client directly, which will be cross-referenced through interviews with MOF and WCPFC to ensure adequate confidence that gear and vessel information is gathered to inform the assessment.	n/a

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Template version control		
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1.0	25 March 2020	Release alongside Fisheries Certification Process v2.2

A controlled document list of MSC program documents is available on the [MSC website](http://msc.org) (msc.org)

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