

Control Union Pesca Ltd.

SZLC, CSFC & FZLC Cook Islands EEZ South Pacific albacore & yellowfin longline Fishery

MSC Variation Request

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1 Introduction

This form details the information required from Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) to enable the MSC to consider a CAB application to vary from a clause or requirement in any of the MSC program documents (GCR 4.12).

Marine Stewardship Council variation request

Table 1 – Variation request

1	Date submitted to MSC
	6 th June 2019
2	CAB
	Control Union Pesca Ltd.
3	Fishery name and certificate number or CoC certificate number
	SZLC, CSFC & FZLC Cook Islands EEZ South Pacific albacore & yellowfin longline Re-Assessment – Current Certificate – MEC-F-031
4	Lead auditor or program manager
	Chrissie Sieben (Team Leader)
5	Request prepared by
	Toru Tsuzaki (Scheme Manager)
6	Scheme requirement(s) for which variation requested
	FCP (v2.1) 7.16.1. – The team shall carry out the site visit as planned.
7	How many times has a variation for this requirement been accepted for the same assessment of the same fishery?
	None

Table 2 – Variation justification

1	Proposed variation			
	The allowance for P1 assessor Dr Jo Gascoigne to attend the Reassessment site visit for this fishery remotely, whilst the other members of the team (including the Team leader) will attend the site visit in Rarotonga, the Cook Islands.			
2	Additional time requested			
	Original deadline date	N/A		
	Modified deadline date requested	N/A		
	Length of additional time requested	N/A		
3	Justification			
	<p>The purpose of the site visit is to enable the team to interview stakeholders and gather information.</p> <p>Dr Gascoigne is an experienced P1 assessor for MSC tuna fisheries in the Pacific region. Over recent years, she has attended numerous MSC related site visits to the Pacific region for assessment of fisheries on tuna stocks, including:</p>			
	Year	Place	Assessment	Stocks
	2013	Rarotonga, Cook Islands Cairns, Australia	Full assessment SZLC, CSFC & FZLC Cook Islands EEZ South Pacific albacore	SP-ALB
	2014	Moololaba, Australia	Walker Seafood Australian albacore, yellowfin tuna, and swordfish longline	WCPO-YFT SP-ALB WCPO-SWO
	2016	Rarotonga, Cook Islands	Surveillance audit and expedited assessment for scope extension to the existing Cook Islands certificate	WCPO-YFT SP-ALB
	2017	Hawai'i, USA	Full assessment American Samoa EEZ Albacore and Yellowfin Longline Fishery	WCPO-YFT SP-ALB
	2017	Tahiti, French Polynesia	Full assessment French Polynesia albacore and yellowfin longline fishery	WCPO-YFT SP-ALB
	2018	Shizuoka, Japan	Full assessment Ishihara Marine Products albacore and skipjack pole and line fishery	NP-ALB WCPO-SKJ

2018	Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia	Full Assessment SZLC CSFC & FZLC FSM EEZ Longline Yellowfin and Bigeye Tuna	WCPO-YFT WCPO-BET
2019	Majuro, Marshall Islands	Full assessment SZLC CSFC FZLC & MIFV RMI EEZ Longline Yellowfin and Bigeye Tuna	WCPO-YFT WCPO-BET
2019	Tarawa, Kiribati	Kiribati albacore, bigeye and yellowfin tuna longline fishery	NP-ALB WCPO-BET WCPO-YFT

Recent site visits have identified a lot of redundancy in these trips for P1, In particular, the Marshall Islands and Kiribati assessments carried out this year, required very minimal updating from previous assessments due to minimal changes in the base information and to the extensive harmonising that occur across stocks between CABs. Often there is very little merit in visiting the actual countries in question in order to evaluate these regional tuna stocks. All the information is regional and available online and it does not need to be adjusted for individual countries.

For this fishery, Dr Gascoigne has specifically attended the location for the first assessment of South Pacific albacore and for the surveillance audit and an expedited assessment to add WCPO yellowfin to the certificate. She has had extensive involvement with the assessment of this fishery and assessed both of these stocks recently as shown in the table above.

Apart from the significant cost implications to the client, travel to destinations throughout the Pacific has a physical and mental toll on assessors, as flight paths can require up to 30 hours travel. Even travel times for assessors based in the region are extensive. In the further comments section there is also the moral and environmental issue of the amount of carbon emissions generated to travel to these site visits.

Dr Gascoigne is not declining her involvement with the assessment, moreover she will be available for the site visit remotely and make herself available for any remote meetings requested by stakeholders, in line with FCP7.16.2. All site visits for this fishery were held at the offices of the Ministry of Marine Resources, which has already demonstrated adequate internet access for remote connectivity. Due to her involvement with previous assessment stages of this fishery, Dr Gascoigne is very familiar with the issues that affect Principles 2 and 3. Moreover, each site visit day will be closed by a debriefing conference call between Jo and the rest of the team so that all matters can be discussed effectively. Any confidential or written submissions can also be reviewed at this time.

Should this variation request be approved, stakeholders will be informed of this variation during the announcement of the fishery and site visit so that any remote meetings can be scheduled as required.

4 If a fishery assessment, implications for assessment

Dr Gascoigne is an experienced member of the proposed assessment team and she has extensive knowledge of the fishery to be reassessed. Her remote participation will not affect the integrity of the assessment as 1) the assessment of Principle 1 does not rely on information gathered during the site visit; all scores for the relevant stocks have been harmonised extensively and all supporting information is available at regional, WCPFC level, and 2) the team will systematically organise a debriefing call after each site visit day so that all matters are communicated effectively between all team members

5 If a fishery assessment, mitigation of the implication for assessment

	Besides Dr Gasoigne, all other team members will be attending the site visit. As previously explained, a debriefing call will take place after each site visit day between the entire team. Furthermore, in the notification to the stakeholders it will be stated that all members of the assessment team are available to meet with stakeholders by virtual methods (Dr Gascoigne) or other physical meetings (rest of the team).
6	If a fishery assessment, how many conditions does the fishery have and will their progress be affected (positive or negative)?
	There are ten conditions outstanding, five of which are related to P1. A CAB-wide variation request was recently approved by MSC, requiring the alignment of this fishery's condition milestones with those of overlapping fisheries in the MSC programme. One of the outcomes of the variation request is that no suspension action will be undertaken for fisheries deemed behind target for Principle 1 conditions raised against version 1.3 of the MSC Standard. Furthermore, all fisheries previously assessed against version 1.3 will be rescored against version 2.0 at the next available opportunity. For this fishery, this will be the Year 4 surveillance and reassessment. The scoring will be conducted in alignment with currently harmonised scores for the relevant stocks.
7	What is the status of the current assessment?
	The 3 rd year surveillance audit for this fishery was completed in Feb 2019. Reassessment cycle into FCP v2.1 is due in August 2019 (Certification expiry is 8 th June 2020).
8	Further comments
	On a typical trip, carbon emissions figure from the UK to the Pacific (e.g. LDN – LAX – RAROTONGA return) generates 6.1 t of carbon emissions (https://co2.myclimate.org/en/portfolios?calculation_id=1984355). This means that since Jan 2018, 24 tonnes of carbon emissions in the service of MSC site visits in the Pacific have been generated by Dr Gascoigne alone. The maximum amount that an individual should produce, per year, in order to stop climate change is estimated to be ~0.6 t (same website as above). This means that although Jo is working for a project (MSC) with the wider aim of improving the marine environment, she may actually be doing overall more harm than good. This is a key reason why she is questioning the logic of attending site visits in the Pacific on a regular basis. The carbon footprint for assessors based within the region remains high due to the limited available flight paths between Pacific Islands. This variation request relates to this reassessment only and attendance of P1 assessors for Pacific tuna fisheries will be considered by CU Pesca on a case-by-case basis.
9	If applicable, additional information added after MSC's request