

**Interpretation Question:**

What type of information can be kept confidential in an assessment process?

**Response:**

The clause 17.9.4 and its subclauses of the Seaweed Certification and Accreditation Requirements allow the use of confidential information to assess a seaweed production unit against the Seaweed Standard.

17.9.4 Confidential annexes with any commercially sensitive or otherwise restricted information may be included in the audit reports without being included in the published versions.

17.9.4.1 The CAB shall agree the content of any such commercially sensitive information with the applicant, which must be accessible by the ASC-MSC and the accreditation body upon request as stipulated in the certification contract.

17.9.4.2 If the audit reports include confidential annexes, the CAB shall include an overview of the items which are in the confidential annexes in the public version of the report.

Note that while the information may be confidential for the public, it must be shared with MSC and ASI upon request (17.9.4.1).

The requirements are not specific about the type of information that should be considered confidential and refers to 'Any commercially sensitive or otherwise restricted information' (17.9.4).

The company can keep details of culture equipment, producing parameter of culture process, commercial brands confidential but there needs to be sufficient information in the reports for stakeholders to understand the performance of the Unit of Assessment (UoA) that is being assessed, and judge whether the scoring is reasonable.

ASC-MSC are not prescriptive about which information should be considered confidential. The CAB can accept to consider information confidential if stakeholders have sufficient information to understand the score and the impact of the UoA in the environment and community