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Sent by email

Date: 26/04/2017

Subject: Request for variation to the MSC Certification Requirement v2.0 FCR-SA3.1.3.1 for Small Pelagics Fishery in Sonora, Gulf of California

Dear Sian Morgan,

I write with reference to your submission on 24/04/2017 of a request for variation to the MSC Certification Requirement (CR) to allow:

To vary from clause FCR-SA3.1.3.1 to assess the P1 target stocks in P1 alone in each UoA, and not under P2 outside their assigned UoAs.

As you are aware, the CR procedures relating to v2.0 FCR-SA3.1.3.1 state:

SA3.1.3 The team shall assign primary species in P2 where all the following criteria are met:

SA3.1.3.1 Species in the catch that are not covered under P1 because they are not included in the UoA

These 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 programme.

MSC notes the factors presented supporting your request, including:

- The assessment includes two Units of Assessment (UoAs): the Northern/Central Gulf of California Pacific sardine and thread herring stocks.
- This assessment consider the Pacific sardine and thread herring UoAs as 'sister' units, as they share the same fleet, gear type/operations and management system, and only differ in regards to the Principle 1 target stock.
- The assessment team have scored Principle 2 and Principle 3 jointly for the two UoAs.
- As a result, the assessment team consider that there is no need to include the target species of the Pacific sardine UoA as a P2 species in the scoring of the thread herring UoA, and vice versa, as prescribed by requirement SA3.1.3.1 as both species are already scored in P1.

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

- Stakeholders are informed.
- If in a subsequent assessment one of the target P1 target species fails, or departs the MSC system for some other reason, and is no longer considered as certified, it will then be assigned as a P2 species.

If you have any questions regarding this response, please do not hesitate to contact the relevant Fisheries Assessment Manager for this fishery.

Marine Stewardship Council
cc: Accreditation Services International