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**Sent by email**

Date: 31/07/2019

**Subject: Request for variation to the MSC Certification Requirement v2.1 FCP-7.29.8 for Northern Ireland Pelagic Sustainability Group(NIPSG) Irish Sea-Atlantic mackerel & North Sea herring**

Dear Louise Allan,

I write with reference to your submission on 24/07/2019 of a request for variation to the MSC Certification Requirement (CR) to allow:

To publish the expedited audit report on the 5th September 2019, more than 60 days after the announcement of the audit.

As you are aware, the CR procedures relating to v2.1 FCP-7.29.8 state:

The CAB shall upload the expedited audit report to the MSC database for publication on the MSC website, within 60 days of announcing the expedited audit

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:**

- This variation will allow for harmonisation with three other overlapping mackerel fisheries currently being audited.
- SAI Global's ISF Iceland mackerel audit and DNV's Faroese Pelagic Organisation North East Atlantic mackerel audit are both scheduled for August.
- A harmonisation call has been scheduled between all three CABs on 19th August 2019.
- LR is also carrying out the surveillance audit of MINSA North East Atlantic mackerel. This fishery is also overlapping and subject to the same harmonisation requirements. The audit was held on the 5th July and the report is due on the 5th September 2019.
- The extension to the deadline for report submission will allow for harmonisation activities to occur.

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

- The deadline is extended for 30 days and no longer.
- Stakeholders are informed.

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