

Control Union (UK) Limited
Scapêche, Euronor and Compagnie de Pêches St Malo
saithe fishery
MSC Variation Request

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Marine Stewardship Council variation request

Table 1 – Variation request

1	Date submitted to MSC
	19/10/2021
2	CAB
	Control Union (UK) Limited
3	Fishery name and certificate number
	Scapêche, Euronor and Compagnie de Pêches de St Malo saithe fishery (MSC-F-31269, MSC-F-31270, MSC-F-31271)
4	Lead auditor or program manager
	Henry Ernst
5	Request prepared by
	Henry Ernst
6	Scheme requirement(s) for which variation requested
	Derogation 6, clause 2.1.1: The CAB shall only apply the derogation to conditions that are set against a Performance Indicator listed in Table 1.
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	
	To vary against derogation 6 clause 2.1.1 in order to allow condition 1 (2.3.1 – ETP species outcome) to benefit from the 12 month extension given to the relevant management and information PIs (in this case 2.3.2 and 2.3.3).	
2	Additional time requested	
	Original deadline date	NA
	Modified deadline date requested	NA
	Length of additional time requested	NA
3	Justification	
	<p>Control Union (UK) understands that the COVID-19 pandemic has invariably caused significant disruption to the development of fishery management systems and to fishery data collection programmes, globally, and so the MSC deemed it appropriate to strategically and proactively issue Derogation 6 to apply extensions to all Conditions set against the management and information PIs.</p> <p>Control Union (UK) notes that the condition which is the subject of the VR was raised against all three client groups; Euronor, Compagnie des Peches Saint Malo, and Scapeche but for different elements. For Euronor and Compagnie des Peches Saint Malo, the condition was raised on starry ray, and for Scapeche, the condition was raised on the common skate complex. The conditions have been closed out for the starry ray element (as a deeper information base is available in the scientific literature on this species, and it was found that overlap and interactions were limited compared to the estimated population), so this VR only concerns the common skate scoring element. The current score of the common skate element for 2.3.1 is 75. The year 4 condition milestone was the following: <i>Develop a plan to reduce impacts on common skate to an acceptable level.</i></p> <p>So, as is common for outcome PIs, the resolution of the outcome condition depended on the information collected feeding the management measures in place to limit impact on the component. Unfortunately, unlike starry ray, the information base on the common skate complex is not extensive, and so management initiatives rely heavily on UoA-specific data (through observers). Indeed, as the outcome hinges on the management in place (which benefits from the 12-month extension), and the management initiatives could not yet be put in place (as outlined below), there is a risk of the fishery not closing out the condition (and subsequently falling out of the program) as a result of the delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>Control Union (UK) requests an extension to the milestones for the Scapeche condition 1 for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - COVID-19 has severely impacted the ability of the client to resource internal capacity and work with management and science partners to plan and deliver the work. An example of this would be the POPOC project, centred on the common skate complex – scheduled to launch in the first trimester of 2020 but could not be undertaken as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, ICES work on this species was abbreviated due to disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Not only were the client group workflows on this condition and species impacted – the same impacts can be seen throughout the wider science and management framework in the region. 	

	<p>- COVID-19 has greatly hindered and limited the ability to continue data collection. Health and safety issues during the pandemic associated with putting people into close proximity at sea, the lack of emergency medical facilities on ships often operating days away of the nearest port, and potential difficulties with repatriating staff when coming into port are all known problems that have hindered planning for at-sea work, with no definitive end point at this time.</p> <p>- Apart from issues of COVID that have caused delays to progressing these conditions, Control Union (UK) highlights that because the milestones are identical between the outcome, management and information PIs, failing to provide an additional year for condition 1 on outcome would essentially require the fishery to adopt different timelines for identical milestones, and to meet the conditions of the outcome PIs a year earlier than would otherwise be expected under the Derogation for the management and information PIs.</p>
4	Implications for assessment
	<p>This VR is necessary to recognise the impact that COVID-19 has had on the client’s ability to meet the condition 1 milestone this year.</p> <p>Furthermore, without this VR, the automatic application of Derogation 6 results in a mismatch of timelines whereby the outcome conditions (e.g. condition 1) have milestones which need to be met before the very same milestones are required to be met on closely related management (condition 2) and information (condition 3) conditions.</p> <p>The implications of this VR is that the outcome condition will be on the same timeline as the management and information conditions with which it shares milestones.</p>
5	Mitigation of the implication for assessment
	<p>None.</p> <p>Indeed the VR itself is aimed to mitigate the impacts that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on this assessment.</p>
6	How many conditions does the fishery have and will their progress be affected (positive or negative)?
	<p>The fishery has a total of 12 conditions, though five (three conditions on starry ray were closed out across the ETP component, and habitat information and outcome conditions were also closed out) were closed out at this year 4 audit.</p>
7	What is the status of the current assessment?
	<p>Certified (v1.3) currently undergoing Year 4 surveillance and reassessment under v2.01.</p>
8	Further comments
	<p>NA</p>
9	If applicable, additional information added after MSC’s request