



Geir Hønneland  
UCSL United Certification Systems Limited  
PO Box 132  
Moscow  
Russian Federation  
121471

**Sent by email**

Date: 13/10/2021

**Subject: Request for variation to the MSC Certification Requirement v2.2 FCP-7.16.1 for Fishery Shipowners Association (FSA) East Sakhalin Walleye pollock**

Dear Geir Hønneland,

I write with reference to your submission on 01/10/2021 of a request for variation to the MSC Certification Requirement (CR) to allow:

The CAB proposes that the site visit for this fishery be conducted remotely for the assessment team, as opposed to conducting a fully onsite visit in the Russian Federation.

As you are aware, the CR procedures relating to v2.2 FCP-7.16.1 state:

The team shall carry out the site visit as planned

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 fishery takes place in Primorskiy Region, Russia. The site visit is planned to be held in Vladivostok, Russia.
- At the present moment there are significant restrictions between the place of residence of the assessors (Norway, India, New Zealand) and Russia. Planning of logistics through other means of travelling and countries will lead to extra expenses to the fishery client.
- The March 2021 MSC COVID derogation states that "If national or local Covid-19 restrictions prevent Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs), assessors or certificate holders from carrying out on-site audits and assessments of already certified businesses, these may be undertaken remotely"

**Given the rationale provided, the MSC is willing to grant a variation to the CR.**

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: Assurance Services International