



Deirdre Wilson
Control Union UK Ltd.
56 High Street
Lymington
United Kingdom
SO41 9AH

Sent by email

Date: 01/03/2023

Subject: Request for variation to the MSC Certification Requirement v2.2 FCP-7.28.2 for SFSAG Northern Demersal Stocks

Dear Deirdre Wilson,

I write with reference to your submission on 23/02/2023 of a request for variation to the MSC Certification Requirement (CR) to allow:

CU(UK) are planning the Year 1 surveillance site visit of the SFSAG Northern Demersal stocks fishery. The Year 1 surveillance is due to take place onsite, with all auditors attending. CU(UK) are also planning to combine this site visit with the Year 4 surveillance and re-assessment for the SFSAG Rockall haddock fishery, for which a VR on the same clause is also being submitted. CU(UK) are requesting that the P1 assessor be allowed to join all meetings for the SFSAG Northern Demersal stocks Year 1 surveillance remotely, rather than in person. This does not affect any deadlines and there is no additional time requested as part of this VR.

As you are aware, the CR procedures relating to v2.2 FCP-7.28.2 state:

Surveillance audits shall take place according to the default surveillance level described in Table 5, unless the team decides on a reduced surveillance schedule, see 7.28.4–7.28.7

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 on-site attendance of Principle 1 assessor will result in unreasonable cost and travel inconvenience.
- The audit will not be adversely affected by the Principle 1 assessor's remote attendance as most of the information needed is available online and provided by the client.
- Three team members will be onsite.
- Previous surveillance audits for this fishery were done with a complete remote team over the COVID-19 period and the results were not impacted by that.

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

- The CAB shall inform stakeholders that the Principle 1 assessor will be attending the site visit remotely and clarify that all the team members are available to meet with stakeholders by virtual or other means.
- The CAB shall document within the surveillance report that the Principle 1 assessor attended the site visit remotely.



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