



Geir Hønneland
Control Union UK Ltd.
56 High Street
Lymington
United Kingdom
SO41 9AH

Sent by email

Date: 16/03/2023

Subject: Request for variation to the MSC Certification Requirement v2.2 FCP-7.16.1 for Rybprom Balkash Lake pikeperch, Bersh and Wels catfish fishery

Dear Geir Hønneland,

I write with reference to your submission on 02/03/2023 of a request for variation to the MSC Certification Requirement (CR) to allow:

CU(UK) are planning the site visit for the first assessment of the Rybprom Balkash Lake pikeperch, Bersh and Wels catfish fishery. The assessment is due to take place onsite, with the P1 and P2 assessors confirmed to attend. However, CU(UK) are requesting that the P3 assessor and Team Leader be allowed to join all meetings remotely rather than in person due to a long-term Covid-19 condition that renders the individual physically and mentally exhausted in only a short period of time.

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-7.16.1 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 Principle 3 assessor / Team Leader is unable to travel to the initial site visit for health reasons.
- The assessment will not be adversely affected by one team member participating remotely, as most of the information required will be obtained in person through meetings and interviews.
- The assessors for Principles 1 and 2 will be attending the audit on-site.
- CU (UK) have effectively conducted many remote site visits for surveillance audits, expedited audits, and new assessments.
- The assessment team are confident that information gathering and stakeholder engagement will not be compromised by the attendance of one remote auditor.

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 3 assessor will attend the site visit remotely and clarify that all team members are available to meet with stakeholders by virtual or other means.
- The CAB shall document within assessment reports that the Principle 3 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