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Sent by email

Date: 09/12/2021

Subject: Request for variation to the MSC Certification Requirement v2.2 FCP-7.16.1 for Norebo Sea of Okhotsk Mid-Water Trawl Pollock Fishery

Dear Gillian Irvine,

I write with reference to your submission on 06/12/2021 of a request for variation to the MSC Certification Requirement (CR) to allow:

To carry out the initial site visit for the Norebo Sea of Okhotsk Mid-Water Trawl Pollock Fishery remotely. Under clause 1.1 of the MSC February 26th 2021 Covid-19 derogation (derogation 3), certain Covid-19 factors prevent an initial onsite assessment for this fishery.

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 audit team would have been travelling from Ireland and Cyprus to Russia and within Russia. The CAB has suspended all non-critical business travel; this assessment is considered non-critical in terms of the need to be conducted on site and in person. There are also travel restrictions in place between the assessor countries and Russia.
- The CAB has an extensive list of potential stakeholders identified through engagement with other similar fisheries in the region as well as with client input.
- The client has already provided comprehensive information to the CAB and the audit team are comfortable in addressing the information gaps via a remote assessment.
- One member of the audit team is Russian and has been involved in various other Russian MSC assessments in the region previously.
- Meetings will be held in English but all attendees will be asked to confirm if they need translation support prior to the site visit. The CAB has conducted many remote meetings that have required an interpreter since March 2020.

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 site visit will be conducted remotely, and provide information to stakeholders on how to participate in the remote visit.
- The CAB shall document within assessment reports that the site visit was undertaken 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