



Sian Morgan
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Sent by email

Date: 20/10/2017

Subject: Request for variation to the MSC Certification Requirement v2.0 FCR-7.23.11.1 for US Atlantic Surfclam and Ocean Quahog

Dear Sian Morgan,

I write with reference to your submission on 17/10/2017 of a request for variation to the MSC Certification Requirement (CR) to allow:

SCS proposes a variation to the requirements of 7.23.11.1 that in the initial certification cycle 2 or more auditors shall be appointed to conduct the 'surveillance audit,' based on the understanding that the MSC intends for CABs to interpret these requirements such that conducting the audit pertains to the conduct of the on-site meeting, which per where 7.23.3.1 an on-site must involve face to face engagement (by both auditors).

SCS is proposing an audit plan for a level 6 surveillance audit with a 2-person assessment team that features face to face engagement by both auditors with key stakeholders, where the auditors conduct the face to face meetings in separate locations. SCS considers that this audit plan meets the MSC intent of assigned 2 auditors where both auditors have face-to-face engagement, and notes that there is nothing in the wording that stipulates that all activities must be conducted by both auditors. SCS considers that this audit plan provides cost and time efficiency without sacrificing effectiveness. If both auditors met in a single location then they may meet with some key management staff via teleconference, which would result in overall less face-to-face engagement.

As you are aware, the CR procedures relating to v2.0 FCR-7.23.11.1 state:

During initial surveillance cycle, the CAB shall appoint a team of 2 or more auditors to conduct the surveillance audit.

a. The team shall comprise a team leader and a minimum of one additional team member who together meet at least three of the Fishery Team qualifications and competency requirements specified in Table PC3

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:

- Each team-member will participate in the meetings whether in person or remotely
- The two-person assessment team will be assessing progress on conditions pertaining to two different principles. The management agency staff best suited to speak to progress on conditions are located in two different locations.
- Participation in the audits from a remote location will not impact the team's ability to gather the required information.

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



following conditions:

- CABs make clear that all members of the team are available to meet with stakeholders by virtual or other means, including at mutually convenient physical locations where it is shown that this would be necessary to effectively communicate key issues.

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: Accreditation Services International