



Coronavirus Announcement, Derogation

Temporary variation statement Chain of Custody Certification Requirements and Fishery Certification Process site visit requirements

Date 28th February 2020

To: MSC Accredited Conformity Assessment Bodies

CC: Assurance Services International

In response to the coronavirus outbreak and consideration of the welfare of all individuals participating in the MSC certification system, the MSC is issuing this derogation to allow for scheduling and conducting of remote site visits and audits for Fisheries and Chain of Custody certificate holders.

The MSC Chain of Custody Certification Requirements include the requirement that all audits shall be conducted on-site except in specific circumstances (clause 7.1.6 and clause 11.3.3). The MSC Fisheries Certification Process includes requirements to conduct site visits and on-site surveillance audits (clauses 7.16.1 and 7.28.2).

This derogation allows site visits for chain of custody audits and fishery assessments (including initial, surveillance and recertification) to be conducted remotely. **The requirements for in-person site visits do not apply during the period of this derogation.** This derogation is normative and no variation request is needed for this derogation to apply.

This derogation shall be used only as necessary. CABs should retain evidence of any travel restrictions that prevent on-site audits; this can include those directed by government bodies or company policies. The existing timeframes for chain of custody audits and fishery assessments (including initial, surveillance and recertification) shall be followed as required in the normative documents. CABs shall maintain a list of certificate holders where this derogation has been applied and shall make this list available for MSC or ASI on request.

Technology should be employed to audit as far as possible. CABs shall note in assessment and audit reports where this derogation has been applied and shall justify any instances where requirements were not evaluated due to remote auditing. The Chain of Custody team will be in touch with CABs with further advice on application of the checklist and evidence requirements during remote audits.

Once the travel restrictions and precautions associated with the coronavirus outbreak have been lifted, site visits and audits shall be conducted as per regular assessment and audit procedures. The MSC will review this derogation in two months, and monthly thereafter, and take a decision on when it shall be revoked.



For any other questions please contact the MSC Supply Chain Standards (supplychain@msc.org) and Fisheries Standard (fisheries@msc.org) teams. The MSC will continue to monitor the situation and provide any updates.

Date of issue: 28th February 2020

End of validity: 28th May 2020

The MSC reserves the right to revoke this derogation if the outbreak is controlled sooner. Equally, the MSC may extend the validity period if the outbreak is not controlled. This letter supersedes the previous letter issued on 3rd February 2020.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Currey", followed by a period.

Dr. Rohan Currey

Chief Science and Standards Officer