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LRQA

Cedar Lake Walleye and Northern Pike Fisheries MSC Variation Request



1 Marine Stewardship Council variation request

Table 1 – Variation request

1	Date submitted to the MSC
	7 th December 2021
2	CAB
	Acoura Marine (t/a LRQA)
3	Fishery name and certificate number
	Cedar Lake Walleye and Northern Pike Fisheries (Initial assessment)
4	Lead auditor or program manager
	Paul Knapman
5	Request prepared by
	Gillian Irvine
6	Scheme requirement(s) for which variation requested
	Variation request to conduct the initial audit site visit remotely as per MSC Derogation 3: Covid-19 Fishery and Chain of Custody Remote Auditing V3. (MSC FCP 2.2, 7.16.1 – location = remote)
7	How many times has a variation for this requirement been accepted for the same assessment of the same fishery?
	0

Table 2 – Variation justification

1	Proposed variation
	To carry out the initial site visit for the Cedar Lake Walleye and Northern Pike Fisheries 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.



2	Additional time requested	
	Original deadline date	NA
	Modified deadline date requested	NA
	Length of additional time requested	NA
3	Justification	
	<p>- Please explain in detail why the variation is requested and why the change is necessary. This helps the MSC decide whether the variation request should be granted.</p>	
	<p>The assessment of the Cedar Lake Walleye and Northern Pike Fisheries would have been conducted in Canada under normal circumstances. The members of the LRQA audit team would have been traveling from the UK and India to Canada and within Canada. The client and their representatives would be traveling within Canada. In view of the risks associated with these travel plans during the pandemic and the travel restrictions currently in place, LRQA are proposing to hold the initial site visit remotely (i.e. the client group, stakeholders and all team members attend the initial assessment remotely). The factors preventing an onsite assessment are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CAB policy: LRQA have 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. 2. Travel restrictions: At present, there are restrictions between the place of residence of the assessor (UK and India) and Canada. The Manitoba government also have self-isolation requirements (14 days quarantine) in place for national and international travellers - https://gov.mb.ca/covid19/prs/orders/ 3. Health risks of conducting an in-person audit/assessment to anyone involved in the audit process: None of the audit team members are considered “vulnerable” as per the UK NHS definition. 	
4	Implications for assessment	
	<p>The planning phase of the audit will be conducted in the same manner as an onsite audit. The “site visit” phase of the audit may take longer than a traditional onsite audit because meetings will take place over more days to account for the time differences and translation/interpretation during meetings. Translation and interpretation support will be provided during interviews with stakeholders. This will necessarily require additional time for each interview and consequently for the overall duration of the “site visit”.</p> <p>During the time since the Covid-19 derogation was introduced, LRQA have conducted many remote site visits for both surveillance audits, expedited audits, and new assessments. These include fisheries where translation & interpretation was required, such as the Fishery Shipowners Association (FSA) Russia Sea of Okhotsk Pollock fishery assessment. This process operated effectively. This remote site visit went smoothly in terms of stakeholder involvement and coordination across time zones and LRQA expects the same for this Cedar Lake Walleye and Northern Pike Fisheries assessment.</p> <p>The opportunity for stakeholder engagement will not be compromised by the use of off-site auditing methods. LRQA’s auditors are very familiar with the fisheries in this area, with auditors currently involved in a number of ongoing assessments in the region.</p> <p>For these reasons, LRQA do not consider that conducting this assessment off-site will compromise the integrity or robustness of the assessment or the extent and effectiveness of stakeholder engagement in the assessment process.</p>	



5	Mitigation of the implications for assessment
	See Table 1 – Risk Assessment that is a requirement of the Sept 28th MSC Covid-19 derogation v3.
6	How many conditions does the fishery have and will their progress be affected (positive or negative)?
	This fishery is currently under assessment and has no conditions as yet. Conditions will be harmonised where necessary.
7	What is the status of the current assessment or audit?
	The fishery entered assessment on the 17 th November 2021 under version 2.2 of the MSC FCP. Stakeholders now have a 60 day consultation period and the site visit is scheduled 17 th – 21 st January 2022.
8	Further comments
	As required by the derogation (at 1.4.1), LRQA will request an additional Peer Reviewer when implementing FCP 7.14.
9	If applicable, additional information added after the MSC's request



LRQA Risk assessment for initial assessments conducted remotely following the [MSC COVID-19 derogation, effective 28th September 2020](#). This risk assessment shall be completed as part of VRs for initial assessments announced after the 28th September 2020 requesting a switch to a remote initial assessment.

Table 1.

Risk areas	Key risks	LRQA Mitigation plan
Sufficient information to enable an effective and robust fishery assessment process and comprehensive assessment against the MSC Fisheries Standard	Ability to verify information remotely	The Client has already provided comprehensive information to LRQA, which has been shared with the audit team. The ACDR was reviewed by the client and all questions/comments discussed between the team and client by email and by video call before final confirmation was given to proceed. The client is committed to arrange all necessary documentation, reports, evidence and discussion with the team remotely. LRQA use online platforms to communicate with stakeholders and are available to all enquires via phone and email.
	Ability to engage with stakeholders, deliver a robust stakeholder consultation process and conduct interviews with stakeholder.	LRQA have an extensive list of potential stakeholders, identified through engagement with other similar fisheries in the region as well as with client input. Stakeholders have been notified of the fishery entering into assessment and that the ACDR is available for comments via MailChimp email notification. All stakeholder enquiries come into the LRQA fisheries shared email inbox and is responded to within 10 days of receipt. Submissions received in the MSC stakeholder input template will be acknowledged via email and uploaded to the MSC website as required by the process. Private meetings will be offered to interested stakeholders as part of the audit planning. The full assessment team will be

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		<p>available for meetings during the site visit and questions can be prepared ahead of time to help direct the conversation. Due to the remote nature of the site visit, additional meetings can be scheduled if needed. Test calls will be offered to all stakeholders prior to the official audit calls, in case some people are not familiar with the platform used. The various features of interaction on the chosen platform will be explained to stakeholders. Permission to record the calls will be requested and recordings will be provided to those stakeholders who joined the call upon request. A follow-up call will be offered to the stakeholder if the initial allocation of time is too short to complete the discussion.</p>
	<p>Ability to gather information and carry out stakeholder consultations if the Risk Based Framework (annex PF) is being used to assess data-deficient PIs.</p>	<p>RBF is not to be used for this assessment</p>
	<p>Availability of information</p>	<p>The Client has already provided comprehensive information to LRQA, which has been shared with the audit team. Current information gaps have been identified in the ACDR available on the MSC website and the team are comfortable in addressing these information gaps via a remote assessment.</p>
	<p>Ability to understand the context, scale, and intensity of the fishery operations.</p>	<p>Two members of the team are based in Canada, and have been involved in various other Canadian MSC assessments in the region previously. The Team Lead also has experience in assessment fisheries that cover wide geographical areas such as this one.</p>

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		Therefore, the team have an understanding of the context, scale and intensity of the fishery operations.
Sufficient communication capability to effectively plan, conduct interviews and facilitate information sharing as per IAF ID 4: 2018.	Availability of information and communication technology (ICT).	The client and audit team members all have experience using LRQA chosen conferencing platforms and familiar with share screen, and recording function. Meetings are organised by LRQA HO staff who will confirm the attendees are comfortable using the chosen platform, test calls will be set up if not. Meetings will be held in English but all attendees will be asked to confirm if they need translation support prior to the site visit. Stakeholders do not need an account with these platforms to join the meeting. If stakeholders do not have an internet connection attendees can join a Skype for Business call from a landline or mobile number. The use of ICT for this assessment will be done in accordance with the IAF Mandatory Document for the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for Auditing/Assessment Purposes.
	Competency of assessment teams, auditees, and stakeholders in using ICT.	As above
	Ability to clearly exchange information between the assessment team, prospective fishery client and stakeholders and to be understood by all parties when parties speak different languages.	Meetings will be held in English but all attendees will be asked to confirm if they need translation support prior to the site visit. Additional time will be allocated to meetings to accommodate an interpreter when needed. LRQA have conducted many remote meetings that have required an interpreter since March 2020 and can use this experience to ensure a satisfactory remote audit.

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	<p>Ability to schedule remote site visit activities at reasonable mutually convenient times when parties are located across different time zones.</p>	<p>Attendees to remote calls will be asked to confirm their timezones in advance of the site visit, where possible meetings will be organised at mutually convenient times. LRQA use the following website for scheduling meetings across time zones: https://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/meeting.html This website allows you to see which times are best for all attendees. If needed the audit team are prepared to work outside of normal working hours to accommodate client and stakeholders. This will be kept to an absolute minimum.</p>
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Annex 1. LRQA review of call platforms. MS Teams is the default platform choice by LRQA unless inaccessible by stakeholders.

Call platform	Risk	Reward
<p>MS Teams – LRQA default platform to use unless inaccessible by stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New platform, not everyone is familiar • Simultaneous translation feature new and not adequate for MSC audit conversations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can access calls online without downloading desktop app • Chat log remains open after call • Ability to share screen • Invites automatically add to outlook calendar • Approved by LRQA for use and LRQA team can control invites and test calls • Can record sessions for sharing with stakeholders later • Can download participant list directly, including their sign in / sign out time • Can adjust settings allowing participants to bypass lobby if needed
<p>Skype for Business</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chat log not saved after call ends • Online app support ending 31st July 2021 • Call ends after 1.5 hours. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can access calls online without downloading desktop app • Invite sender does not need to be present • Ability to share screen • Invites automatically add to outlook calendar • Approved by LRQA for use and LRQA team can control invites and test calls
<p>Zoom</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not secure • New platform, not everyone is familiar • No LRQA subscription and no plan to use it so can not set up meeting • Not approved by overall LRQA policy for LRQA staff to initiate calls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can access calls online without downloading desktop app • Ability to share screen



2 Template information and copyright

This document was drafted using the 'MSC Variation Request Form – Fisheries v1.0'.

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Template version control

Version	Date of publication	Description of amendment
1.0	25 March 2020	Release alongside Fisheries Certification Process v2.2

A controlled document list of MSC program documents is available on the MSC website (msc.org).

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