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**Sent by email**

Date: 21/12/2018

**Subject: Request for variation to the MSC Certification Requirement v2.0 FCR-7.4.14 for Usufuku Honten  
Northeast Atlantic longline bluefin tuna fishery**

Dear Hugh Jones,

I write with reference to your submission on 28/11/2018 of a request for variation to the MSC Certification Requirement (CR) to allow:

The CAB has identified that there is potential for catches of non-target (P2) Western Atlantic Bluefin tuna stock (BFT-w) that are inseparable or practicably inseparable (IPI) from target (P1) stock BFT-e in the UoA based on research literature.

As you are aware, the CR procedures relating to v2.0 FCR-7.4.14 state:

**7.4.14**

If IPI stocks are identified and are below the level of 15% specified in 7.4.13.1.c, the CAB shall, as early as practicable in the assessment process and following the variation request procedure set out in section 4.12 of the GCR, submit a variation request to the requirements section 7.4 to the MSC to either:

**7.4.14.1**

Allow fish or fish products to be considered as coming from IPI stocks to enter into chains of custody subject to Annex PA.

- a. The variation request to allow fish or fish products to be considered as coming from IPI stocks to enter into chains of custody shall include a detailed and substantiated rationale of how the catches under consideration fulfil the requirements of 7.4.14.1 above.
- b. If this variation request is accepted, the requirements for IPI stocks in Annex PA shall apply.

**7.4.14.2**

Allow fish or fish products considered as coming from IPI stocks to enter chains of custody, with an exemption to the additional assessment requirements for IPI stocks given in PA4.2.

- a. The variation request to allow an exemption to requirements for IPI stocks shall include a detailed and substantiated rationale showing that, in addition to 7.4.13.1:
  - i. The catch proportion of IPI stocks calculated in 7.4.13.1.c is less than or equal to 2% and the total catch of IPI stock(s) by the UoA does not create a significant impact on the IPI stock(s) as a whole.
  - ii. CABs shall note that significance will be assessed on basis of the status of the IPI stock, and the risk that the IPI catch poses to the health of the IPI stock

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:**

- CU Pesca identified at the site visit and subsequent stakeholder meetings that catches of IPI stocks are possible within the UoA.
- The CAB has identified that there is potential for catches of non-target (P2) Western Atlantic Bluefin tuna



stock (BFT-w) that are inseparable or practicably inseparable (IPI) from target (P1) stock BFT-e in the UoA based on research literature.

- According to the latest available data collected by ICCAT, the contribution of the BFT-w stock to BTW-e catches is less than 15% on average.
- These data include otolith studies and genetic sampling
- Data specific to the UoA is not obtainable on the basis of it being a single vessel though data collected from the UoA as part of the wider Japanese fleet are part of the ICCAT study.
- All other IPI requirements are met and Annex PA shall apply to this UoA.

**In this case the rationale is insufficient for the MSC to grant a variation to the CR. This request is therefore declined.**

- There is no UoA specific information on catch proportions of the IPI stock.

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