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Jason Combes  
Intertek Fisheries Certification  
10A Victory Park  
Victory Road  
Derby  
DE24 8ZF

Sent by email

Date: 30 April 2015

Subject: Request for variation to the MSC Certification Requirements 7.23.11.5

Dear Jason Combes,

I write with reference to your submission on 29 April 2015 of a request for variation to the MSC Certification Requirement (CR) to allow the surveillance audit to occur during the 30-day stakeholder consultation period for the Ekofish Group North Sea twin rigged otter trawl plaice fishery.

As you are aware, the CR procedures relating to surveillance audit timing and stakeholder consultation 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 in your letter supporting your request, including:

- The request is made because a combination of constraints on both team availability and the approaching deadline for carrying out the surveillance audit. Assessment team members are only available in the first week of May and then in late June. Under the terms of the previously granted variation allowing for certificate extension, the assessment audit has to take place on or before 3 June.
- IFC are not aware at this time of any factor related to fishery status or performance against conditions that could result in the fishery no longer being in compliance with the MSC fishery standard.
- If this variation request is granted, IFC shall provide a notice for posting on the MSC website informing stakeholders about the dates for the surveillance audit at the earliest opportunity.
- IFC are presently making arrangements with the client for a separate re-assessment site visit, which is due to take place in June 2015. This will provide another opportunity for stakeholder engagement and will be preceded by an announcement more than 30 days in advance.



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- In order to facilitate stakeholder engagement in the surveillance process, IFC propose that stakeholder comments will be accepted for a period of 30 days from the date that the surveillance audits are announced.

Given the rationale provide, the MSC is willing to grant a variation to the CR with the following conditions:

- Given the short notification period, IFC should allow stakeholders to meet with the team if stakeholders are unable to attend the audit.
- Stakeholder comments should be adequately addressed by the assessment team, including any further requests for information or on-site visits to the fishery if necessary.
- IFC's stakeholder notice should 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 me.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Dan Hoggarth'.

Dan Hoggarth  
Fisheries Oversight Director  
Marine Stewardship Council

cc: ASI