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Sent by email

Date: 8 April, 2015

Subject: Request for variation to the MSC Certification Requirement FCR 7.24.6b for the SFSAG North Sea Haddock fishery

Dear Vicki

I write with reference to your submission on 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2015 of a request for variation to the MSC Certification Requirements FCR 7.24.6b to conduct a reduced re-assessment for this fishery, despite a new condition being having been placed at the 4<sup>th</sup> surveillance audit.

As you are aware, the FCR procedures relating to re-assessments 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:

- As part of the initial assessment process for the SFSAG North Sea haddock fishery, three conditions were opened. Two of these were met in year 1 and the other in year 2, closing all open conditions.
- During the year 4 surveillance audit, a fourth condition was opened in response to scores of less than 80 for PI 1.2.2: 'Harvest control rules and tools: There are well defined and effective harvest control rules in place'. This is in relation to the change in stock area designation (now including Subarea IV, Division IIIaN and Division VIa as a single stock) which means that management plans or management plan proposals are no longer relevant for the newly defined stock.
- This condition does not increase the risk level of the fishery, however to reduce concern the on-site audit will be completed by two people, one with expertise in the condition raised.
- In addition to this, two peer reviewers will also be used.

Given the rationale provided, the MSC is willing to grant a variation in this case with the following condition:

- All stakeholders are made aware that this fishery will hold a reduced re-assessment, revised as proposed to allow for the recently-introduced condition, and that the CAB further informs all stakeholders which team members will be present on and off-site for the site-visit.



Dan Hoggarth

Fisheries Oversight director

Marine Stewardship Council