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Tristan Southall  
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Sent by email

Date: 23 April 2013

Subject: Request for variation to the MSC Certification Requirement 27.22.3.1

Dear Tristan Southall,

I write with reference to your submission on 16 April 2013 of a request for variation to the MSC Certification Requirement (CR) to allow the upcoming surveillance audit for the DFPO North Sea and Skagerrak saithe fishery to be delayed from May to late June/early July 2013 (audit was originally due in February 2013).

As you are aware, the CR procedures relating to the location of surveillance audits 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:

- DFPO currently has five certified fisheries, with the earliest certification date being in February and the latest in August.
- Late June/early July was selected as it allows for the consideration of the updated ICES advice, which is released in May/June each year. This delay is particularly important for the DFPO Denmark North Sea plaice fishery since ICES is reportedly planning to change the stock delineation to incorporate the Skagerrak within the North Sea plaice stock.
- Conducting the five audits separately would be costly and impractical. Further, the assessments teams are broadly similar, and the same stakeholders involved in each.
- The requirements inherent in each fishery will be examined individually to ensure that appropriate assessors are present to scrutinise the key factors and pivotal technical points in every instance.



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Given the rationale provide, the MSC is willing to grant a variation to the CR in this case subject to the following conditions:

- If at any point it becomes apparent that a standalone site visit is required for any one of the fisheries, a dedicated site visit will be carried out for the fishery in question.
- The CAB is not aware of any reasons why the fishery's surveillance should not be delayed (e.g., due to concerns on stock status, management conditions that could result in the fishery not being in compliance with the MSC fishery standard).

In granting this variation, the MSC accepts that future audits for this fishery may also take place annually in late June/early July. Since a variation was granted to this requirement in January, the MSC would not be likely to grant a further variation.

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