



Chrissie Sieben
ME Certification Ltd

Sent by email

Date: 10 March 2017

Subject: Request for variation to the MSC Certification Requirements FCR v2.0 7.3.2, 7.3.4; 7.4.7/8; SA3.1.3, SA3.1.3.1, SA3.1.4 for the Joint demersal fisheries in the North Sea and adjacent waters

Dear Ms. Sieben

I write regarding your submission on 17 February 2017 of a request for variation to the MSC Certification Requirement (CR) to:

- extend the timeline requirements (7.3.2, 7.3.4)
- confirm the UoA/UoC structure after the site visit (7.4.7/8)
- assess P1 target stocks in P1 alone, and not under P2 outside their assigned UoAs (SA3.1.3, SA3.1.3.1 and SA3.1.4)

As you are aware, the CR procedures relating to the above-mentioned requirements 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 scope of the assessment covers many Principle 1 stocks, gear types and management areas justifying the need for extended timelines;
- MEC will extend the public consultation periods for both the fishery announcement and the PCDR in response to the complexity of the assessment and the increased timelines granted in this request;
- Stakeholders will be made aware of the UoA/UoC structure ahead of publication of the PCDR;
- And P1 stocks generally score well (>80) in P2, and their subsequent removal from scoring in P2 will ultimately result in more precautionary scores.

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



- Stakeholders are given the opportunity to comment on the UoA/UoC structure once defined by the CAB.

If you have any questions regarding this response, please do not hesitate to contact the Fisheries Assessment Manager for this fishery.