



Cora Seip
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Sent by email

Date: 19/03/2021

Dear Cora Seip,

I write with reference to your submission on 11/03/2021 of a request for variation to the MSC Certification Requirement (CR) to allow:

An extension on the timeline by 3 weeks 2 days for the publication of ACDR and announcement of the re-assessment. This is a total of 7 weeks 2 days from the original 7.30.1 90 day limit (e.g. including the already accepted VR)

As you are aware, the CR procedures relating to v2.2 FCP - 7.30.1 state:

The CAB shall announce the reassessment of a certified fishery no later than the date 90 days after the fourth anniversary of the existing certificate. Exact timing and planning of the reassessment shall remain the responsibility of the CAB, in consultation with the client

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:

- The Covid-pandemic slowed down the collection of additional information in some key governmental departments.
- Part of the fishery under assessment scoring is heavily influenced by the outcomes of Brexit, and new management procedures relating to fishery-specific regulations and the new relationship between the UK and other coastal states (EU and Norway).
- The content of an agreement between the UK and the EU, and the UK and Norway has influence on all aspects of the fishery under assessment and the outcomes of all Principles (management structure, Harvest Strategies and control rules). Formal documentation on the rights to reciprocal access of EEZ's, quota shares and future relationships between the 3 coastal states remains incomplete, but are due to be finalised by end of March 2021 having been delayed twice.
- This extension does not breach the 6-month post certificate anniversary limit for surveillance audits (certificate anniversary is 12th November).
- The stakeholders have been made aware of the year 4 surveillance taking place beyond the year 4 certificate anniversary.
- Stakeholders will be offered opportunities to make comment or bring new information pertinent to the scoring of the fishery.
- Rather than publish an ACDR with information that will be superseded with new data after the site visit from Brexit and harmonisation with other CABs the variation would mitigate the publication of obsolete information on the MSC website.

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



- The CAB shall inform the client that a delay to the reassessment announcement may result in the certificate expiring before the reassessment is complete and that the CAB and client cannot request a certificate extension unless there are extenuating circumstances that are outside the control of the client and CAB.
- The extended deadline is 16 April 2021.
- A stakeholder announcement shall be uploaded to E-cert for publication on the MSC website to inform stakeholders of the delay to the announcement of the reassessment.

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: Assurance Services International