

Covid-19 Pandemic

Derogation – Effective 28 September 2020

The ASC-MSC have closely monitored the impact of Covid-19 on the seafood supply chain and its certification program. The ASC-MSC recognise that the impact of Covid-19 will continue to persist. Mindful of the welfare of those participating in the ASC-MSC Seaweed program, the ASC-MSC issues the following derogation.

This derogation allows for audit and assessment activities for Seaweed and Chain of Custody certificate holders to be undertaken remotely, rather than in person, according to the specifications below. The intent of this derogation is to ensure the welfare of those participating in the ASC-MSC Seaweed program as they carry out audits and assessments to ensure that the requirements are met.

Seaweed and Supply Chain Programs: This derogation applies in situations where national or local restrictions put in place to prevent the spread of Covid-19 prevent CABs, auditors or assessors or certificate holders from carrying out on-site audits. This derogation also applies in situations where CABs assess there is a health risk involved in conducting an on-site audit.

The CABs shall conduct on-site audits or assessments, subject to existing requirements, in situations where there are no Covid-19-related restrictions or health risks, affecting either the CAB, auditors/assessors, or certificate holder. CABs shall enable remote attendance for any other stakeholders who may be subject to Covid-19-related restrictions or health risks. If there are Covid-19-related restrictions or health risks affecting either the CAB, auditors/assessors or certificate holder, the CABs should conduct specified audit types remotely. These audits include the following: seaweed surveillance audits, expedited audits, scope extensions assessments and re-assessments, as well as all supply chain audits subsequent to initial audits.

CABs shall document in the assessment announcement and the assessment/audit report the information on the restrictions or health risks which have prevented the on-site audit. CABs shall maintain a list of certificate holders where this derogation has been applied and shall make this list available for ASC-MSC or ASI on request.

This derogation is effective from 28 September 2020 until 27 March 2021. Certificate holders are still required to meet the requirements of the standards during the period this derogation applies.

Seaweed Program: CABs shall submit a variation request and complete a risk assessment in situations where Covid-19-related restrictions or health risks prevent them from carrying out an on-site visit as part of an initial assessment. The ASC-MSC Seaweed Program will consider variation requests on a case-by-case basis. The ASC-MSC will require that Reports for initial assessments carried out remotely are subject to additional internal and external review.

To implement the derogation, the MSC has provided requirements and guidance. This document is normative, and compliance with the requirements is auditable by ASI. Please contact MSC with any questions.

[Guidance to CABs \(Seaweed and CoC\)](#)