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Sent by email

Date: 5/5/2022

Subject: Request for variation to the ASC-MSC Seaweed (Algae) Certification and Accreditation Requirements v1.01 clause 17.15.2 for Jusanhama Gyokyo, Youth Association

Dear Francesca Vescovi,

I write with reference to your submission on 3/5/2022 of a request for variation to the ASC-MSC Seaweed Certification and Accreditation Requirement (CAR) to allow:

To allow the eligibility date to be set on 17 March 2022, the date of the public audit announcement and before the publication date of the PCDR.

As you are aware, the CAR procedures relating to 17.15.2 state:

The Eligibility Date can be set as either:

- a. The date of the certification of the UoA as specified on the certificate, or
- b. The publication date of the PCDR.

These are integral to ensuring all ASC-MSC accredited Conformity Assessment Bodies operate in a consistent and transparent manner. The ASC-MSC intends that these requirements be met across all seaweed operations and CoC certificate holders, except in exceptional, well-justified circumstances, as part of the AC-MSC programme.

ASC-MSC notes the factors presented supporting your request, including:

- Jusanhama Gyokyo, Youth Association farm's initial assessment PCDR is not expected until June 2022 (earlier).
- The farm under assessment has a short annual harvest season – Wakame (March to April); Kelp (April to May). Setting the eligibility date at the start of the harvest, 17 March 2022 would allow consistent handling without losing the 2022 assessed harvests.
- DNV confirms all 19 farm sites in scope only handle UoA products.
- Traceability of the 19 multisite farms have been verified, evaluated and determined risk of the earlier eligibility date is low by DNV.
- DNV has confirmed the named members of the client group eligible to handle under assessment product.
- DNV is unaware of any critical conditions resulting from the site visit nor change to the UoC.
- DNV has informed all 19 UoAs of all criteria for handling under assessment product and confirmed all farm sites are able to conform to the requirements ([Seaweed CAR 17.15.4](#); [CoC Standard clause 5.6](#)).

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

- The eligibility date is set as 17 March 2022.
- DNV shall inform the client group members eligible to handle under-assessment product of the approved eligibility date.
- Stakeholders are made aware of the change to the eligibility date including clear documentation of the eligibility date in the PCDR, subsequent PCR and harvest date for buyers' validation in line with and in reference to the approved VR.
- The farm follows all criteria for handling 'under-assessment' products, as set out in the CAR 17.15.4 and CoC

Standard clause 5.6.

- This variation shall not be taken as a precedent for similar situation in the future.
- The MSC reserves the right to revoke or amend this variation at any time within 14 days' notice provided in writing.

If you have any questions regarding this response, please do not hesitate to contact the Seaweed Accounts Manager

Marine Stewardship Council

cc: Assurance Services International

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