# FISHERY BY-PRODUCT REPORT

## IFFO GLOBAL STANDARD FOR RESPONSIBLE SUPPLY OF FISHMEAL AND FISH OIL

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| **FISHERY By-Product:** | **Saithe/Coley (*Pollachius virens*)** |
| **LOCATION:** | **ICES Division Va (Iceland Grounds)** |
| **DATE OF REPORT:** | **December 2015** |
| **ASSESSOR:** | **Sam Dignan** |

| 1. APPLICATION DETAILS AND SUMMARY OF THE ASSESSMENT OUTCOME | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Name:** | | |
| **Address:** | | |
| **Country:** Iceland | **Zip:** | |
| **Tel. No.** | **Fax. No.** | |
| **Email address:** | **Applicant Code** | |
| **Key Contact: :** | **Title:** | |
| **Certification Body Details** | | |
| **Name of Certification Body:** | **Global Trust** | |
| **Assessor Name** | **Peer Reviewer** | **Initial/Surveillance/ Re-certification** |
| Sam Dignan | Deirdre Hoare | Surveillance |

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|---|---|
| **1. Scope of Assessment** | IFFO RS by-product surveillance |
| **2. Fishery By-Product** | Saithe/Coley (*Pollachius virens*) |
| **3. Fishery By-Product Location** | ICES Division Va (Iceland Grounds) |
| **4. Fishery Method** | Bottom trawl & gillnet |
| **5. Outcome of Assessment** | Approve by-product |

## 2. GUIDANCE FOR ONSITE ASSESSMENT

## 3. ASSESSMENT DETERMINATION

**There is a robust fishery management framework in place in Iceland which is applied specifically to the saithe stock in the assessment area. Management is supported by species-specific data collection and stock assessment. The assessment team recommends approving this by-product material against the IFFO RS standard.**

## 4. RATIONALE OF THE ASSESSMENT OUTCOME

### A. THE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK AND PROCEDURE

| LEVEL OF COMPLIANCE | |
|---|---|
| *The management of the fishery used to produce the By- Product must include a legal and administrative basis for the implementation of measures and controls to support the management of the fishery.* | |
| **LOW** | An administrative framework that ensures an efficient management of the fishery is not established. |
| **MEDIUM** | An administrative framework that ensures an efficient management of the fishery is somehow established, but there is evidence of not being efficient to ensure the management of the stock. |
| **HIGH** | A legal and administrative framework that ensures an efficient management of the fishery is established and works efficiently. |

***Determination: There is an effective fishery management framework in place in Iceland, which is applied specifically to the by-product species under assessment.***

**Fishery management framework:**

Modern Icelandic fisheries management is based on the Fisheries Management Act of 1990, and is the responsibility of the Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture. The objectives of the Fisheries Management Act are to promote the conservation and efficient utilisation of the marine resources and thus to ensure stable employment and economic viability of fishing communities. In other words, the aim is to ensure the sustainability of the fisheries while emphasising the economic benefits of the fisheries sector. The fisheries management system in Iceland is primarily based on extensive research on the fish stocks and the marine ecosystem, decisions made on the conduct of fisheries and allowable catches on the basis of scientific advice, and effective monitoring and enforcement of the fisheries and the total catch. Research is carried out within Iceland by the Marine Research Institute and internationally by ICES. These are the main pillars of the Icelandic fisheries management intended to ensure responsible fisheries and the sustainability of the ocean's natural resources. Management of those stocks subject to international prosecution is facilitated by Iceland's membership of the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC).

**Species-specific management:**

Saithe in Division Va is managed as a discrete stock, which accurately reflects the current best scientific understanding of the biological stock structure of saithe in the Northeast Atlantic. An annual quota is set using a harvest control rule that has been approved by ICES which is contained within a species-specific management plan in place since spring 2013. For the 2014/15 fishing season the TAC was set at 58,000t and total landings from Icelandic waters were approx. 52,500 t.

**R1 – R5**

### B. STOCK ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES AND MANAGEMENT ADVICE

| LEVEL OF COMPLIANCE | |
|---|---|
| *B. Research in support of fisheries management should exist.* | |
| **LOW** | Research to support the management of the stock does not exist |
| **MEDIUM** | Research to support the management of the stock exists, however research programmes could be significantly improved to decrease scientific advice uncertainty. |
| **HIGH** | Research to support the management of the stock exists, and research programmes for provision of scientific advice are considered adequate. |

***Determination: Management of the Icelandic saithe fishery is supported by species-specific data collection and stock assessment activities.***

Fisheries management in Icelandic waters is supported nationally by the Marine Research Institute (MRI). The MRI carries out ongoing research on the status and productivity of commercial stocks, and long-term research on the marine environment and the ecosystem around Iceland. The results of this research are the foundations on which the majority of Icelandic fishery management decisions are made. Additional and international scientific advice is provided by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES). ICES utilises the

best available scientific information collected by 20 member countries and others, and develops advice for the majority of commercially fished stocks in European waters. Annual management advice is provided by both the MRI and ICES.

There is an established assessment method for saithe, which was approved by ICES at a benchmark-process in 2010. The method for assessing the abundance and exploitation of the saithe in Iceland is a forward projecting, separable model, fitted to catch numbers at age and the spring survey indices at age. Catch data in numbers at age are obtained by combining landings data with age distributions from samples.

A Harvest Control Rule has been developed for the annual TAC for Icelandic saithe, and has been implemented since 2013. ICES evaluated the Iceland saithe FMP in 2013. ICES concluded that the harvest control rule for Icelandic saithe in the request is precautionary and in accordance with the ICES MSY approach.

There is a target harvest rate (20% of the spawning stock biomass (SSB)) in the management plan, which is a proxy for fishing mortality. This harvest rate is associated with a low (<5%) probability of bringing the spawning biomass below the limit level of 61,000 t. There is a trigger SSB below which the harvest rate will be reduced.

The stock is considered to be well above $B_{pa}$ / $B_{trigger}$, and in recent years fishing mortality has been close to FMSY. ICES notes that the assessment does contain some sources of uncertainty due to fluctuations in the spring survey data and changes in fleet selectivity.

**R3 – R5**

## C. STOCK STATUS

| LEVEL OF COMPLIANCE | |
|---|---|
| *C. The fish used to produce the fish By- Product is not considered to be critically at risk of over exploitation in accordance with the IUCN guidance.* | |
| **LOW** | The fish By-Product must not come from a species that is listed as extinct, or critically endangered. |
| **MEDIUM** | The fish By- Product is from a species that is classified as vulnerable, but has a management regime in place that will control the level of fishing permitted. Or if a species is deemed to be endangered but the sub-group from where the fish By- Product is harvested is deemed scientifically to be at no risk of over exploitation. |
| **HIGH** | The fish By- Product comes from a fishery that is not deemed to be at risk of over exploitation from fishing activities. |

***Determination: Saithe has not been categorised by the IUCN; however the additional evidence described below leads the assessment team to believe the species is not at serious risk and so a high compliance rating is appropriate.***

The IUCN has not categorised *Pollachius virens*, and it does not appear in the CITES appendices. There are around 12 saithe fisheries in the Northeast Atlantic which have been certified against the MSC standard. The Icelandic saithe fishery has been certified against both MSC and FAO-based Iceland Responsible Fisheries Management Specifications.

**R6 – R9**

## 5. REFERENCES

**R1 –** Icelandic fisheries management: http://www.fisheries.is/management/fisheries-management/

**R2 –** Marine Research Institute: http://www.hafro.is/undir_eng.php?ID=1&REF=1

**R3 –** ICES advice, saithe in Division Va (Icelandic saithe): http://www.ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Advice/2015/2015/sai-icel.pdf

**R4 –** MRI advice, Marine Stocks 2014/2015 and prospects for 2015/2016 (saithe) http://www.hafro.is/Astand/2015/english/saithe_2015.pdf

**R5 –** MRI advice, saithe, 2015: http://www.hafro.is/Astand/2014/english/03-saithe-14.pdf

**R6 –** IUCN redlist: http://www.iucnredlist.org/

**R7 –** CITES appendices: http://www.cites.org/eng/app/appendices.php

**R8 –** Marine Stewardship Council ISF Iceland saithe and ling https://www.msc.org/track-a-fishery/fisheries-in-the-program/certified/north-east-atlantic/isf-saithe-ling

**R9 –** Iceland Responsible Fisheries (Saithe Fisheries) http://www.responsiblefisheries.is/certification/certified-fisheries/saithe-fisheries/