

## Marine Stewardship Council - Variation Request Form V1.2

<b>Date submitted to MSC</b>	28/11/12
<b>Conformity Assessment Body</b>	Food Certification International Ltd
<b>Fishery Name/CoC Certificate Number</b>	Samherji Norwegian & Icelandic herring trawl and seine fishery
<b>Lead Auditor/Programme Manager</b>	Nick Pfeiffer / Melissa McFadden
<b>Scheme requirement(s) to vary from</b>	CR 27.4.2

### Proposed variation

An additional herring stock (Icelandic summer spawning herring) to be specified within the Units of Certification for this assessment. This stock is fished only within ICES Subarea Va (within the Icelandic EEZ) and fishes using both Purse Seine and Mid-water trawl.

Further, the existing purse seine Unit of Certification to be modified to ONLY include the Icelandic summer spawning herring.

The resulting Units of Certification for the fishery will now be:

UoC1

<b>Species:</b>	Atlantic herring ( <i>Clupea harengus</i> )
<b>Stock:</b>	Herring in the Northeast Atlantic (Norwegian spring-spawning stock)
<b>Geographical area:</b>	Iceland EEZ, ICES Subarea IIa, Va and Vb1b and North East Atlantic FAO Area 27
<b>Harvest method:</b>	Mid-water trawl mesh size 40mm
<b>Client Group:</b>	Samherji hf and Sildarvinnslan hf vessels targetting the Northeast Atlantic herring stock in ICES Subarea IIa, Va and Vb1b using mid-water trawl
<b>Other Eligible Fishers:</b>	Icelandic registered vessels that are not currently members of Samherji hf and Sildarvinnslan hf targetting the Northeast Atlantic Norwegian spring-spawning herring stock within the Iceland EEZ, ICES subareas IIa, Va and Vb1b using mid-water trawl

UoC2

<b>Species:</b>	Atlantic herring ( <i>Clupea harengus</i> )
<b>Stock:</b>	Herring in the Northeast Atlantic (Icelandic summer-spawning stock)
<b>Geographical area:</b>	ICES Subarea Va within Icelandic EEZ
<b>Harvest method:</b>	Mid-water trawl mesh size 40mm
<b>Client Group:</b>	Samherji hf and Sildarvinnslan hf vessels targetting the Icelandic summer-spawning stock in ICES Subarea Va within the Icelandic EEZ using mid-water trawl
<b>Other Eligible Fishers:</b>	Icelandic registered vessels that are not currently members of Samherji hf and Sildarvinnslan hf targetting the Icelandic summer-spawning stock in ICES Subarea Va within the Icelandic EEZ using mid-water trawl

UoC3

<b>Species:</b>	Atlantic herring ( <i>Clupea harengus</i> )
<b>Stock:</b>	Herring in the Northeast Atlantic (Icelandic summer-spawning stock)
<b>Geographical area:</b>	ICES Subarea Va within Icelandic EEZ
<b>Harvest method:</b>	Purse seine mesh size 31mm
<b>Client Group:</b>	Samherji hf and Síldarvinnslan hf vessels targetting the Icelandic summer-spawning stock in ICES Subarea Va within the Icelandic EEZ using purse seine
<b>Other Eligible Fishers:</b>	Icelandic registered vessels that are not currently members of Samherji hf and Síldarvinnslan hf targetting the Icelandic summer-spawning stock in ICES Subarea Va within the Icelandic EEZ using purse seine

#### **Rationale/Justification**

Purse seine is not currently used by the fleet under assessment in this fishery for pursuing the Icelandic Norwegian spring spawning herring stock. Although Icelandic Norwegian spring spawning herring has been caught by purse seine at various times by the fleet in the past, this is no longer the case and the distribution and nature of N-I ss herring shoals (which are less densely aggregated in Icelandic waters in contrast with the densely aggregated shoals they form in Norwegian waters) has meant that the fleet under assessment must use pelagic trawls in order to efficiently pursue herring catches in Icelandic waters.

For this assessment, the client had originally requested that the purse seine gear type be included as a 2nd UoC in the certification primarily in case any member vessels in the future wished to fish in some parts of the Norwegian EEZ, where pelagic trawling is not permitted. However, as this gear type has not been used by the fleet in recent years, there was insufficient evidence of usage patterns, catch profiles and impacts to support an assessment. Accordingly, it is requested that the purse seine unit of certification be removed in respect of the Norwegian Spring spawning herring stock.

Additionally, significant landings of Atlantic herring from the Icelandic summer spawning herring stock are made by the client fleet using pure seine as well as pelagic trawl. There is significant mixing of stocks in the pelagic trawl fishery and significant volumes of Icelandic summer spawning herring are taken in the trawl fishery for Norwegian spring spawning herring. Because of this the client wishes to add the Icelandic summer spawning stock to the assessment. The Icelandic summer spawning stock is fished entirely by Icelandic vessels using both pelagic trawl and purse seine gears. The management of the Icelandic summer spawning stock is exclusively under the jurisdiction of Iceland. Scientific advice is provided by the Marine Research Institute and the ICES. Inclusion of this stock would effectively add two further Units of Certification to the assessment (pelagic trawl and a new purse seine unit).

The data provided to the CAB by the client at the start of the process indicated total catches of Norwegian Spring Spawning herring (also known as Atlanto Scandian herring or Icelandic Norwegian spring spawning herring). The client did not make detailed (broken down by species or stock) catch data available prior to the site visit as they did not realise that this could be relevant as they were seeking certification of a single stock of herring only. There was no indication to the CAB that the fishery in fact captured smaller volumes of a second herring stock. Provision of more detailed catch

data in advance of the site visit would have enabled the team to determine that catches were in fact comprised of two separate herring stocks which are mixed in the catch. As such, the situation only became apparent when detailed landings data (by vessel landing event) was provided to the assessment team during the site visit.

The proportion of Icelandic summer spawning herring that is present in the catch of Norwegian Spring spawning herring is presently within the scope where these could be considered under IPI methodology (at 10-12% of total herring catch). However, indications from a review of a time series of landings are that the proportion of Icelandic summer spawners in the catch has been increasing in recent years. It is considered most probable that with further observed reductions in the overall stock biomass and associated TAC's for Norwegian summer spawning herring in recent years, the future proportion of Icelandic summer spawning herring captured in the Norwegian spring spawning herring fishery will increase beyond the 15% limit that applies to stocks that are eligible for consideration under IPI. This is considered a likely scenario within a one to three year time frame. This would then require an appropriate response by the CAB which would most likely result in the addition of the Icelandic summer spawning stock to the assessment at that time. The assessment team and CAB believe it more appropriate to add the second stock to the assessment as early in the process as possible to enable full transparency from the outset.

#### **Implications for assessment (required for fisheries assessment variations only)**

The assessment thus far, including the on-site assessment visit, has only covered the Norwegian spring spawning herring stock. If the variation is approved, it is intended to contact all previously identified stakeholders and to include an additional period for stakeholder comment and consultation prior to proceeding to scoring of additional Units of Certification. It is not proposed to conduct an additional site visit unless stakeholder submissions received indicate that this is necessary.

#### **Have the stakeholders of this fishery assessment been informed of this request? (required for fisheries assessment variations only)**

No, but all identified Stakeholders will be informed if the variation is confirmed, and opportunity for full consultation on the Summer spawning herring will be provided before moving forwards with the assessment.