

Marine Stewardship Council - Variation Request Form V1.3

Date submitted to MSC	29.04.2013
Conformity Assessment Body	Det Norske Veritas Business Assurance (DNV)
Fishery Name/CoC Certificate Number	Faroe Island North East Arctic cod & haddock fisheries
Lead Auditor/Programme Manager	Mrs. Sandhya Chaudhury
Scheme requirement(s) to vary from	27.4.2
Is this variation sought in order to undertake an expedited P1 assessment (CR annex CL)?	No

1. Proposed variation

The revised fishery certification will be defined as:

- Species 1:** Cod (*Gadus morhua*)
- Stock 1:** North-East Arctic Cod
- Species 2:** Haddock (*melanogrammus aeglefinus*)
- Stock 2:** North-East Arctic haddock

Both fisheries

- Geographical area:** ICES subareas I & II: within REZ, NEZ and International waters
- Harvest method:** Demersal rock-hopper trawl
- Management:** The stock is managed jointly by Norway and Russia through the Joint Norwegian-Russian Fisheries Commission.
- Client Group/ fishing boats:** Gadus P/F
Sjúðarberg
Vesturvón
- Other Eligible fishers:** Enniberg P/F

2. Rationale/Justification

The original assessments covered 2 vessels (Gadus P/F & Vesturvón) in the UoC with the only other eligible fisher being the Enniberg. JFK Trol, which is the owner of Gadus P/F, has acquired a new vessel, Sjúrdarberg which now joins this unit of certification. There is no aspect in the operations of Sjúrdarberg that may impact P2 and the quota for Sjúrdarberg does not exceed the total Faroese quota in the Barents Sea.

The following are similar to the certified vessels:

1. The vessel is c. 60 m stern trawler processing (filleting or heading and gutting) and freezing the catch at sea.
2. The vessel uses Baka 630 trawl with 21-inch (sic 53.3 cm) disc rockhopper ground gear and slotted Faroe doors; curved ovoid doors with two rows of choked slots. The slots accelerate the water flow across the back of the door creating a strong lateral force ('lift') pulling the door away from the centre line of the trawl, typically providing 150 m spread.
3. The vessel uses a plastic flexi-sorting grid in the top of the sleeve, just ahead of the cod end and opt to use 150 mm cod-end mesh, to further minimise small-fish capture, rather than use the statutory 130 mm minimum.
4. A typical fishing trip last 6–8 weeks; the season starts in January, most probably fishing off Lofoton where the mature cod aggregate on their way to the inshore spawning grounds.
5. There are 18 crew members on-board and the expected annual catch is 3000 tonnes.
6. There will now be 4 vessels fishing on the Faroese quota of north east arctic cod and haddock

The original full assessment will not be impacted by the addition of this new vessel - reference to enclosed evaluation from P2 expert, Dr. Stephen Lockwood, the main points of which are:

Whereas the current Barents Sea regulations require trawlers to work with a 130 mm minimum cod-end mesh size, the Sjúrdarberg opts to use a 150 mm cod end mesh to further minimise the capture of small and non-target fishes.

The additional vessel will be required to comply with all aspects of Barents Sea coastal-state fishery regulations, including strict observance (and reporting where appropriate) of gear regulations, threshold limits on small and juvenile fish captures, real-time, seasonal and permanent area closures. There is no reason to believe that the addition of the Sjúrdarberg to the Faroe Islands' Barents Sea fleet represents a measurable change in the environmental footprint of the fleet's fishing effort.

As regards main retained species saithe is subject to internationally agreed precautionary exploitation rules and both cod and haddock, the main retained species, are subject to rigidly enforced harvest control rules.

The bycatch of non-gadoid species is very small and as the new vessel will be fishing the same gear in the same areas as the other three certified vessels, there is no reason to anticipate any significant change or threat to bycatch fish species.

There is no reason to believe that the Sjúrdarberg will prove any less observant and

compliant with regard to ETP or to marine protected areas and VME than sister ships already covered by the certification.

The participation of the Sjúrdarberg in the Barents Sea fishery represents one very small part of a much larger international fleet and will become part of, not additional to, the existing Faroese fleet's effort. In this context, the presence of Sjúrdarberg will not influence the long-term stability or integrity of the Barents Sea ecosystem.

3. Implications for assessment (required for fisheries assessment variations only)

NA – Fishery is already certified.

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

N
All stakeholders will be notified in the usual manner once this variation is granted.

5. Further Comments

NA

COASTAL FISHERIES CONSERVATION & MANAGEMENT

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Faroe Island North East Arctic cod fishery

Marine Stewardship Council Certification

Certification Body: Det Norske Veritas Certification AS

Notification of additional vessel: F.V. *Sjúrðarberg*

At the time of certification, the unit of certification covered three Faroese-registered fishing vessels. This new, fourth vessel is of similar size and design, using the same fishing gear (subject to variations in individual skippers' preferences for rigging) with the same processing facilities and methods. i.e. *Sjúrðarberg* is a c. 60 m stern trawler working with a Baka 630 trawl with 21-inch (*sic*; 53.3 cm) disc rock-hopper ground gear and slotted Faroe doors. (Curved ovoid doors with two rows of choked slots that accelerate the water flow across the back of the door creating a strong lateral force, typically providing 150 m spread.) In common with the other vessels, and in compliance with Barents Sea fishery regulations, the vessel uses a plastic flexi-sorting grid in the top of the sleeve, just ahead of the cod end. Whereas the current Barents Sea regulations require trawlers to work with a 130 mm minimum cod-end mesh size, the *Sjúrðarberg* opts to use a 150 mm cod end mesh to further minimise the capture of small and non-target fishes. All fish are processed (filleted or headed and gutted) and frozen at sea.

The Barents Sea fish quotas allocated to the Faroe Islands have not been increased with the addition of the new vessel; the total annual Faroese quotas are unaffected by the number of vessels but individual vessels will catch less to remain within this quota. All commercial fish species must be retained on board and landed. Catches must be recorded in the paper or electronic log book (according to the preference of the coastal state) and be available to inspection at all times by coastal-state fishery enforcement inspectors. The additional vessel will be required to comply with all aspects of Barents Sea coastal-state fishery regulations, including strict observance (and reporting where appropriate) of gear regulations, threshold limits on small and juvenile fish captures, real-time, seasonal and permanent area closures. Thus, there is no reason to believe that the addition of the *Sjúrðarberg* to the Faroe Islands' Barents Sea fleet represents a measurable change in the environmental footprint of the fleet's fishing effort.

Referenced scoring for P2 is available in the original assessment reports¹ but key points are highlighted here.

¹ http://www.msc.org/track-a-fishery/fisheries-in-the-program/certified/north-east-atlantic/faroe_island_north_east_arctic_cod
http://www.msc.org/track-a-fishery/fisheries-in-the-program/certified/north-east-atlantic/faore_island_north_east_arctic_haddock

Principle 2.1 – Main retained species

Cod fishery: the main retained species are haddock and saithe. Both haddock and saithe stocks in the Barents Sea area are in robust condition, and subject to internationally agreed precautionary exploitation rules and rigidly enforced harvest control rules.

Haddock fishery: the main retained species are cod and saithe. The cod stock biomass is currently greater than at any time over the past 70 years and is subject to an internationally agreed and ICES endorsed MSY-based management plan. The saithe is subject to internationally agreed precautionary exploitation rules and both species are subject to rigidly enforced harvest control rules.

Principal 2.2 - Bycatch

All commercial fish species must be retained, recorded, reported and landed. The bycatch of non-gadoid species is very small and as the new vessel will be fishing the same gear in the same areas as the other three certified vessels, there is no reason to anticipate any significant change or threat to bycatch fish species.

Principal 2.3 – ETP

The Faroe Islands is a member of and signatory to (albeit through Denmark) a wide range of international conventions and agreements aimed at the management and conservation of endangered, threatened and protected species. The vessel is obliged to be fully compliant with these conventions as applied and enforced through the coastal state in addition to meeting the Faroe Islands' legislation and obligations. There is no reason to believe that the *Sjúrdarberg* will prove any less observant and compliant in this regard than sister ships already covered by the certification.

Principal 2.4 – Habitats

In common with the certified vessels, *Sjúrdarberg* will be using rock-hopper rig, which has the capacity to break and abraid benthic communities and disrupt seabed habitat. In recent years considerable research effort has been expended in the Barents Sea to identify, protect and close areas identified as vulnerable marine ecosystems (VME). Vessels fishing in the Barents Sea are informed and know where these areas are, and opt to avoid such areas, particularly in the case of cold-water coral reefs and areas of dense sponge communities; both corals and sponges have the potential to cause significant gear damage with concomitant loss or damage to the catch. There is no reason to believe that the *Sjúrdarberg* will prove any less observant and compliant with respect to marine protected areas and VME than sister ships already covered by the certification.

Principal 2.5 – Ecosystem

The participation of the *Sjúrdarberg* in the Barents Sea fishery represents one very small part of a much larger international fleet and will become part of, not additional to, the existing Faroese fleet's effort. In this context, the presence of *Sjúrdarberg* will not influence the long-term stability or integrity of the Barents Sea ecosystem.



16 April 2013

