

KONUR ERU LÍKA
Í SJÁVARÚTVEGI



Responsible Fisheries

Sigríð Merino

CEO, Iceland Responsible Fisheries Foundation (IRFF)

Sjávarútvegsráðstefnan, Reykjavík 10th of November 2022



Overview

- The importance of certification
- Understanding how certification of well managed fisheries works
- IRF certification programme: background, pillars and prospects of growth



Why is certification important?

- Icelandic fisheries operate mostly in an international environment
 - 98% of our seafood products - exported
- Certification provides credibility and assurance of well managed fisheries, and at the same time puts emphasis on traceability and origin
- Verification through independent third party certification



How does certification of well managed fisheries work?

- IRF owns and has developed two standards:
 - Fisheries Management Standard
 - Chain of Custody Standard
- Main objectives
 - Strengthen access for Icelandic seafood products to foreign markets
 - Ensure buyers reliable, professional information about the Icelandic Fisheries Management System



Iceland Responsible Fisheries certification programme

- This project is the result of the initiative and solidarity of the partners within the Icelandic Fishing Industry
- IRF was founded in 2011, after many years of groundwork done within Fiskifélag Íslands
 - Representatives from SFS, LS and Fiskifélag Íslands constitute the Board at IRFF
- Cod was the first certified fishery back in 2010
- Our focus has always been to work on a cost basis, keep on improving our standards and ensuring effective operations



The requirements are detailed

- The certification is based on governmental formal harvest rules for individual fish stocks within the Icelandic EEZ
- No discounts or exceptions are given in the IRF Fisheries Management Standard
 - IRF Certification does not contemplate FIPs
- IRF Certification provides for competition in the certification forum, especially for the substance and scope of the certification, certification bodies and audit procedures, and cost restraint in this ever expanding field of audits.



IRF Certification pillars

- Established according to the Icelandic fisheries and the Icelandic fisheries management system
- The programme is owned by ourselves and it is the responsibility of the partners of the Icelandic Fishing Industry
- Follows internationally adopted agreements regarding well managed fisheries.
- The IRF Certification is internationally accredited by ISO/IAF
- IRF is GSSI recognised since 2016
 - IRF is one of five Fishing Management Standards which GSSI has benchmarked and recognized as equivalent: IRF, Alaska RFM, MSC, G.U.L.F. and MEL



CERTIFIED

Example – connection to the Financial Market

- Brim hf. published green/blue bonds recently

General funding of sustainable groundfish operations and assets with at least over 90% of the pro-rate revenues from groundfish operations certified under the Global Sustainable Seafood Initiative (GSSI) certification scheme.

- Part of the premise of publishing the bonds, was that an independent third party could verify well managed fisheries in the Icelandic EEZ
 - Brim is a member of IRF Certification programme through its Icelandic fish stocks



CERTIFIED

IRF internationally

- 2021: IRF and CSC (Alaska RFM) presented the RFM Unified Chain of Custody Standard
 - It supports increased cohesion and reduces audit costs.
- Norway began the work in 2020, but Covid implications have stalled that work.



New projects for IRF – FISH Standard for Crew

- SFS and LS agreed in 2021 that IRF would introduce a social standard to its members.
- The international standard refers to and establishes the requirements for decent working conditions for fishermen onboard fishing vessels.
 - The pilot audit took place in Iceland in the beginning of September 2022
 - The objective is to certify the working environment of fishers working for the members of SFS and LS
 - Not focusing on quality/food security or environmental issues
 - This project is intended to serve buyers of Icelandic seafood
 - <https://fishstandard.com/the-fish-standard/>



FISH Standard for Crew

- IRF is well suited to take this project on since it represents the majority of the Icelandic Fishing Industry.
- Advantages of IRF managing this Standard:
 - we can use the IRF operation model so this only leads to minimal added costs
 - we count on our knowledge on certification, and the connection and work with certification bodies
- This is our response to increased demand for social audits of our members in the seafood value chain



To summarise...

- IRF existence and continuation is based on the Icelandic Fishing Industry, that has international projection and relevance
- IRF will continue to build capacity and develop knowledge in the certification sphere - with the objective to keep operations at cost level and service the Fishing Industry to the best of our ability.
- The message of Iceland Responsible Fisheries certification is and always will be our message, verified through independent third - party certification.

