

## Summary of FIP for Atlantic Mackerel and Atlanto-Scandian Herring in the North-East Atlantic Ocean

### FIP Leads

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### FIP Description

There are two fisheries captured within this FIP: the North East Atlantic (NEA) mackerel fishery, and the Atlanto-Scandian herring (ASH) (also known as the Norwegian spring spawning herring) fishery.

Both fisheries are prosecuted using pelagic (midwater) trawls and purse seines. Coastal vessels also use mechanised handlines.

These fisheries are managed by the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC). NEAFC was formed to recommend measures to maintain the rational exploitation of fish stocks in the Atlantic and Arctic Oceans. Most of this area is under the fisheries jurisdiction of NEAFC's Contracting Parties (Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland (DFG)), the EU, Iceland, Norway and the Russian Federation), but four large areas (including the area around the North Pole) are international waters and constitute the NEAFC Regulatory Area.

The allocation of national quotas is based on allocation keys negotiated in connection with the establishment of the EU Common Fisheries Policy or negotiated in the framework of NEAFC, the Joint Norwegian-Russian Fisheries Commission (JNRFC) or in bilateral agreements between EU (at the time EC) and Norway and the Faroe Islands. Many of these allocations were established when the 200 nm EEZs were established in the late 1970s. These keys are to a large extent based on the coastal states' fishing records during the period 1971–76 and has subsequently and with only a few amendments been used by the European Union (EU) for the annual allocation of fishing quotas among its Member States. Known as "the relative stability" this is one of the cornerstones of the EU Common Fisheries Policy, CFP.

However, the changing distribution of these stocks has led to demands for a share of the catch by those countries that have little history of it. The parties have not been able to reach a satisfactory agreement on quotas.

All mackerel MSC certificates were suspended in March 2019. The suspension originally took place after ICES advice showed stock (SSB) level below trigger point. After revised ICES advice, showing the stock (SSB) above trigger level, the relevant CABs nevertheless concluded:

*"The outcome of harmonisation during the 2nd surveillance audit is that despite the change in mackerel stock status with the SSB currently above the MSY BTrigger, PI 1.2.2 Harvest Control Rules & Tools score remains < 60 and the fishery still fails, for the following reasons:*

- The current level of exploitation does not provide evidence that the tools used to implement the generally understood HCRs are appropriate and effective in controlling exploitation.*
- There is a continuing dispute over mackerel quota allocation resulting in annual catches well in excess of the advised catches. There is an absence of long-term management strategy for the mackerel agreed by all parties involved in mackerel fisheries. Therefore, it could not be concluded with confidence that the management agency can and will act effectively and in a timely manner to reduce exploitation rate if the point of recruitment impairment is approached.*
- Despite the change in mackerel stock status with the SSB currently above the MSY BTrigger and the improvement in the management of the advised catch, with current and predicted exploitation level together with low recruitment, the stock is nevertheless predicted to continue to decline. Therefore, there is a reason to conclude that such high*

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<p><i>level of exploitation will lead to a situation where the stock is likely to fall below sustainable level in the foreseeable future.</i></p> <p><i>Therefore, the suspension of the fishery certificate is not lifted"</i></p> <p>The reinstatement of certification is reliant on the effective adoption and implementation of the HCRs.</p> <p>For herring, independent assessors identified the risk to future stock health and set conditions against their certification in 2015, requiring states to reach a quota-sharing agreement by November 2020. This was not achieved and these fisheries lost their MSC certificates on 30 December 2020. The latest expedited audit (Aug 2020) reveals that the fisheries require:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The fishery needs to demonstrate that the harvest strategy is achieving its objectives and that overall quotas are within sustainable limits.</li> <li>• The ongoing allocation dispute needs to be resolved.</li> <li>• The fishery should work with the EU, the Pelagic Advisory Council, other certified or suspended UoCs in the fishery and/or other parties as appropriate to support the resolution of the dispute between the Coastal States and to re-establish an effective international cooperation and dispute-resolution mechanism for the fishery.</li> </ul>
<p><b>FIP Objective</b></p> <p>FIP stakeholders are implementing management improvements with a goal to re-certify the FIP fisheries against the MSC Standard by 2024.</p>
<p><b>FIP Type</b></p> <p>Comprehensive</p>
<p><b>FIP Stage</b></p> <p>Stage 3: FIP Implementation</p>
<p><b>Start and Projected End Dates</b></p> <p>April 2021 - April 2024</p>
<p><b>Next Progress Report Due</b></p> <p>Sunday, October 30, 2022</p>
<p><b>Species</b></p> <p>Common Name - Atlantic Mackerel Scientific Name - <i>Scomber scombrus</i></p> <p>Common Name – Atlanto-Scandian Herring Scientific Name - <i>Clupea harengus</i></p>
<p><b>Gear Type</b></p> <p>Hydraulic Hook &amp; Line Midwater Trawl Purse Seine-Unassociated</p>
<p><b>Location</b></p> <p>FAO Fishing Area 27 (Atlantic, Northeast)</p>
<p><b>Regional Fisheries Management Organization</b></p> <p>North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission</p>
<p><b>Latest Progress Rating</b></p> <p>C (some recent progress)</p>