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Global Standard for Responsible Supply of Marine Ingredients Fishery Assessment Methodology and Template Report V2.0



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Fishery Under Assessment	Hake (<i>Merluccius merluccius</i>) ICES Areas IVa-c, VIa, VIIa,b,d, h,j Northern Stock
Date	July 2019
Assessor	Jim Daly

Application details and summary of the assessment outcome				
Name: Bioceval				
Address:				
Country: France		Zip:		
Tel. No.:		Fax. No.:		
Email address:		Applicant Code		
Key Contact:		Title:		
Certification Body Details				
Name of Certification Body:		SAI Global Ltd		
Assessor Name	Peer Reviewer	Assessment Days	Initial/Surveillance/Re-approval	Whole fish/ By-product
Jim Daly	Virginia Polonio	0.5	Initial	By-product
Assessment Period	2018			

Scope Details	
Management Authority (Country/State)	EU/Common Fisheries Policy
Main Species	Hake (<i>Merluccius merluccius</i>)
Fishery Location	ICES Areas IVa-c, VIa, VIIa,b,d-h,j Northern Stock
Gear Type(s)	Trawl, gillnet, longline, and mixed gears
Outcome of Assessment	
Overall Outcome	Pass
Clauses Failed	None
Peer Review Evaluation	Approval
Recommendation	Pass

Assessment Determination

Fishery removals of the species in the fishery under assessment are included in the stock assessment process. The species is considered, in its most recent stock assessment [Northern stock (Greater North Sea, Celtic Seas, and the northern Bay of Biscay)] to have a biomass above limit reference point.

Discarding of juvenile hake (undersized and above minimum size) can be substantial in some areas and fleets. In the most recent period, discarding of large individuals increased because of quota restrictions in certain fleets. In 2017, observed discards decreased. Some fleets fishing this stock have been under the EU landing obligation since 2016. Other regulations including minimum mesh size and restrictions on permitted percentage of bycatch when vessels target other species have reduced fishing pressure on this stock.

It is proposed (EU 2018) to replace the five existing single-species based multi-annual plans (including Northern Hake) adopted by separate regulations by bringing all multi-annual plans for the different demersal stocks into one Regulation. The introduction of this new approach would allow achievement of conservation objectives while, at the same time, permitting elimination of fishing effort limitations meaning that numerous reporting and control obligations would not be required. This will result in a significant reduction of the administrative burden.

Fishery removals of the species in the fishery under assessment are included in the stock assessment process. The species is considered, in its most recent stock assessment, to have a biomass above the limit reference point (or proxy). IUCN has categorised hake as a species of least concern (website accessed 01.07.19).

The assessment team recommends maintaining the approval of hake as by-product material under the IFFO RS Standard v 2.0.

Peer Review Comments

PR agrees with the conclusions raised in the report. However, while not all discards are included in the analytical assessment, they are included in the final advice catch estimates. Discards represent approximately 2%–5% of the total stock catches and furthermore, discards have decreased substantially this year. The new assessment plan will ensure that all the countries who exploit the resource present data on time and in correct format. Therefore, PR recommends the approval of this by product under IFFO RS Standard v 2.0

Notes for On-site Auditor

Species-Specific Results

Category	Species	% landings	Outcome (Pass/Fail)	
Category A			A1	
			A2	
			A3	
			A4	
Category B				
Category C	Hake (<i>Merluccius merluccius</i>)		Pass	
Category D				

SPECIES CATEGORISATION

The following table should be completed as fully as the available information permits. Any species representing more than 0.1% of the annual catch should be listed, along with an estimate of the proportion of the catch each species represents. The species should then be divided into Type 1 and Type 2 as follows:

- **Type 1 Species** can be considered the ‘target’ or ‘main’ species in the fishery. They make up the bulk of annual landings and are subjected to a detailed assessment.
- **Type 2 Species** can be considered the ‘bycatch’ or ‘minor’ species in the fishery. They make up a small proportion of the annual landings and are subjected to relatively high-level assessment.

Type 1 Species must represent 95% of the total annual catch. Type 2 Species may represent a maximum of 5% of the annual catch (see Appendix B).

Species which make up less than 0.1% of landings do not need to be listed (NOTE: ETP species are considered separately). The table should be extended if more space is needed. Discarded species should be included when known.

The ‘stock’ column should be used to differentiate when there are multiple biological or management stocks of one species captured by the fishery. The ‘management’ column should be used to indicate whether there is an adequate management regime specifically aimed at the individual species/stock. In some cases it will be immediately clear whether there is a species-specific management regime in place (for example, if there is an annual TAC). In less clear circumstances, the rule of thumb should be that if the species meets the minimum requirements of clauses A1-A4, an adequate species-specific management regime is in place.

NOTE: If any species is categorised as Endangered or Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List, or if it appears in the CITES appendices, it **cannot** be approved for use as an IFFO RS raw material. This applied to whole fish as well as by-products.

TYPE 1 SPECIES (Representing 95% of the catch or more)

Category A: Species-specific management regime in place.

Category B: No species-specific management regime in place.

TYPE 2 SPECIES (Representing 5% OF THE CATCH OR LESS)

Category C: Species-specific management regime in place.

Category D: No species-specific management regime in place.

Common name	Latin name	Stock	% of landings	Management	Category
Hake	<i>Merluccius merluccius</i>	Northern		EU/Common Fisheries Policy	C

CATEGORY C SPECIES

In a whole fish assessment, Category C species are those which make up less than 5% of landings, but which are subject to a species-specific management regime. In most cases this will be because they are a commercial target in a fishery other than the one under assessment. In a by-product assessment, Category C species are those which are subject to a species-specific management regime, and are usually targeted species in fisheries for human consumption.

Clause C1 should be completed for **each** Category C species. If there are no Category C species in the fishery under assessment, this section can be deleted. A Category C species does not meet the minimum requirements of clause C1 should be re-assessed as a Category D species.

Species Name		<i>Merluccius merluccius</i>	
C1	Category C Stock Status - Minimum Requirements		
	C1.1	Fishery removals of the species in the fishery under assessment are included in the stock assessment process, OR are considered by scientific authorities to be negligible.	PASS
	C1.2	The species is considered, in its most recent stock assessment, to have a biomass above the limit reference point (or proxy), OR removals by the fishery under assessment are considered by scientific authorities to be negligible.	PASS
			Clause outcome: PASS
Evidence			
C1.1:			
<p>Member States of the European Union implement the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) in their waters. In force since 1983, the CFP aims to reconcile resource conservation with the preservation of income and jobs in coastal zones that offer few alternatives in terms of production or employment. It therefore covers not just resources but also markets and structures.</p> <p>With regard to resource management, the CFP regulations comprise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A traditional management tool based on Total Allowable Catches (TACs) and quotas; • Technical measures relating to gear or catch; • Effort-related management, based on vessel engine power and the number of days at sea. <p>The CFP also provides for the introduction of measures to rebuild, over a period of several years, stocks that are threatened in terms of sustainable harvesting, and for recourse to effort-related management rules to supplement TACs and quotas.</p> <p>The CFP is periodically reviewed and reformed. The most recent CFP reform process was completed in 2013 and came into effect from the 1st January 2014. Key changes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The introduction of an objective to ‘ensure high long-term fishing yields for all stocks by 2015 where possible, and at the latest by 2020’ (i.e. movement towards an MSY-based approach). • The gradual (2015-2019) introduction on a fishery-by-fishery basis of a ‘landing obligation’, which effectively bans discarding. • An overhaul of the management structure, including increased regionalisation and more extensive stakeholder consultation. <p>Commercial landings are included in the stock assessment further four survey indices (EVHOE-WIBTS-Q4, SpPGFS-WIBTS-Q3, IGFS-WIBTS-Q4, and RESSGASC). Other input data considered in the models are: maturity data: constant maturity (Martin, 1991); natural mortality: constant value (0.4) and discards and bycatch data. Data series from most fleets are available and an estimated percentage of 75 of the observed discards are included in the assessment (ICES, 2017a).</p>			

Not all discards are included in the analytical assessment, but they are included in the final advice catch estimates.

Given the expansion of the stock into northern areas (ICES, 2017a), biological sampling and discard quantification may be limited. The data compilation of this stock is very complicated because it is exploited by several countries and the assessment model configuration is complex. In turn, the assessment model is very sensitive to the data and the settings used. Hence, it is extremely important for the quality of the assessment to have the complete data for all the countries on time and in the right format (ICES, 2017).

Therefore, it can be concluded that fishery removals of the species in the fishery under assessment are included in the stock assessment process and **the stock passes Clause C1.1.**

C1.2:

ICES Advice:

Subareas IV, VI, and VIIa b,d-h,j. Northern stock (Greater North Sea, Celtic Seas).

The spawning-stock biomass (SSB) has increased substantially since 2006 and is well above historical estimates. Fishing mortality (F) has decreased markedly after 2005 and has been below FMSY since 2012. The two most recent recruitment (R) estimates are above the average of the time-series (**Figure 1**):

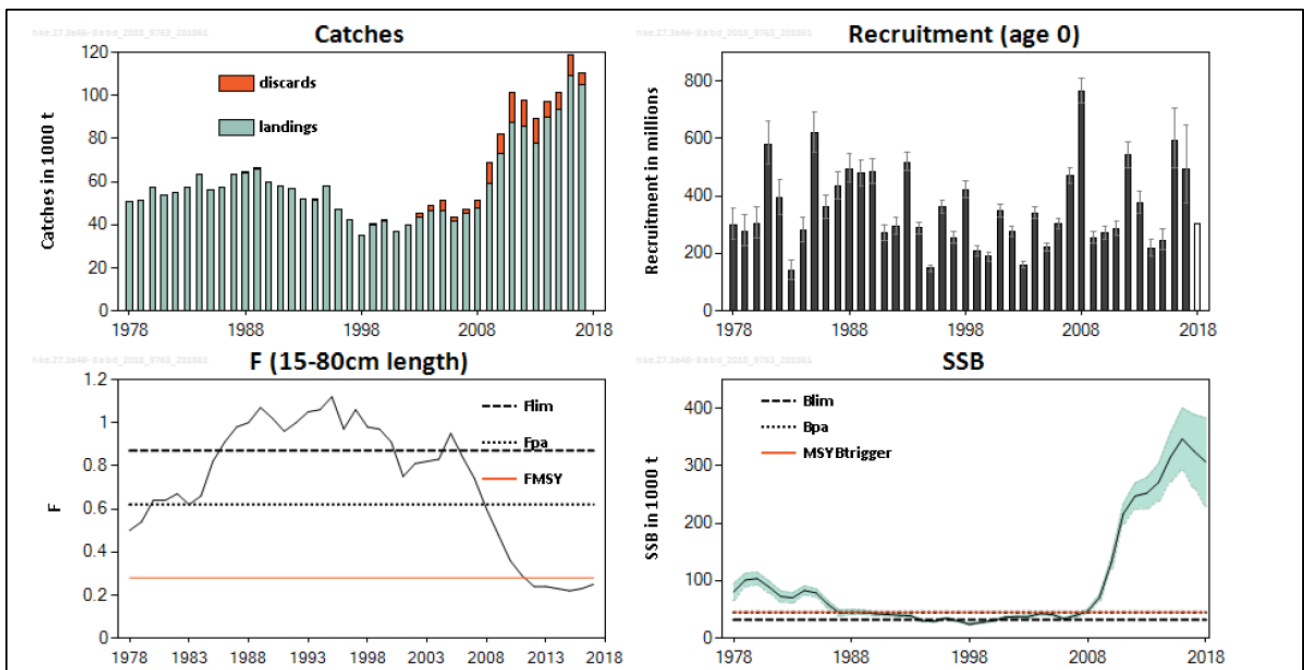


Figure 1 Hake in subareas IV, VI and VII Northern stock. Summary of the stock assessment. Complete discard estimates are available only since 2003. Recruitment and SSB plots show 95% confidence intervals (shaded area). Assumed recruitment values are unshaded.**R2**

ICES assesses that fishing pressure on the stock is below FMSY, Fpa, and Flim and that spawning-stock size is above MSY Btrigger, Bpa, and Blim (**Table 1**):

Table 1: Hake in subareas IV, VI and VII Northern stock. State of the stock and fishery relative to reference points **R2**

	Fishing pressure			Stock size			
		2015	2016	2017	2016	2017	2018
Maximum sustainable yield	F_{MSY}	✓	✓	✓	Appropriate	MSY $B_{trigger}$	✓ Above trigger
Precautionary approach	F_{pa}, F_{lim}	✓	✓	✓	Harvested sustainably	B_{pa}, B_{lim}	✓ Full reproductive capacity
Management plan	F_{MGT}	–	–	–	Not applicable	B_{MGT}	– Not applicable

The current recovery plan (EU, 2004) is based on precautionary reference points that are no longer appropriate. ICES has not evaluated this plan. The European Commission has proposed a multiannual management plan (MAP) for the Western Waters, which was finalised in March 2018.

North Western Waters Multi-annual Plan (Proposal):

The objective of the proposal is to establish a management plan for demersal stocks, including deep-sea stocks, and their fisheries in the Western Waters. The plan will ensure the sustainable exploitation of these stocks, by ensuring that they are exploited according to the principles of maximum sustainable yield (MSY) and of the ecosystem approach to fisheries management as well as the precautionary approach. The plan will provide stability of fishing opportunities, while ensuring that management is based on the most up to date scientific information on stocks, mixed fisheries and other aspects of the ecosystem and environment. The plan will also facilitate the introduction of the landing obligation.

It is proposed to replace the five existing single-species based multi-annual plans (including Northern Hake) adopted by separate regulations by bringing all multi-annual plans for the different demersal stocks into one regulation. The introduction of this new approach would allow achievement of the conservation objectives while, at the same time, permitting elimination of fishing effort limitations meaning that numerous reporting and control obligations would not be required. This results in a significant reduction of the administrative burden.

The species is considered, in its most recent stock assessment, to have a biomass above the limit reference point (or proxy) **and passes Clause C1.2.**

References

R1 EU Fishing Quotas (2019):

- Council Regulation (EU) No. 2019/124 fixing for 2019 the fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks and groups of fish stocks, applicable in Union waters and, for Union fishing vessels, in certain non-Union waters: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32019R0124&from=EN>

R2 ICES Advice: Northern hake:

- ICES (June 2018) Northern stock (Greater North Sea, Celtic Seas, and the northern Bay of Biscay): <http://www.ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Advice/2018/2018/hke.27.3a46-8abd.pdf>

R3 North Western Waters Multi-annual Plan: (March 2018)

- Proposal for a REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL establishing a multiannual plan for fish stocks in the Western Waters and adjacent waters, and for

fisheries exploiting those stocks, amending Regulation (EU) 2016/1139 establishing a multiannual plan for the Baltic Sea, and repealing Regulations (EC) No 811/2004 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52018PC0149&from=EN>

R4 IUCN Red list: <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/198562/45792063>

Standard clauses 1.3.2.2

SOCIAL CRITERION

In addition to the scored criteria listed above, applicants must commit to ensuring that vessels operating in the fishery adhere to internationally recognised guidance on human rights. They must also commit to ensuring there is no use of enforced or unpaid labour in the fleet(s) operating upon the resource.