

Title: **Risk identification and perceptions in the fisheries sector: comparisons between the Faroes, Greece, Iceland & UK**

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Abstract: This paper presents the findings of risk identification and risk perception research conducted in relation to the fisheries systems of four distinct and diverse European countries: Faroes, Iceland, Greece and the UK. Risk research traditionally attempts to quantify the potential threat or consequences from a range of risk events or hazards. This research, however, adopted a social sciences perspective and so assumed that a risk event or hazard can mean different things to different people and that these perceptions are also context and culturally dependent. Risk perceptions were examined and risk registers developed in each country for a range of stakeholder groups. A "mental modelling" approach was adopted in a series of qualitative interviews. Findings were examined in terms of a wide range of psychological, social and cultural risk theories. Differences in risk perceptions were noted between stakeholder groups and countries and contextual influences were examined such as the widely differing fisheries management systems used in each country. Risk identification and risk perception research is an important first step towards developing risk management and risk communication strategies. This research provides one of the first attempts to systematically evaluate risks and perceptions across a range of fisheries-systems. The findings support social science theories which argue that risk is a subjective, as opposed to objective, concept and that this subjectivity will therefore affect our attempts to assess and manage those risks we think we can potentially influence or control.