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Dublin, 18 November 2011

Subject: Request for funding for studies to develop a Celtic Sea multi-annual management plan (MAMP) for Mixed Demersal Fisheries

Dear Ms. Candela Castillo,

In 2011, the NWWRAC is committed to the development of a multi-annual management plan (MAMP) for mixed demersal fisheries in the Celtic Sea (ICES sub-area VII_{fg}).

As an observer to our last round of meetings, you will be aware that important progress has been already achieved on this topic (for example, the development of a set of short and long-term biological, economic and social objectives). The NWWRAC has now reached a stage where it is necessary to address some fundamental questions regarding how multi-species fisheries management might function, in practice, in the Celtic Sea (Appendix I).

For this reason, the NWWRAC believes that a scientific perspective is required, either from ICES and/or STECF as well as national scientific bodies. Without such support, it would be difficult to achieve the aim of drafting a coherent MAMP. During our Celtic Sea Focus Group meetings, held in Dublin in July and October, you suggested that the NWWRAC could avail of a mechanism for additional funding in addition to the ordinary operational budget of the NWWRAC for the current financial year (i.e. 1/10/2011-30/9/2012).

In particular, it has been brought to our attention that DG MARE might launch a call for projects under the general heading of "Studies for carrying out the Common Fisheries Policy". If required, the NWWRAC could assist this process by drawing up the project specifications for such a call in order for the scientific components to be in line with our needs and demands.

The NWWRAC is aware that it is urgent to provide the Commission with evidence-based and workable management proposals within the remit of its fisheries. However, it would be difficult to cope with Commission, Member States' and stakeholders' expectations without adequate financial support to ensure that preparatory work can be carried out by relevant, scientific institutes. The successful completion of a Celtic Sea MAMP proposal by the NWWRAC will largely depend on this.

We hope that you will provide our request with due consideration and look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely,

Bertie Armstrong
NWWRAC Chairman



Annex I

Questions to be addressed through an EU-funded project in the context on the ultra-mixed, multi-species, multi-gear, multi-jurisdiction fisheries in the Celtic Sea (ICES Area VIIfg)

- What are the options for setting TACs within the context of a multi-species approach in the Celtic Sea (VIIfg)? ;
- What options are available for providing protection for vulnerable species, whilst exploiting target stocks at the maximum sustainable level? ;
- What options exist for decoupling species within a multi-species fisheries configuration? ;
- What would be the advantages and disadvantages of a multi-annual management plan focused primarily or exclusively on the economic driver species? ;
- What are the specificities of the Celtic Sea (Area VIIfg) fisheries that require a bespoke approach to a long-term management plan? ;
- What data sets are required for the development of a comprehensive, multi-species management plan? ;
- What data-deficiencies have been identified that require resolution as part of an effective multi-species management plan? ;
- What objectives might be set for the demersal fisheries in VII fg that balance all three pillars of sustainability: economic, social and environmental?