



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels  
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**Subject: Joint NWWAC/NSAC Request for harmonisation of skates and rays identification guides on an EU wide basis**

Dear Mr Brouckaert and Mr Fisher,

I am writing in response to your letter of 15 September 2022, in which you requested specific support from the Commission regarding the harmonisation of skates and rays identification guides for fishers in EU waters.

We appreciate your work on harmonising the management measures for skates and rays in the North Sea and North Western Waters. We are also grateful for your efforts to seek a standardisation of the existing ID guides, encourage relevant training, and to distribute existing knowledge through ID guides.

The Commission has examined your request from a couple of angles, and wishes to share this with you.

Current possibilities to offer direct scientific funding, from the Commission, has been looked into. The measures proposed by the NWWAC and NSAC can be considered as a communication action rather than a scientific one. Therefore, our current framework contracts for the North Sea and Western Waters would not be a suitable tool to provide support to produce communication material. As for future support measures, it would be useful to consider the progress that has been made while implementing grant projects (funded by FAO or EU-Interreg).

Regarding the role of possible EMFAF funding for future measures, we would like to point out that negotiations on national EMFAF programmes are almost finalised; implying that objectives and types of action have been defined by now. Once programmes will be adopted, MS managing authorities will select those proposals for funding that can deliver

Mr Emiel Brouckaert  
Chairman of the NWWAC  
Executive Committee

Mr Kenn Skau Fisher  
Chairman of the NSAC  
Executive Committee

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largest contribution to the targets of the programme. In line with the allocation of responsibilities under shared management, the Commission could only recommend that concerned MS consider defining the measures you propose as a more generic type of action under Specific Objective (SO) 1.1 or SO 1.6 in their programmes, if they and other MS would be willing to put funds together in a joint project.

Furthermore, in many EMFAF programmes, MS also provide trainings for fishers in managing fisheries more sustainably. If willing, MS will be able to fund a training element once the publication has provided guidance on what is needed, and if it aligns with MS ambitions set forth in the programme.

We remain available for any further discussions on the above issues.

Yours faithfully,

Charlina VITCHEVA