**Participation by Fishery Improvement Project members in fishing industry scientific data collection programmes**

One of the main actions in the Irish Whitefish and Prawn FIP workplans is to improve the provision of scientific data from fishing vessels through the taking out of scientific observers and participation in self-sampling schemes. This information has become even more important due to the lack of observer coverage over the past few years due to Covid and the negative impact this may have on both the scientific assessment and the ability to demonstrate the sustainability of fishing activities.

This initiative is supported by the co-ops and PO’s who recognise the importance of ensuring that the scientific assessment of these stocks is based on good information from fishing vessels. In order to participate please contact **Macdara Ó Cuaig**, the Marine Institute Fisheries Liaison, on **0872075988** who will provide additional information of the At Sea Sampling Programs, data sheets for At Sea Self-sampling and any further training as required. Please contact Macdara directly to express your willingness to participate in the sampling programs.

An example of an At-Sea Self-Sampling protocol and data sheet are provided below for your information. Please note that there is a separate self-sampling protocol for prawns from the Porcupine (FU16). Separate protocol and data sheet documents are attached with this email. It is important to note also that there are updated fields on the data sheet to collect information on selective fishing gears used. This is another important element of the FIP workplan as we know that many fishermen are using selective gears without the information being collected and reported through the FIP.

Please contact **Mike Fitzpatrick** at [mike@vfact.com](mailto:mike@vfact.com) or on **0868584156** with any further queries regarding this scheme and the FIPs in general.

# Example 1.0: Marine Institute Sampling Protocol Apr 2022

# At-Sea Self Sampling Irish Fleet Protocol

In the absence of a trained sampler aboard during a fishing trip the skipper of a vessel can undertake an **At-Sea Self Sampling Trip** by following the protocols as set out below. The skipper should fill the At-Sea Self Sampling datasheet as described below. All cells should be filled as required.

* At the start of the trip please record: Vessel Name, Skipper name, Departure Port, and Departure date.

The Fisheries Liaison TL Macdara Ó Cuaig will give you a Trip Code to use for the trip.

* On each day of the trip select one haul to self-sample, if possible vary selected time of day.
* Record Haul number, Gear details, Shot time/date/depth/Lat/Long and Haul Time/date/depth/Lat/Long.
* On hauling should the Haul be a valid tow (i.e. no tear up or coming fast) proceed with the rest of the self-sampling protocol. Should the Haul be an invalid tow please self-sample the next available tow.
* On hauling back the gear, record an estimate of the **Bulk Catch in kg.** The bulk catch is the amount in the cod end on hauling back all inclusive of wanted and unwanted material. If the vessel is multi-rigging this number will be the combined total of all the cod ends bulk for that haul.
* While the crew are sorting the catch collect one **Random Box of Unwanted Catch** from the sorting system and set aside. This box will include fish and non-fish unwanted material as is randomly collected. It is best to fill this box by taking random samples at intervals during the sorting process. This helps mitigate for any bias that would occur due to settlement in the cod end.
* Label the **Random Box of Unwanted Catch** with Vessel name, Date and Haul numberand store on ice for collection on landing.
* Record the **weight** of the **Wanted Catch** for the haul by species, grade and presentation (gutted or round). Wanted catch is the total tally from a haul that goes into the hold. Be sure to record all species regardless of amount (i.e. 5kg of sole is just as valid/important as 150kg of haddock).

Should the haul include Landing Obligation fish being put into the hold please record them using their respective species name and record Grade as “LO” for Landing Obligation.

* Record the details associated with birds, mammals, or reptiles as appropriate.
* Double check to ensure that the **Random Box of Unwanted Catch** is clearly labelled and stored correctly
* Should you have any comment for the self-sampled haul, please enter in the box provided.
* **One haul per fishing day** **should be self-sampled** according to the protocol above.
* Once a decision to return to port has been made please call the **Fisheries Liaison TL – Macdara Ó Cuaig on 0872075988** so that arrangements can be made to collect the labelled Random Boxes of Unwanted Catch and the associated data sheets
* At the end of the trip record Return Port, and Return date.
* A payment of €50 per Random Box of Unwanted Catch with associated data subject to a max of one box per days fishing will be made to the skipper for the samples and data collected according to the protocol above. An invoice template is provided for the skipper to complete to facilitate payment.
* Return completed invoice to the billing address to receive payment of above.
* To minimise the number of personnel social interactions, on return to port a selection of wanted catch boxes may be collected from the vessel. This will be arranged with the vessel agent (co-op, and/or processor). Payment for any Wanted Catch will be done through the co-op/processor as per normal arrangements.

# Example2.0: Marine Institute At Sea Self-Sampling Data Sheet

