



30<sup>th</sup> May 2022

Marine Institute,  
Rinville,  
Oranmore,  
Co. Galway  
Address 5

RE: Marine Institute & Irish FIP scientific collaboration

To who it may concern,

The Marine Institute have been working with the Irish Fisheries Improvement Project (FIP) for the last number of years working in collaboration to collect fisheries data at sea and ashore to feed into the stock assessment process. The Marine Institute run a Sampling at Sea program where Marine Institute trained staff go to sea on commercial fishing vessels and sample the catch that the fishermen bring aboard according to internationally agreed protocols. The Irish fishing fleet facilitate the At Sea Sampling program by providing a berth and safe working space for our sampler aboard their vessels during normal fishing operations.

During Covid-19 to adhere to health and safety guidelines and to protect the samplers and fleet the Marine Institute temporarily suspended the At Sea Sampling program. The Marine Institute along with the Irish fishing fleet designed and implemented an At Sea Self Sampling Program – where by the skippers and crews collect data and samples and bring these ashore for Marine Institute staff to work up on landing. The success of the At Sea Self Sampling program ensured that the fisheries dependant data flow was maintained during the Covid-19 restrictions.

Following Covid-19 easing of restrictions the Marine Institute lifted the suspension on the At Sea Sampling program in May 2022. The Irish Whitefish FIP has been helping to reinvigorate the program and getting samplers out on member vessels. The first vessel post restrictions has been a FIP member and it is expected that more trips will follow. The Marine Institute has also run analysis on the At Sea Self Sampling program and has decided to continue with this program to increase the number of observations from fisheries dependant data sources by maintaining a dual stream of data. The Irish Whitefish FIP has openly supported this measure and are actively promoting both streams among the membership.

Should you wish to receive more information on above please contact me directly via 0872075988 or [Macdara.ocuaign@marine.ie](mailto:Macdara.ocuaign@marine.ie).

Sincerely yours,  
Macdara Ó Cuaig, Fisheries Liaison Team Leader.