**Summary of meeting between FIP coordinators and Macdara O Cuaig, Marine Institute (MI) Fisheries Liaison Team Leader**

**February 14th 2023**

Sampling at Sea programs

* The number of demersal sampling/observer trips in 2022 was low.
* The sampling at sea and observer programmes need higher levels of sampling to supply reliable datasets. Need to be able to stand over datasets.
* It was agreed that relying on fishers to make the initial call to the MI scientists was unlikely to achieve the desired increase in sampling levels. It was agreed that a more pragmatic approach, based on FIP coordinators, Co-op and PO managers contacting fishers initially and securing their agreement to participate, followed by a call from the MI scientist responsible should be more productive.
* A new pelagic self-sampling program has been developed and will be trialled with the Albacore Tuna fishery in 2023 facilitated by the Irish Tuna FIP.
* As part of the current programme, for the demersal fishery, 1 haul per day is sampled.
* Fishing samples are provided for whitefish and Nephrops along with collection records. For Pelagic fisheries, only paper records are provided.
* Estimates of losses due to gear breakages in pelagic fisheries are unaccounted for in log-book data.
* In the Tuna fishery the previous FIP organised approach taken to sampling yielded positive results in data collection and it was agreed to continue this approach.
* Use the Albacore Tuna fishery as a trial for updated self-sampling programme with the aim to roll it out across other fisheries.

IFISH project integration

* Current self-sampling practices are based on paper data collection.
* FIP co-ordinators have been in regular contact with another MI initiative, IFISH, which is looking at using digital approaches to streamlining, automating and improving the reliability of self-sampling programs.
* The FIP agreed to facilitate a meeting within the next few weeks between the IFISH project, the FIPs and the MI fisheries liaison team leader to discuss how the existing self-sampling program could benefit from being digitalised.

Demersal FIPs bycatch data

* The MI team leader provided links to a number of publications providing data on catch trends in FIP relevant fisheries in Irish waters. However these sources did not contain the required resolution to assess trends in catch composition by metier which are necessary for the FIP to provide a baseline on bycatches as per the FIP workplans.
* Further information on catch composition needed to develop information on P2 tasks for the FIP.
* It was agreed that the FIP coordinators would send Macdara a more detailed data request on catch composition by metier and by area so that he could access this data from the relevant MI stock assessment scientists.

**Actions:**

* Macdara to share draft sampling procedure sheets.
* FIP to engage the reach of Co-ops and POs to enlist vessels for observer and self-sampling and to supply these names for Macdara to contact.
* Macdara to provide short summary on positives to engaging in observer and self-sampling programmes for market sell.
* FIP to send Macdara more detailed data request on catch composition by metier and by area

**Next steps:**

* Look at setting a meeting of the Tuna FIP to discuss the trial self-sampling scheme. The importance of observer data in stock assessments and the usefulness of data collected by the FIP over the past 3 years will be stressed.
* FIP to set a meeting with Julia Calderwood of the IFISH project to investigate value of developing digitalised logs to record observer data.