

## SUMMARY BRIEF

### Untangled: Regional workshop on ghost gear in the East Asian Seas

1-3 March 2023, United Nations Conference Centre, Bangkok, Thailand and online



The Untangled: Regional Ghost Gear Workshop took place in Bangkok, Thailand on 1-2 March 2023. The workshop was co-organized by COBSEA and the Environmental Justice Foundation (EJF) with support from the Government of Canada through the Ghost Gear Fund. The workshop brought together experts from governments, civil society organizations, development partners, and businesses to discuss challenges and opportunities to manage abandoned, lost, and discarded fishing gear (ALDFG) in the East Asian Seas region.

The Regional Ghost Gear Workshop was attended by over 100 participants from eight countries in the East Asian Seas, both virtually and in person at the United Nations Conference Center in Bangkok, Thailand. Over 20 guest speakers covered a range of issues from ALDFG retrieval, identification and tracking, monitoring of fishing activities and gear loss, to waste management innovation and gear marking. Participants engaged with experts and government officials on addressing challenges and gaps in ALDFG, identifying opportunities, and reviewing the use of regional tools such as the East Asian Seas Regional Node of the Global Partnership on Plastic Pollution and Marine Litter (GPML).

The workshop concluded with a field trip on 3 March to showcase successful fishing gear waste management in the Klong Kor Tor coastal community (one of EJF's [Net Free Seas](#) participating communities), to understand community waste management challenges in the Si Long coastal community, and to visit the Teamplas Chemical Co. Ltd recycling company that manages ghost gear waste.



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## Workshop recommendations for Abandoned, Lost and Discarded Fishing Gear (ALDFG) management in the East Asian Seas:

### Prevention (Reporting and monitoring system of ALDFG):

- Governments to make ALDFG management as high priority and develop a framework of best practices.
- Governments to prioritize and promote fair and sustainable fisheries management.
- There is not one designated agency responsible for ALDFG management, it is recommended this is established to ensure greater coordination and effectiveness.

### Awareness raising and retrieval operations:

- Explore alternative approaches to effectively communicate the ALDFG topic, including shorts on social media platforms.
- Establishing standardized retrieval protocols that are safe for both divers and the marine ecosystems.

### ALDFG disposal facilities, logistical and cleaning complications:

- Integrated policies are needed related to ocean governance, land-based waste management, and sea-based waste management. Including Establishment of national committees to address ALDFG.

### Country engagement:

- Effective community engagement, particularly with fishing communities, including fair incentives
- Localized and effective best practices will need to be developed by relevant authorities to suit local needs.

### Data collection and knowledge management:

- Accurate and robust data is critical to develop suitable policies, regulations, and solutions, and for engaging stakeholders.
- Effective knowledge management and networking mechanisms are needed to enhance information sharing and understanding of ALDFG management issues.
- Existing platforms such as the East Asian Seas Regional Node and COBSEA's toolbox can be leveraged to address this gap.

### Technical support and funding:

- Resources are needed to scope and develop technologies and designs to mitigate the negative impacts associated with ALDFG.
- ALDFG is transboundary in nature, so it is important to promote international cooperation.
- Relevant regional bodies, such as COBSEA, should explore opportunities to support countries in addressing this challenge.
- Inclusion of fishing net manufacturers in discussions related to ALDFG.

### Highlighted opportunities and next steps for ALDFG best practices in the East Asian Seas:

- COBSEA and EJF, commit to **developing a comprehensive toolkit on ghost gear** that will consolidate existing knowledge and tools and generate new knowledge, where needed.
- A mailing list and contact list of workshop participants will be created to support **networking** beyond the workshop.
- The workshop has served as a valuable platform and **partnerships established** will continue to grow and thrive.
- COBSEA and EJF will **scope follow-up funding** opportunities.



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