



# A Multi-stakeholder Approach for ALDFG Management in Sri Lanka



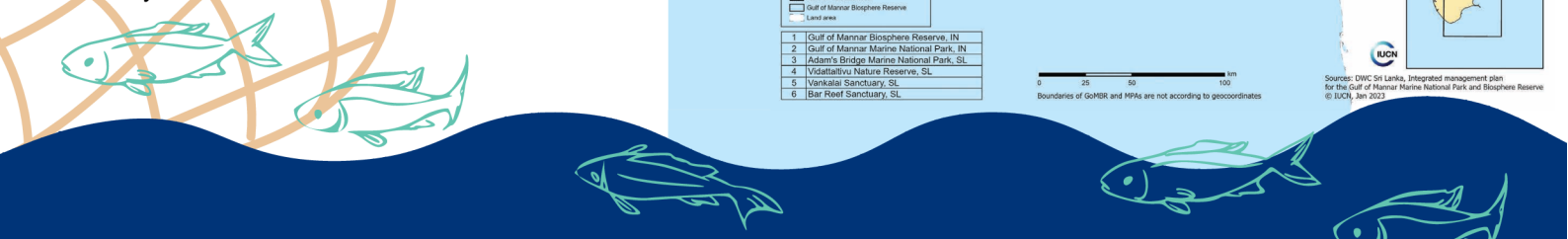
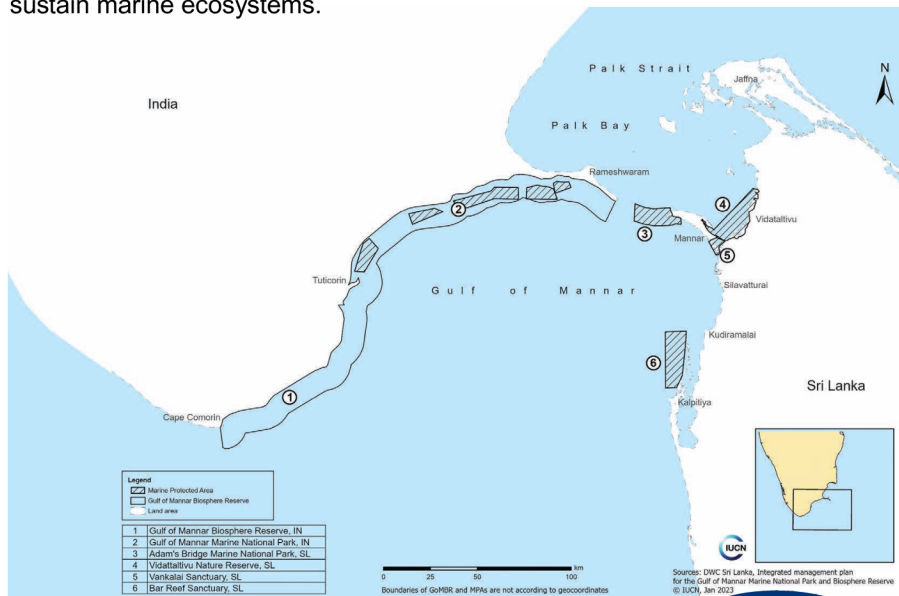
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## Overview

In 2021, the issue of Abandoned, Lost, or Otherwise Discarded Fishing Gear (ALDFG) was a relatively unexplored area in Sri Lanka, lacking comprehensive research and findings.

The Mannar Region Systemic Solutions (MARESSOL) Project emerged during this period to address this gap by initiating extensive research in the Gulf of Mannar and Palk Strait. The project is a Gulf of Mannar regional collaboration between Sri Lanka and India with contributions from International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Lanka Environment Fund (LEF), Suganthy Devadason Marine Research Institute (SDMRI), India, and SALT, Norway with funding from the Norwegian Retailers Environment Fund (NREF). These regions were strategically chosen due to their ecological significance and sensitivity, encompassing the Marine Biosphere Reserve, Ramsar sites, sanctuaries, and rich biodiversity.

The project involved macro and microplastic surveys and perception surveys among fishermen and vessel operators from November 2021 to August 2022, in collaboration with the Department of Fisheries, the University of Ruhuna, and the Open University of Sri Lanka. Insights from these surveys are crucial for developing effective ALDFG management strategies to conserve and sustain marine ecosystems.







# Embracing a multi-stakeholder approach

During the same period, the Ministry of Environment (MoE) initiated the BRS/NORAD project with the University of Peradeniya, and the Centre for Poverty Analysis (CEPA), in collaboration with the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS) on the initiative of the Ocean Country Partnership Programme (OCPP). These projects conducted a material flow analysis and assessed ALDFG generation from fishing vessels, respectively.

The MARESSOL Project, guided by the MoE, established a National Advisory Committee with representatives from government agencies, NGOs, international organizations, and the private sector to create a unified strategy for ALDFG management.

The committee aims to integrate research efforts, formulate unified strategies, advocate for effective policies, encourage sustainable practices and create platforms for continuous dialogue, awareness and outreach. This coordinated, inclusive, and sustainable approach ensures effective ALDFG management and the protection of Sri Lanka's marine ecosystems.



## National Advisory Committee

Ministry of Environment (lead and Co-Chair), Marine Environment Protection Authority (lead and Co-Chair), Ministry of Fisheries, Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DFAR), Ceylon Fishery Harbour Corporation, Coast Conservation and Coastal Resource Management Department (CC&CRMD), National Aquatic Resource Research and Development Agency (NARA), National Aquaculture Development Authority (NAQDA), Coast Guard Department, Central Environment Authority (CEA), CEY-NOR Foundation, Sri Lanka Navy, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), USAID/Research Triangle International (RTI), Lanka Environment Fund (LEF), Help-O, Center for Poverty Analysis (CEPA), Prof. Terney Pradeep Kumara, Dr. Anurudda Karunarathna.

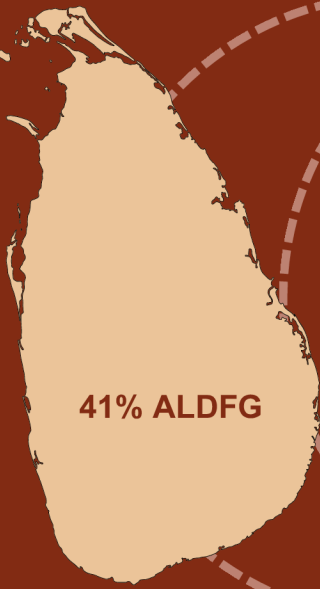
## Other Key Partners

British High Commission – Ocean Country Partnership Programme, Parley for the Ocean, Pearl Protectors



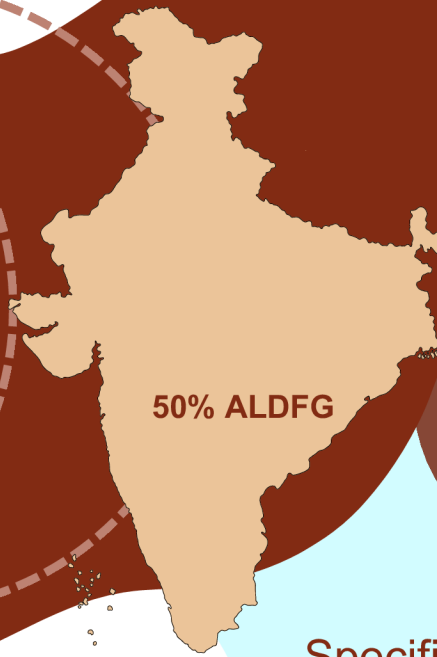


# Our findings



Abandoned, Lost or otherwise Discarded Fishing Gear (ALDFG) made up a significant share of stranded macro debris in the Gulf of Mannar.

Ropes were the most abundant  
Other common items were parts of nets, styrofoam, boat pieces, traps, floats and buoys, etc.



North-east monsoon  
3.54 - 85.94 MP/kg of sand

South-West monsoon  
32 - 57 MP/kg of sand  
380 - 800 MP/m<sup>3</sup> of surface water

Inter-monsoon  
5.00 - 89.67 MP/kg of sand  
8.22 - 106.85 MP/m<sup>3</sup> of surface water

Specific regulations for ALDFG management is lacking in Sri Lanka and India.

## What the fisherfolk had to say

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Gillnets were the most commonly used as well as lost on an annual basis by both the fishermen of Sri Lanka (38%) and India (70%)

Fisherfolk in both countries lack designated locations for disposing of used gear but support a system to collect old fishing gear.

Fishers attempt to prevent and retrieve lost gear, but the success rate is unknown.

In Sri Lanka, fishermen claim that "bad weather" is the main cause of gear loss, while in India, it is "bottom snagging."

ALDFG is not commonly discussed among fisherfolk or with authorities

Lack of ALDFG awareness material and field guides

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\*MP: microplastics

# Where are we now?



Research Finding for Current Status of ALDFG in Sri Lanka

A National Advisory Committee

ALDFG Handbook in all three languages



Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Fishing Vessel and Operators, Fisheries Officials and Fishermen in all three languages

Policy Brief

Draft of the National Action Plan

TOT for Mannar Fisheries Officers using the ALDFG handbook

Pilot for fisheries-based plastic waste collection with Sarvodaya communities, INSEE Ecocycle and Lanka Up-cycle

In the process of developing a national programme for the management of fisheries-based fibreglass waste.



# Whats next?

Expand capacity building and awareness on ALDFG management nationwide.

Introduce a digitized central database for reporting abandoned, lost, and discarded gear and tracking cleanup programs.

Continuation of ALDFG management initiatives by other partners in collaboration with the National Advisory Committee.

Use advanced technologies like Automatic Identification System (AIS) Global Positioning System (GPS) for tracking fishing gear.

Improve professional skills for gear retrieval among local divers.

Enhance infrastructure in harbours and ports for ALDFG collection.

Expand existing Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs) initiatives for collecting nets and ropes.

Develop an integrated mechanism to strengthen the collection network.

Mobilise ongoing community platforms such as fisheries societies, fisherwomen societies and CBOs.

Strengthen the buy-back process and sustainable financing for net and other fisheries-based plastic collection.

Introduce recycling and up-cycling technologies for contaminated and mixed polymer waste.

Implement and raise awareness of SOPs in all Fisheries Inspectors (FI) divisions.

Work towards implementing import/export regulations to increase gear quality and recyclability.

