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REPORT

ON THE

REGIONAL WORKSHOP

ON THE

DEVELOPMENT OF THE TECHNICAL GUIDELINE TO ASSESS, PREVENT, AND REMOVE ABANDONED, LOST, OR OTHERWISE DISCARDED FISHING GEAR (ALDFG) IN THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN REGION



SOUTHEAST ASIAN DEVELOPMENT CENTRE
MARINE FISHERY RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT







Report on The Regional Workshop on the Development of the Technical Guidelines to Assess, Prevent, and Remove Abandoned, Lost, or Otherwise Discarded Fishing Gear (ALDFG) in the Southeast Asian Region

Bangkok, Thailand
31 March 2026

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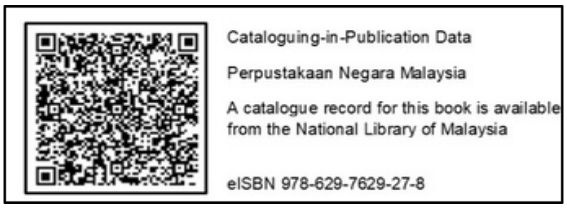

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ABBREVIATION

ALDFG	Abandoned, Lost, or OtherwiseDiscarded Fishing Gear
AMS	ASEAN Member States
DOF	Department of Fisheries
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
IFRMDM	Inland Fishery Resource Development and Management Department
IMO	International Maritime Organization
MFRDMD	Marine Fishery Resource Development and Management Department
NGO	Non-Government Organizations (NGO)
NPOA	National Plan of Action
RFPN	Regional Fisheries Policy Network
RFMO	Regional Fisheries Management Organization
SEAFDEC	Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Centre
SIOFA	Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement
TD	Training Department
UM	Universiti Malaya

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Regional Workshop on the Development of the Technical Guidelines to Assess, Prevent, and Remove Abandoned, Lost, or Otherwise Discarded Fishing Gear (ALDFG) in the Southeast Asian Region
31 March 2026
Bangkok, Thailand

ADOPTED

I. OPENING SESSION

1. SEAFDECorganized a *Regional Workshop on the Development of the Technical Guidelines toAssess,Prevent,and Remove Abandoned, Lost, or Otherwise Discarded Fishing Gear (ALDFG) in the Southeast Asian Region* in Bangkok, Thailand on 31 March 2026. The workshop was conducted in a hybrid format. The workshop was attended by representatives from Cambodia (online), Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam; representatives from the ASEAN Secretariat; the Regional Fisheries Policy Network (RFPN) members; a resource person from Universiti Malaya (UM); as well as officials from the SEAFDEC Secretariat, Training Department (TD), Inland Fishery Resource Development and Management Department (IFRDMD), and Marine Fishery Resource Development and Management Department (MFRDMD). The list of participants is provided in **Annex 1**.

2. The regional workshop was officiated by Secretary General of SEAFDEC, *Ms. Sampan Panjarat*. Her welcoming remarks appear as **Annex 2**.

3. TheChief of SEAFDEC/MFRDMD,*Mr.AbdHarisHilmiAhmadArshad* then delivered the openingspeech.Hisopeningspeechappearsas **Annex 3**.

II. ADOPTION OF AGENDA AND INTRODUCTION OF THE PROJECT

4. *Ms. Sampan Panjarat*, Secretary General of SEAFDEC, delivered the agenda. The agenda was adopted from SEAFDEC/MFRDMD Special Departmental Coordinator without any amendment. Her presentation appears as **Annex 4**.

5. *Mr. Fumiya Takahashi*, the project manager for the Project on "Regional Collaborative Research and Capacity Building for Monitoring and Reduction of Marine Debris from Fisheries in Southeast Asia," (or Marine Debris project), presented the introduction of the Marine Debris project. Then *Mr. Mohammad FaisalMdSaleh*,the project activity leaderfor activity 1.2 continuedwith presenting the progress of the activity 1.2.1.His presentation appearsas **Annex 5**.

III. SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRE ON PREVENTIVE MEASURES FOR MARINE DEBRIS AND ALDFG IN SOUTHEAST ASIAN REGION

6. The resource person from Universiti Malaya, *Assoc. Prof. Dr. Fauziah Shahul Hamid* presented the summary of feedback on questionnaire Preventative Measures on ALDFG.

7. The representative from the Philippines, *Ms. Kima Karla Cedo* recommended that certain contexts in the report of the analysis should include additional explanations or remarks for clarity. As an example, she noted that the Philippines responded "YES" to the question on penalties for gear loss. While this response is not directly related to ALDFG, it is connected through the broader framework of penalties under the Clean Water Act, where ALDFG is considered a source of marine pollution and a potential obstruction to navigation. *Ms. Sampan* concurred to add the context to avoid misunderstanding.

8. *Ms. Sampan* inquired about the meaning of the term "limited mandatory" as presented on the gear marking slide. *Assoc. Prof. Dr. Fauziah* clarified that, based on ASEAN Member States (AMS) responses to the questionnaire, mandatory gear marking is considered limited among AMSs. This is because some AMSs have imposed compulsory marking for certain aspects (e.g., ownership or registration identifiers), while other aspects remain non-compulsory.

9. *Ms. Sampan* shared that, during the Symposium on Marine Debris and Microplastic held on 30 March 2026, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) representative highlighted the requirement under the International Maritime Organization (IMO), which is expected to transition from voluntary to mandatory. This shift will specifically cover the marking of fishing gear and the reporting of ALDFG. She further shared that the technology of monitoring fishing gear is improving nowadays. Based on the questionnaire feedback, Malaysia utilizes radio communication to monitor fishing gear, while some Regional Fisheries Management Organization (RFMO) members mandate the use of satellite systems to monitor fishing activities in the high seas. This mandatory requirement by RFMOs can serve as a reference point or alternative for AMSs in considering future compliance measures.

10. *Ms. Kima* added that the Philippines has developed a National Plan of Action (NPOA) on Marine Litter, with the overarching aim of achieving zero waste by 2040. However, one of the key challenges identified is the management of ALDFG, as the issue is currently operationalized in a limited manner. The existing NPOA on Marine Litter is primarily focused on land-based sources and has not yet extended to fishery-related aspects, including ALDFG.

11. *Ms. Sampan* elaborated that, since the respondents of the questionnaire were fisheries officials rather than fishers, it is very important to also include perspectives from the fishers themselves. Doing so would help uncover critical gaps such as the unavailability of reporting systems, uncertainties regarding whom the fishers should report to, the reasons for reporting, and other practical considerations. She also shared that the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA) has established a logbook system for reporting fishing gear loss, then the member of SIOFA has to report back to SIOFA. This initiative may serve as a useful reference to integrate into the technical guidelines.

12. *Ms. Pattaratjit Kaewnuratchadasorn*, Policy and Program Coordinator of the SEAFDEC Secretariat highlighted the regional context, particularly focusing on how small-scale fisheries can report fishing gear loss. She emphasized that, at present, communication among fishers is largely verbal, and there is no official reporting system established for small-scale fisheries to document such losses.

13. The representative from Thailand, *Dr. Watcharapong Chumchuen*, emphasized that gear marking is one of the mechanisms to mitigate ALDFG. He noted that the current Technical Guidelines on ALDFG are voluntary. If countries wish to further develop these guidelines, whether on ALDFG management or gear marking, significant investment and stakeholder participation would be required to support the decision-making process within each country.

14. The representative from Viet Nam, *Dr. Nguyen Thi Phuong Dung* informed the Meeting that Viet Nam has incorporated some aspects of ALDFG within its Fisheries Law. Viet Nam welcomed the development of the Technical Guidelines and expressed the hope that the guidelines would be simplified and not overly complex. She emphasized that the guidelines should cover the basics of assessment and adopt standardized methodologies or procedures among AMSs. *Ms. Sampan* concurred, highlighting that the guidelines should also be sufficiently flexible to accommodate varying national capacities and evolving environmental conditions, particularly in multi-gear fishing contexts.

15. The representative from Malaysia, *Ms. Haryati Abd Wahab* highlighted the ongoing efforts in gear marking development and capacity building, including pilot gear marking programs in Peninsular Malaysia and Sarawak. She encouraged knowledge-sharing from developed nations such as Japan, particularly on licensing systems and advanced gear tracking technologies, which could strengthen traceability and accountability.

16. *Ms. Sampan* further noted the need for deeper understanding and continued regional collaboration to acknowledge gaps. Overall, the discussion underscored that while the awareness and initial frameworks exist, significant

improvements are needed in enforcement, technology adoption and regional cooperation.

17. *Mr. Fumiya* presented the Conclusions and Recommendations from the Symposium on Marine Debris and Microplastics held on 30 March 2026. In his summary, he highlighted several needs: Research and Development (R&D), legal and regulatory frameworks, and Information, Education and Capacity (IEC) for the prevention of marine debris from fisheries and for the assessment of ALDFG, marine debris, and microplastics. The Symposium recommended further study on methodologies for identifying, removing, and retrieving ALDFG. It was suggested that mathematical modelling based on ocean currents be used to predict the distribution of marine debris and to identify hotspots for targeted removal of ALDFG. The need for technology to transform ALDFG and End-of-Life Fishing Gear (EOLFG) into recycled plastic products, such as Nitto Seimo fishing nets, was also emphasized. In addition, methods to safely dispose of ALDFG that cannot be recycled or transformed should be explored.

18. *Assoc. Prof. Dr. Fauziah* also presented the Synthesis of the Regional Symposium on Marine Debris and microplastic. She shared the needs for coordinated regional action in three pillars in managing ALDFG which are Prevention, Assessment and Retrieval. Her presentation appears as **Annex 6**.

19. The representative from Viet Nam, *Mr. Dinh Xuan Hung*, shared Viet Nam's experience and suggested exploring alternative approaches using the Automatic Identification System (AIS), including the possibility of attaching AIS devices directly to fishing gear to monitor gear and prevent conflicts. *Ms. Sampan* acknowledged *Mr. Dinh*'s suggestion on utilizing technology and innovation, such as AIS. Such innovations could enhance traceability, enable fishers to easily locate lost gear, reduce ALDFG, and improve operational efficiency.

20. The representative from Singapore, *Ms. Sarah Hui Qin Tang* sought further clarification on the suggestion to "harmonize standards for gear marking and reporting of gear loss across the Southeast Asian region" presented in the slides. *Assoc. Prof. Dr. Fauziah* explained that a general standard could be applied for harmonization of gear marking. She emphasized that while approaches may differ across AMSs, achieving comparable outcomes is more important. Harmonized reporting frameworks would enable data standardization, facilitate comparison, and enhance mutual understanding among countries with varying capacities. She further outlined key considerations for gear marking systems, including durability, cost-effectiveness, efficiency, environmental friendliness, weather resistance, and acceptance by fishers.

21. The representative from Myanmar, *Dr. Su Myo Thwe* noted that Myanmar is currently exploring efforts toward harmonization in following the regional standard.

22. *Ms. Sampan* emphasized the need for further research to combat marine debris ALDFG. She highlighted the importance of using scientific information to support policymakers in developing legal and regulatory frameworks. In addition, she stressed the need for capacity building and raising awareness among stakeholders (fishers and fisheries officials).

IV. OVERVIEW AND REVIEW OF THE DRAFT OF TECHNICAL GUIDELINES TO ASSESS, PREVENT AND REMOVE ABANDONED, LOST OR OTHERWISE DISCARDED FISHING GEAR (ALDFG) IN THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN REGION

23. *Ms. Sampan* chaired the session on the overview and review of the draft of the Technical Guidelines on ALDFG. *Assoc. Prof. Dr. Fauziah* then presented the first draft of technical guidelines to the participants using the google document. During the session, the participants were invited to share their view and provide recommendations for improvement.

24. The Workshop revised the draft objectives, simplifying them to align with the intention of providing flexible and practical guidance for AMSs.

25. The Workshop agreed that the Guidelines would apply specifically to the marine environment, excluding freshwater (rivers and estuarine) and aquaculture contexts. It was further decided that this scope would be explicitly stated in the document to clarify that the Guidelines are intended only for marine environments.

26. *Mr. Joseph Arbiol* from ASEAN Secretariat inquired whether the same assessment measures could be applied to ALDFG in freshwater or inland contexts. *Assoc. Prof. Dr. Fauziah* clarified that the measures would not be identical, noting that Lao PDR had not been included among the respondents to the questionnaire survey. *Dr. Watcharapong* emphasized that the mechanism for the causes of ALDFG may vary according to the physical characteristics of different water bodies (marine versus inland). The knowledge of ALDFG in the inland ecosystem needs to be enhanced first; therefore, the guidelines should primarily focus on marine environments. He further noted that inland systems remain important and may need to be addressed separately. This view was concurred by *Mr. Dinh*, who shared his opinion that freshwater ecosystems may be comparatively simpler to address than marine ecosystems.

27. The Workshop revised the Statement of Purpose to make it more focused and specific to each component. It was also agreed that the Scope and Principles should be clearly defined to address the respective components directly.

28. The Workshop revised several definitions under the section Definition of Terminologies. It was agreed that some definitions would follow those of FAO to ensure consistency and avoid confusion, with appropriate references made to FAO.

29. The Workshop agreed that the results from the questionnaire survey and the underwater survey would be moved to the Annex, as they should not be mixed into the main components of the Guidelines.

30. The Deputy Secretary-General of SEAFDEC, *Mr. Koichi Tahara*, inquired regarding the section on Respondent Categories. He suggested adopting the term 'entrepreneur' to describe certain stakeholders, a suggestion with which *Ms. Sampan* initially concurred. *Ms. Haryati* proposed that more standard fisheries industry terminology should be used to ensure consistency and technical accuracy.

31. *Ms. Sampan* noted that the Guidelines are regional in nature and could also be applied by Timor-Leste, while Lao PDR is excluded since the Guidelines focus on the marine environment. However, she emphasized that although Lao PDR may be excluded from certain datasets, the Guidelines should still remain applicable to them. *Ms. Pattaratjit* explained that Lao PDR and Timor-Leste had not been included during the actual study period, but both countries are encouraged to utilize the Guidelines. Her suggestion was concurred by *Mr. Joseph*.

32. On *Mr. Dinh* 's inquiry on suggestion to repeat the survey 2 to 3 years, *Assoc. Prof. Dr. Fauziah* clarified that the survey is not difficult to conduct. She emphasized that extending the interval period to five years may result in major changes to the ALDFG situation, and some mitigation measures might no longer be effective.

33. *Dr. Nguyen* shared her experience as an environmental expert, noting that to identify hotspots, it is first necessary to assess the severity of environmental problems through questionnaire surveys combined with field surveys. *Assoc. Prof. Dr. Fauziah* responded that the Guidelines propose AMSs carry out questionnaire surveys to assess the ALDFG situation. She further emphasized

that if AMSs have access to more advanced technologies, such as actual field surveys, the Guidelines would not restrict their use.

34. *Mr. Joseph* suggested that an explanatory note should be provided before inserting a table. His suggestion was noted and incorporated into the revised draft.

35. The Workshop revised specific words and sentences to improve clarity, and provided suggestions for improvement.

36. *Dr. Su* commented that the term 'fishing gear' is more suitable and should be consistently used in the document.

37. *Dr. Nguyen* recommended replacing the term 'strengthen' with 'promote' to better reflect a more practical and encouraging approach in policy language.

38. *Ms. Cedo* shared that the Philippines has introduced bioparametric insurance for fishers, whereby compensation can be made when adverse weather conditions (e.g., typhoons) prevent them from going to sea.

39. *Mr. Mohammad Faisal* added that implementing a closed season could help reduce fishing gear damage as fishing activities are limited during certain periods.

40. *Dr. Nguyen* inquired about the Concluding Note section. *Assoc. Prof. Dr. Fauziah* explained that the Concluding Note is useful to simplify the content and provide a brief snapshot. However, the Workshop later agreed to remove the Concluding Note, as the Guidelines should remain straightforward in outlining the actions required of each country.

41. *Ms. Pattaratjit* emphasized the importance of maintaining consistency in format or sentence structure and numbering across all components of the Guidelines. This was duly noted, and the draft will be updated accordingly.

42. *Dr. Watcharapong* requested clarification on how the survey was conducted and how it is linked to the Guidelines. *Mr. Muhammad Amirullah Al Amin Ayob* from MFRDMD explained that the Removal of ALDFG component was developed based on findings from selected pilot sites in Malaysian waters. He highlighted that this component is intended to provide practical step-by-step guidance and a comprehensive framework to support safe, coordinated, and effective ALDFG removal across AMSs.

43. *Ms. Cedo* highlighted that some AMSs may have limited time to conduct surveys and that methodologies may differ. She requested that the Guidelines be further refined to ensure they are practical and adaptable to diverse national contexts. *Ms. Sampan* concurred with this view.

44. *Ms. Cedo* also suggested including an explanation in the document, noting that the results or information obtained from assessments carried out by each country would subsequently determine whether a pre-survey should be conducted for the ALDFG removal guidelines.

45. *Mr. Muhammad Amirullah Al Amin* shared that the method of removing ALDFG depends on site conditions. For example, mechanical removal is not recommended in coral reef areas due to potential damage, and is therefore more suitable for deeper waters where corals are absent. He further noted that in countries with limited technology, fishers could play a supportive role in removal activities. In addition, low-cost approaches such as ocean modelling can be utilized to identify ALDFG hotspots without relying on vessels or expensive equipment.

46. *Mr. Muhammad Amirullah Al Amin* informed the Workshop that the Removal guidelines were developed through field surveys and workshops conducted in collaboration with various stakeholders, including Department of Fisheries (DOF) Malaysia as well as Non-Government Organizations (NGO) such as Reef Check.

47. *Dr. Nguyen* noted that it is difficult to determine the most appropriate approach at this stage and suggested organizing a workshop to facilitate further discussion and decision-making.

V. WAY FORWARD

48. *Mr. Mohammad Faisal* presented the way forward for activity 1.2. His presentation appears as **Annex 7**.

49. The Workshop discussed the timeline and workplan for the development of the Technical Guidelines. It was expected that the Workshop report and the revised draft would be disseminated to AMSs within a few weeks.

50. The finalized guidelines or at least the progress and outlines of the Guidelines will be presented at the 58th Council Meeting that is scheduled to be held in May 2026.

51. *Ms. Pattaratjit* pointed out that the draft Guidelines is almost completed, she then suggested that the revised outlines of the Guidelines with the accommodation of the comments from this Workshop should be finalized by April in order to report the progress to the 58CM, the completed revised draft to circulate to AMSs for review and feedback by May 2026. It was further requested that this revised draft should be finalized by early May 2026, for submission to ASEAN and JAIF and also to SEAFDEC Council in May 2026 (if it is available). The final draft then can be presented in upcoming 49PCM, 29FCG/ASSP prior final approval by the 59CM and subsequently by 35ASWGFi in 2027. The Workshop took note of this work plan.

VI. CLOSINGSESSION

52. The Deputy Chief of SEAFDEC/MFRDMD,*Dr.Masahito Hirota* delivered the closing remarks. His remarks appear as **Annex 8**.

ANNEX 1

Regional Workshop on the Development of the Regional Guideline on ALDFG

31 March 2026, Bangkok, Thailand

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ANNEX 2

OPENINGREMARKS

by *Ms. Sampan Panjarat,* SEAFDEC Secretary-General

Regional Workshop on the Development of the Technical Guidelines to Assess, Prevent, and Remove Abandoned, Lost, or Otherwise Discarded Fishing Gear (ALDFG) in the Southeast Asian Region

31 March 2026, Bangkok, Thailand

Mr. Koichi Tahara, Deputy Secretary-General of SEAFDEC,
Mr. Abd Haris Hilmi bin Ahmad Arshad, Chief of MFRDMD
Distinguished delegates from ASEAN Member States,
Representatives from the ASEAN Secretariat,
My colleagues from SEAFDEC,
Ladies and gentlemen, good morning.

It ismy greathonorto welcomeyou to **the Regional Workshop on the Development of the Technical Guidelines to Assess, Prevent, and Remove Abandoned, Lost, or Otherwise Discarded Fishing Gear (ALDFG) in the Southeast Asian Region**.

Today's meeting aims to review the draft Technical Guidelines on ALDFG and to further strengthen regional cooperation and collaboration in reducing its impacts, in support of sustainable fisheries management. This is one of the key expected outputs under the project entitled *"Regional Collaborative Research and Capacity Building for Monitoring and Reduction of Marine Debris from Fisheries in Southeast Asia,"* implemented by SEAFDEC with financial support from the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF).

As presented by MFRDMD yesterday, the draft Technical Guidelines have been developed progressively. Today provides an excellent opportunity to gather your valuable views and feedback on the draft before we proceed to the next step of submission to the SEAFDEC Council and the ASEAN mechanism.

Your insights will be greatly appreciated. Lastly, thank you very much, and I wish you all a productive and fruitful workshop. Have a good day.

ANNEX 3

OPENINGADDRESS

by *Mr. Abd Haris Hilmi Ahmad Arshad,* Chief of SEAFDEC/MFRDMD

Regional Workshop on the Developmentofthe Technical Guidelines to Assess, Prevent, and Remove Abandoned, Lost, or Otherwise Discarded Fishing Gear (ALDFG) in the SoutheastAsian Region

31 March 2026Bangkok, Thailand

Good morning.

Distinguished Ms. Sampan Panjarat, Secretary-General of SEAFDEC,

Mr. Joseph Arbiol, Head of the Food, Agriculture, and Forestry Division, ASEAN Secretariat,

Mr. Koichi Tahara, Deputy Secretary-General of SEAFDEC,

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Fauziah Shahul Hamid, Resource Person from the Universiti Malaya, Kuala Lumpur Malaysia,

Mr. Fumiya Takahashi, Manager of the JAIF Marine Debris Project,

Dr. Masahito Hirota, Deputy Chief of SEAFDEC/MFRDMD,

Mr. Mohammad Faisal Md Saleh, Activity Component Leader

Distinguished representatives from Cambodia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, The Philippines,

Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam,

Officers and staff of SEAFDEC/Secretariat and SEAFDEC/MFRDMD.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Itismygreat pleasure and distincthonour to extendawarmwelcometoallofyoutothe **Regional Workshop on the Development of Technical Guidelines to Assess, Prevent, and Remove Abandoned, Lost, or Otherwise Discarded Fishing Gear (ALDFG) in the Southeast Asian Region**.

The objectives of this workshop are, to review and discuss the draft Regional Technical Guidelines for ALDFG management; as well as to further strengthen regional cooperation and partnerships in addressing marine debris and promoting sustainable fisheries management. It is envisaged that this workshop will produce a set of voluntary Technical Guidelines, which will be presented to the SEAFDEC Council Meeting for consideration and subsequently to the ASEAN Member States for possible adoption at the national level.

Iwould like to extend my sincere congratulations to all representatives who have been nominated to participate in this important workshop. Your presence here clearly reflects your

strong commitment and dedication to working collaboratively towards practical and effective solutions for the management of marine debris and ALDFG in Southeast Asia.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the process of developing these Technical Guidelines, MFRDMD has convened several important activities. Two workshops were conducted to develop questionnaires: one on the Assessment of the Status of Marine Debris and ALDFG in ASEAN Member States (AMSs), and another on Preventive Measures for ALDFG.

In addition, the Regional Technical Meeting (RTM) on Marine Debris and ALDFG was successfully held earlier from 21–23 January in Seremban, Malaysia. This meeting provided valuable insights into the current status of ALDFG across AMSs, as well as a clearer understanding of the existing regulatory frameworks in place. The inputs and recommendations provided by participants have significantly enhanced the substance and relevance of the draft Technical Guidelines, ensuring that they are more comprehensive, practical, and responsive to the regional needs.

It is therefore my sincere hope that, following this regional workshop, we will continue to work closely together, particularly with the focal points from AMSs, to further review and finalize the Technical Guidelines on ALDFG, ensuring that they are well-aligned with national priorities and regional contexts.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to express my sincere appreciation to our distinguished resource person, Associate Professor Dr. Fauziah Shahul Hamid, for her valuable contributions and willingness to share her expertise and insights throughout this workshop. I am confident that her guidance will greatly enrich our discussions and deliberations.

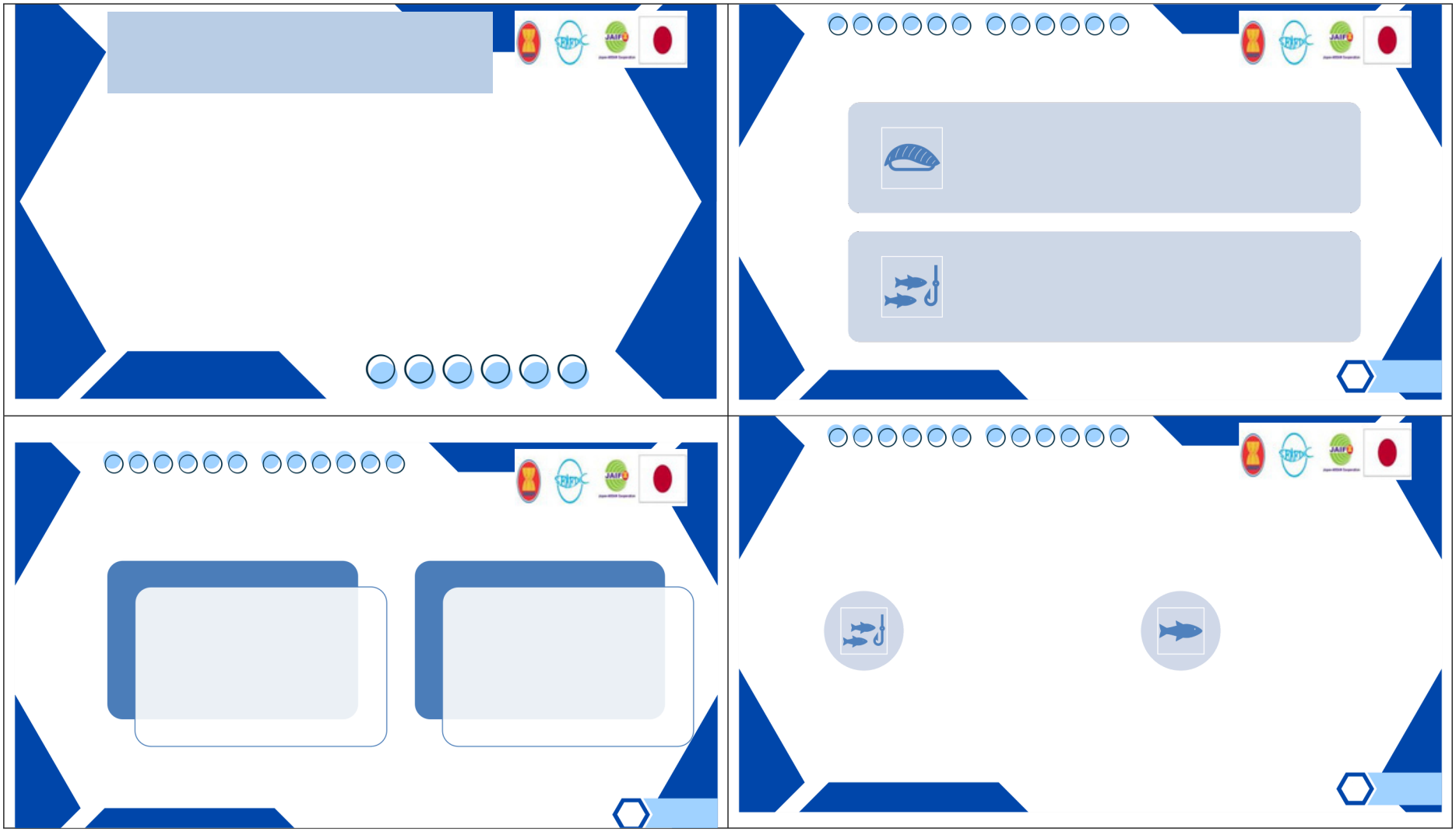
I would also like to take this opportunity to convey my heartfelt gratitude to the secretariat of this workshop from the SEAFDEC/Secretariat and SEAFDEC/MFRDMD for their dedication, hard work, and excellent arrangement. Their tireless efforts have been instrumental in ensuring the successful organization of this workshop.

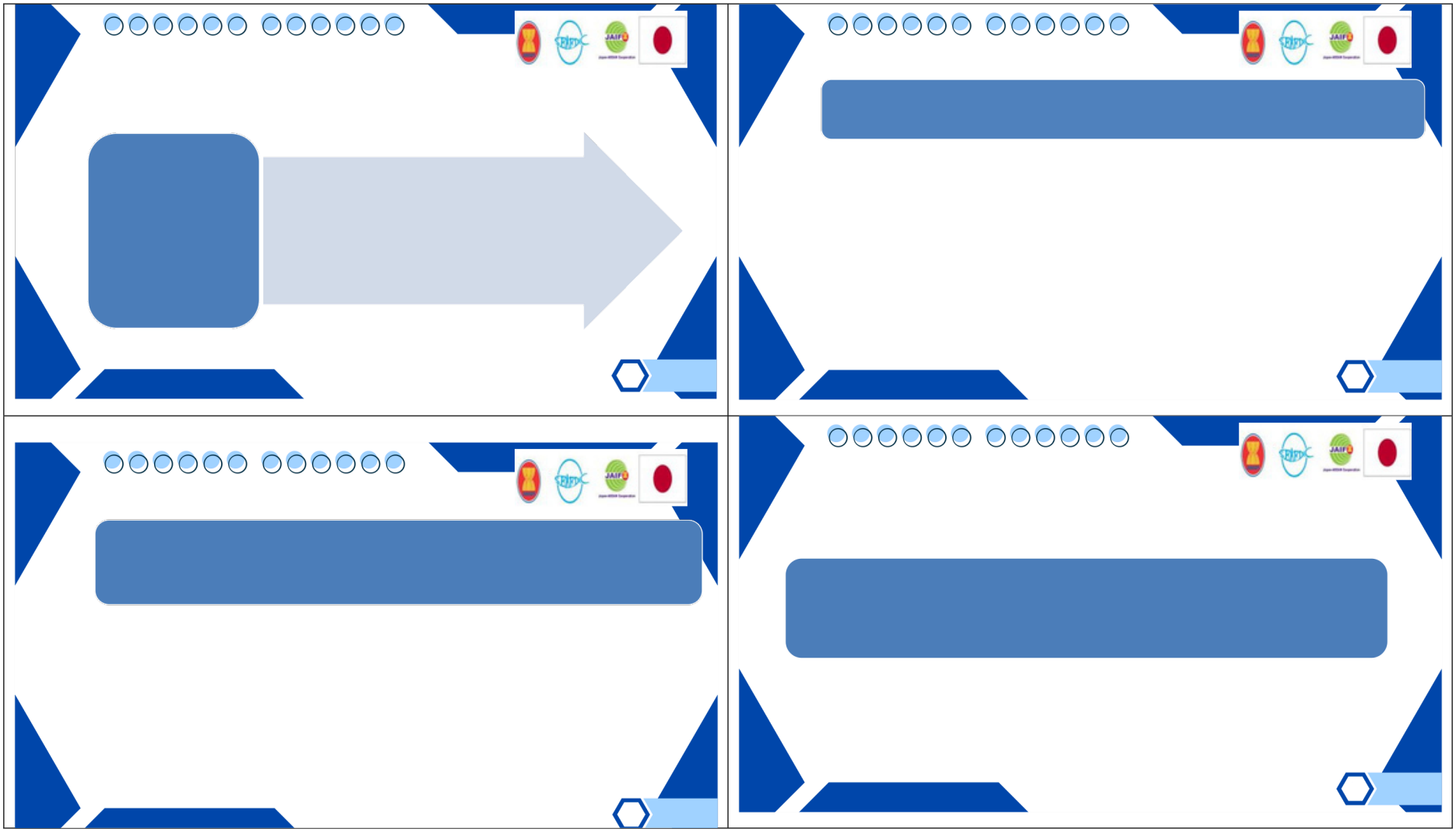
Finally, on behalf of SEAFDEC/MFRDMD, I would like to express our sincere apologies in advance for any shortcomings that may arise during the course of this Regional Workshop.

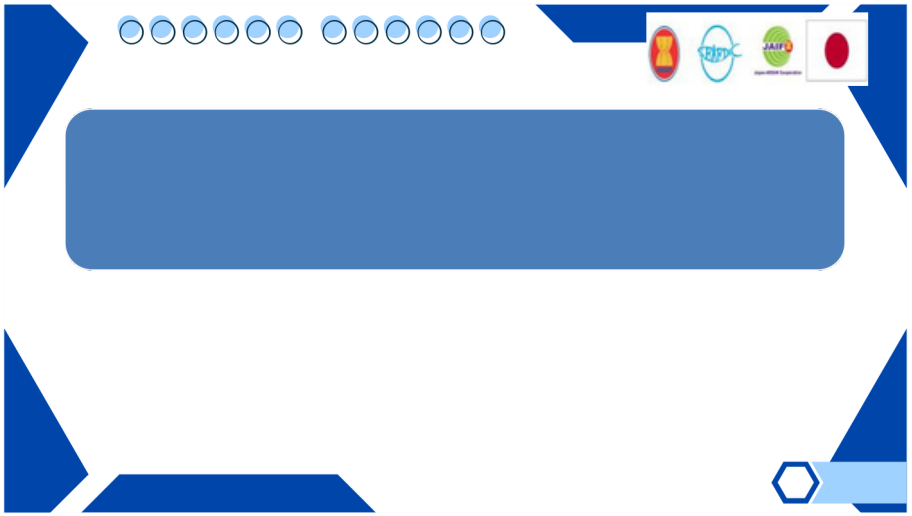
With that, I end my opening address.

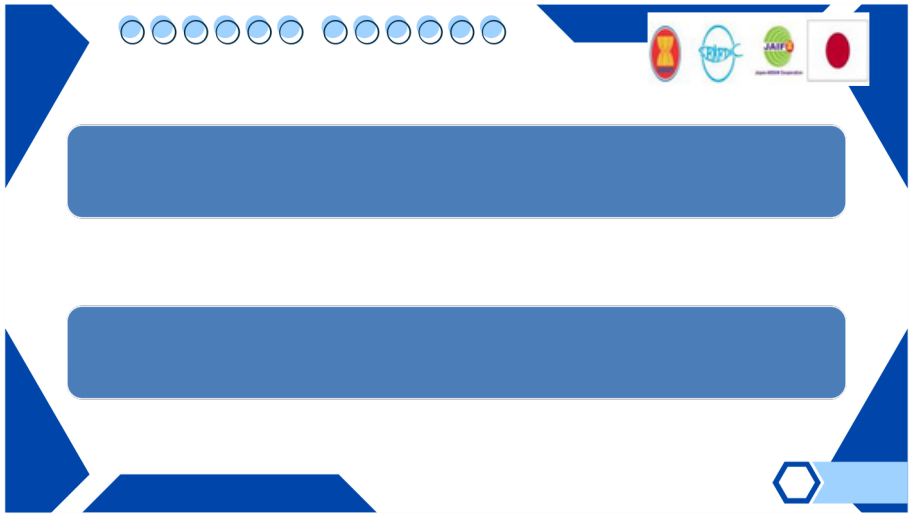
Thank you very much.

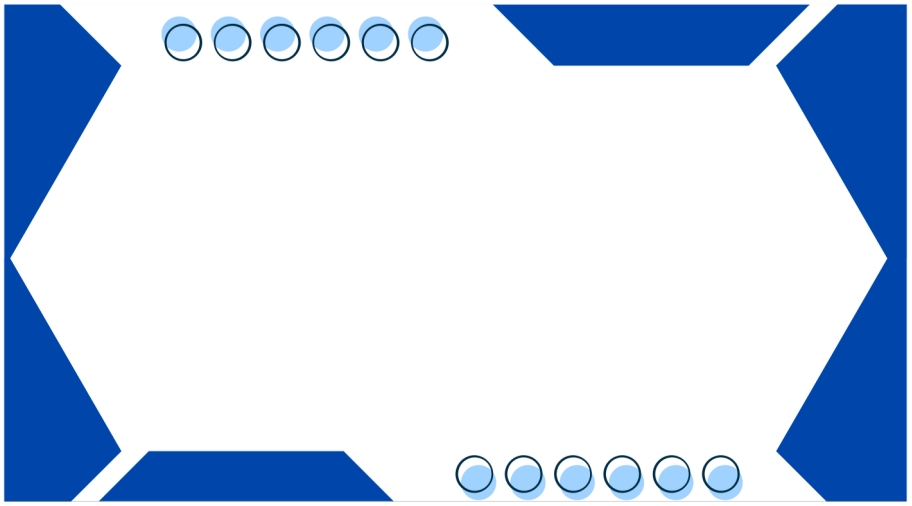
ANNEX 4





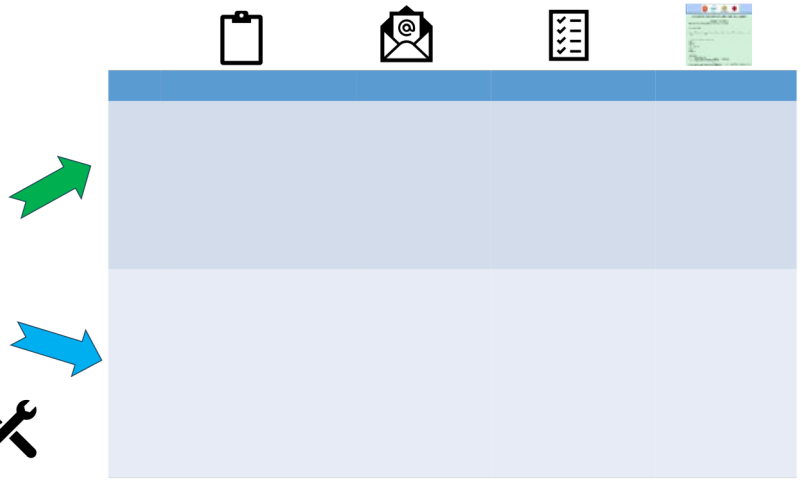


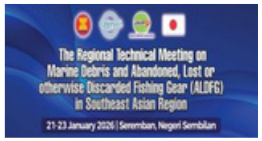




Introduction of Activity 1.2 of Project
Regional Collaborative Research and Capacity Building for Monitoring and Reduction of Marine Debris from Fisheries in Southeast Asia






The Regional Technical Meeting on
Marine Debris and Abandoned, Lost or
otherwise Discarded Fishing Gear (ALDFG)
in Southeast Asian Region
21-23 January 2026 | Seremban, Negeri Sembilan









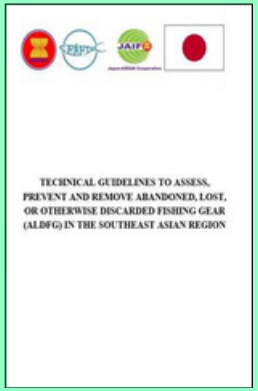











TECHNICAL GUIDELINES TO ASSESS, PREVENT AND REMOVE ABANDONED, LOST, OR OTHERWISE DISCARDED FISHING GEAR (ALDFG) IN THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN REGION



UNIVERSITI MALAYA

From Assessment to Action: Strengthening Regional Responses to Marine Debris and ALDFG in the ASEAN Fisheries Sector

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Why "From Assessment to Action"?

Over the past decade, ASEAN Member States have:

- Strengthened marine debris monitoring
- Improved data collection and research
- Launched pilot mitigation initiatives

However:

- Regional reporting remains fragmented
- Gear traceability systems are inconsistent
- Retrieval incentives are limited
- Integration into fisheries governance is still evolving

While awareness of ALDFG has increased across the region, the greater challenge now lies in coordinating and harmonizing implementation within the fisheries sector.

ALDFG in the ASEAN Context

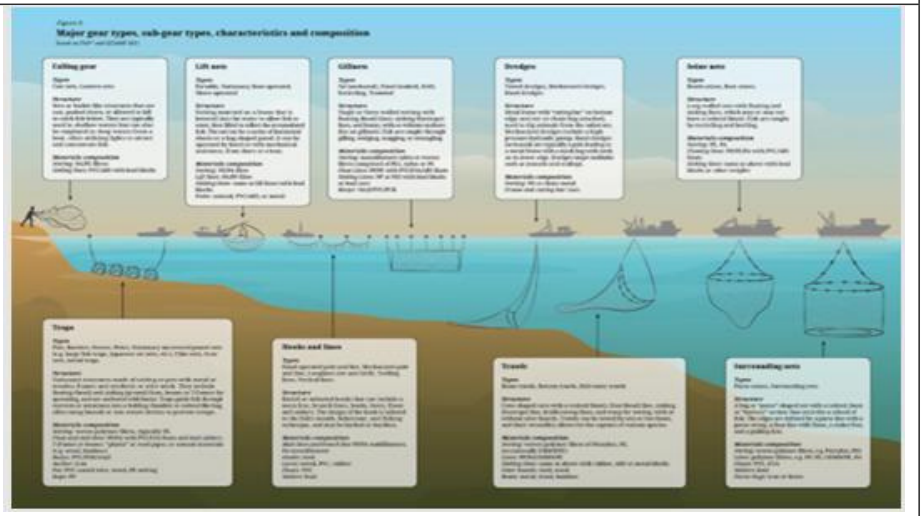
Southeast Asia's fisheries are characterized by:

- High fishing intensity
- Dominance of small-scale fisheries
- Transboundary fishing grounds
- Monsoon-driven currents
- Increasing extreme weather events

These dynamics increase:

- Gear loss
- Ghost fishing
- Transboundary debris movement
- Fisheries conflicts

These dynamics make ALDFG not only an environmental issue, but a transboundary fisheries governance challenge.



Why ALDFG Requires a Fisheries-Centered Approach?

ALDFG is not general marine litter. It is:

- Designed to capture marine life
- Highly durable
- Operational even when abandoned
- Directly linked to fisheries management systems

Therefore:

ALDFG management must be embedded within fisheries governance frameworks.

Section 1: Impacts

Ecological Impacts

ALDFG contributes to:

- Ghost fishing and unintended mortality
- Entanglement of marine mammals and turtles
- Coral reef and seagrass damage
- Habitat degradation

These impacts undermine ecosystem resilience and biodiversity.

Implications for Fisheries Sustainability

ALDFG affects fisheries through:

- Reduction in exploitable stock
- Damage to nursery habitats
- Altered recruitment patterns
- Increased pressure on already stressed stocks

This directly threatens long-term fisheries productivity.

Livelihood and Safety Impacts

Small-scale fishers are disproportionately affected:

- Loss of fishing days
- Costly gear replacement
- Reduced catch and income instability
- Increased time disentangling gear
- Navigation hazards at sea

ALDFG is therefore both an environmental and socio-economic issue.

Section 2: Governance Gaps

Key Governance Gaps Identified

Despite progress, challenges remain:

- Lack of harmonized regional reporting systems
- Limited standardized gear marking protocols
- Weak traceability mechanisms
- Insufficient retrieval financing models
- Limited integration into fisheries licensing systems

These gaps hinder coordinated regional response

Why Governance Integration Matters?

When ALDFG is treated as external to fisheries policy:

- Prevention becomes secondary
- Reporting remains voluntary
- Compliance mechanisms weaken
- Data remains fragmented

Prevention efforts can be strengthened by integrating ALDFG into:

- Fisheries licensing
- Vessel monitoring systems
- Co-management frameworks

Section 3: Moving Toward Action

A Prevention-Oriented Framework

- Prevention must be prioritized over retrieval.
- A fisheries-centered prevention framework should be guided by these key principles:
  - Accountability
  - Traceability
  - Incentive-based systems
  - Fisheries sector ownership
  - Regional harmonization

Gear Marking & Traceability

Standardized gear marking can:

- Improve accountability
- Reduce illegal disposal
- Facilitate recovery
- Support enforcement

Regional harmonization would prevent cross-border inconsistencies.

Reporting & Data Harmonization

Strengthening reporting mechanisms through:

- Standardized reporting templates
- Regional data-sharing platforms
- Integration with national fisheries databases

Improved data enables evidence-based management.

Incentive-Based Retrieval Mechanisms

Effective approaches include:

- Deposit-refund systems
- Gear buy-back programs
- Incentivized retrieval campaigns
- Community-based recovery initiatives

Incentives are often more effective than punitive measures.

Port Reception Facilities

Accessible and functional port facilities:

- Reduce at-sea disposal
- Encourage responsible disposal
- Support compliance

Infrastructure must match fisheries realities.

Capacity Building & Fisher Engagement

Long-term success requires:

- Fisher training and awareness
- Community co-management
- Youth engagement
- Inclusion of small-scale fisheries

Fishers must be partners — not targets of enforcement.

UNIVERSITI MALAYA

Section 4: Regional Cooperation

Regional Platforms and Harmonization

- ASEAN frameworks, building on existing fisheries cooperation mechanisms,

  provide opportunities to:
  - Align technical standards
  - Share monitoring data
  - Coordinate capacity-building
  - Scale best practices

Regional cooperation is essential due to transboundary marine dynamics.

From Documentation to Implementation

ASEAN has:
- Assessment data
- Scientific evidence
- Emerging technical guidance

The next phase requires:
- Practical operationalization
- Institutional integration
- Cross-sector collaboration

Strategic Priorities Moving Forward

1. Harmonize regional gear marking standards
2. Integrate ALDFG into fisheries management systems
3. Establish incentive-based prevention mechanisms
4. Develop a shared regional monitoring platform
5. Strengthen capacity across Member States

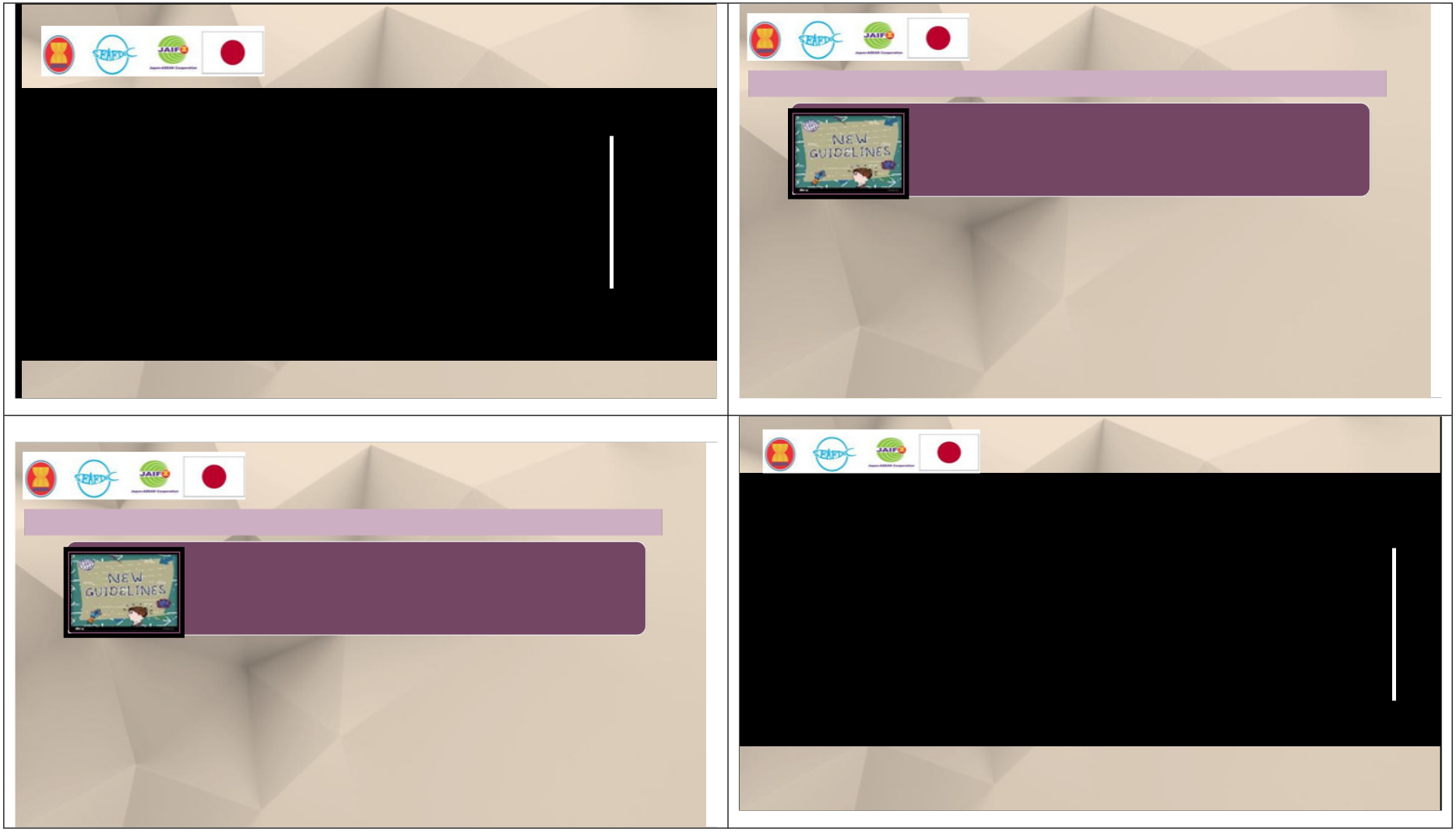
Closing Message

Transforming assessment into coordinated regional action is critical to:
- Safeguard marine ecosystems
- Protect fisheries sustainability
- Secure coastal livelihoods

The fisheries sector plays a central role in this transition.


"Addressing ALDFG is not only about protecting the marine environment — it is about securing the long-term resilience of our fisheries and coastal communities."
UNIVERSITI MALAYA
THANK YOU
fauziahsh@um.edu.my

ANNEX 7 WAY FORWARD



ANNEX 8

CLOSINGREMARKS

by *Dr. Masahito Hirota,* DeputyChief of SEAFDEC/MFRDMD

The Regional Workshop on the Development of the Technical Guideline to Assess, Prevent, and Remove Abandoned, Lost,or Otherwise Discarded Fishing Gear (ALDFG) in the Southeast Asian Region

31 March 2026, Bangkok, Thailand,

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Fauziah from University of Malaya

Mr. Joseph from ASEAN secretariat

M**s**. Sampan Panjarat, SEAFDEC/Secretary General

Mr. Koichi Tahara SEAFDEC/Deputy Secretary General

Mr. Abd Haris Hilmi Armad Ahshad: chief of MFRDMD

All representatives from ASEAN member countries, Ladies and Gentlemen, Good afternoon. Thank you very much for joining "**The Regional Workshop on the Development of the Technical Guideline to Assess, Prevent, and Remove Abandoned, Lost, Discarded Fishing ".** This activity is supported by the JAPAN
ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF), the objective is to support all ASEAN member countries to consider how to establish the system of Prevention of Marine debris for the ASEAN community. And this program is well expected to deepen the mutual understanding between Japan and ASEAN countries, in promotion of human resource communication, technology transferring, study and research activities.

I hope that today's discussion can be a good contribution and meaningful information for ASEAN member countries, for the sustainable use method of marine resources in ASEAN water, keeping the sustainable use of fishing ground and the condition.

And here, I must express my sincere gratitude to Mr. Fumiya Takahashi and Ms. Parinthon from SEAFDEC/SEC as the project coordinators. Thanks to your devoted contribution, this project safely has achieved the goal. This workshop is the last mission of Mr. Takahashi in SEAFDEC, thanks very much.

Now, I would like to declare this workshop closed. Thanks.

APPENDIX

Theimagesphotographed by SEAFDEC Secretariat









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