Preventing and Addressing ALDFG (Abandoned, Lost and Discarded Fishing Gear)

KIMO Resolution 2026/2

Adopted by KIMO's Assembly of Delegates on 7 October 2026

PREAMBLE

Recognising that abandoned, lost and otherwise discarded fishing gear (ALDFG), including so-called ghost gear and waste from net cuttings, constitutes a significant and persistent source of marine pollution, impacting marine ecosystems, coastal environments and maritime activities;

Concerned that ALDFG poses serious threats to marine wildlife through entanglement and ingestion, contributes to the generation of microplastics as gear degrades over time, and negatively affects fisheries, coastal communities and tourism;

Acknowledging that the loss of fishing gear can occur unintentionally during normal fishing operations – both commercial and recreational - but that improved prevention, reporting, retrieval and end-of-life management can significantly reduce its occurrence and impacts;

Recognising the significant efforts made by many commercial and recreational fishers in recent years to improve sustainability, reduce environmental impacts and contribute to healthy marine ecosystems, including through participation in initiatives aimed at preventing marine litter and supporting the retrieval of waste from the marine environment.

Noting that existing EU and international frameworks increasingly address marine litter and waste from fisheries, including requirements for port reception facilities and extended producer responsibility, but that significant gaps remain, and further efforts are needed to ensure effective implementation, coordination and coverage of ALDFG;

Recognising the importance of collaboration across stakeholders - including fishers, ports, authorities and industry - in preventing gear loss, facilitating retrieval and ensuring responsible management and recycling of fishing gear, and recognising the importance of practical, efficient and accessible systems and infrastructure that support fishers in reporting, retrieving and responsibly managing fishing gear

Recalling KIMO's role in supporting coastal municipalities in addressing marine pollution, including through the long-standing Fishing for Litter initiative, which for more than 25 years has demonstrated the value of voluntary cooperation between KIMO and the fishing sector, enabling fishers to make an important contribution to the removal of marine litter from the sea, and emphasizing the importance of local leadership in prevention, awareness-raising and practical solutions in the protection of marine environments;

KIMO International therefore adopts the following resolution.

OVERARCHING AMBITIONS

KIMO International calls on national governments and the European Union to:

1. Prevent the loss of fishing gear at source

2. Ensure robust and effective systems for reporting, retrieval and responsible management of lost fishing gear, including clear roles and responsibilities across actors

3. Promote the collection and recycling of fishing gear, ensuring responsible and environmentally sound end-of-life-management

PREVENTION OF ALDFG

International Actions

- Establish requirements to prevent the loss of fishing gear, including through improved gear design, marking, handling practices and the use of technologies that reduce the risk of loss.

- Develop harmonised systems for reporting lost fishing gear, ensuring consistency across countries and enabling timely and coordinated responses.

- Support the development and uptake of innovative solutions, including gear tracking, marking systems and alterative materials, to reduce gear loss and improve traceability.

While We Wait – National & Local Actions

- Engage with fishers, including recreational fishers, to promote practical measures and best practices that reduce gear loss, and provide clear and targeted guidance on prevention (national/local).
- Support practical reporting pathways for lost gear, including by facilitating communication between fishers, ports and relevant authorities (national/local).
- Facilitate local partnerships between municipalities, ports and fisheries stakeholders and promote the exchange of good practices, strengthening prevention efforts and building capacity (local).

RETRIEVAL AND MANAGEMENT OF ALDFG

International Actions

- Promote the uptake and implementation of international guidelines and best practices for the retrieval of ALDFG, including those developed by OSPAR and HELCOM and relevant organisations such as FAO and the Global Ghost Gear Initiative.
- Support the development of harmonized approaches to reporting, locating and retrieving lost fishing gear, including practical coordination and data-sharing mechanisms across countries.
- Strengthen and clarify frameworks for the handling and management of retrieved fishing gear, ensuring that responsibilities and pathways are clear where existing systems, including extended producer responsibility schemes, do not adequately cover ALDFG.

While We Wait – National & Local Actions

- Support and facilitate the retrieval of lost fishing gear through cooperation with fishers, ports and other stakeholders, including by supporting practical recovery initiatives (national/local).

- Share best practice examples and encourage ports and harbours to have accessible and appropriate facilities for the reception of retrieved fishing gear, including systems that encourage delivery without placing additional burdens on fishers (local).

RECYCLING AND END-OF-LIFE MANAGEMENT

International Actions

- Strengthen frameworks for the end-of-life management and recycling of fishing gear, including by addressing gaps in extended producer responsibility schemes – particularly where ALDFG remains insufficiently covered or addressed – and enabling financially viable and operations recycling solutions for fishing gear.

While We Wait – National & Local Actions

- Promote and support the establishment of accessible systems and facilities for the collection and recycling of fishing gear at ports and harbours, including through cooperation with waste operators, recyclers and industry (local).

- Promote the development and implementation of practical recycling solutions, including pilot projects and partnerships that help identify viable approaches and build experience (national/local).

- Promote and support that clear responsibilities and practical arrangements are in place for the handling and transfer of fishing gear waste, reducing uncertainty for municipalities, ports and stakeholders (national/local).