

WWF – Pacific
Terms of Reference (ToR)

Position Title: Consultant – Report on Abandoned, Lost or otherwise Discarded Fishing Gear in Fiji (ALDFG)

Project: Safeguarding Nesting Populations of Sea Turtles in Fiji

Reporting: Policy Coordinator, Sustainable Fisheries & Seafood Programme (SFS)

Date: 03rd November 2025 – 15th December 2025

Location: Suva, Fiji

Summary

With the rising population, there is an increased demand for fish, and therefore the use of fishing gear such as gillnets, traps, pots, FAD and other gear types are compounding the problem of plastics in our ocean as they end up ALDFG¹. It is estimated that 5.7% of all fishing nets, 8.6% of all traps and 29% of all lines were lost to the world's ocean for the year 2017². The European Commission reported that ALDFG accounts for over 11,000 tons per year in European seas and almost half of the great garbage patch in the Pacific Ocean consists of such fishing gear³. Fishing gear accounts for a small percentage of the types of marine plastics found in Fiji however the impacts are disproportionate as Fiji are depended on the fisheries and tourism sector⁴ALDFG is the deadliest form of marine plastic debris ⁵; can impact 66% of marine mammals, 50% of seabirds and species of sea turtle⁶.

This consultancy aims to improve understanding and management of ghost gear in Fiji's tuna fishing sector. The study will provide an in-depth understanding of the ghost gear issue in Fiji's tuna fishing sector. This will help stakeholders at all levels to better address and mitigate the environmental and economic impacts of abandoned, lost, or otherwise discarded fishing gear. By conducting interviews to gauge the extent of the issue and running an awareness workshop, the consultant will help develop a shared understanding among key stakeholders, identify best practices, and propose practical policy recommendations to address the problem effectively.

The undertaking will also be a timely task to collaborate with the Fiji tuna fishing sector in enhancing its ghost gear management strategy; conforming to third party standards such as the recent MSC (Marine Stewardship Council) ghost gear requirement with the intention to identify effective and practical approaches to manage ghost gear such as prevent, mitigate or to remediate.

Objective

- To conduct a study on the extent of ghost gear (abandoned, lost, or otherwise discarded fishing gear) within Fiji's tuna fishing sector.
- Gather qualitative data to assess the scale and impact of ghost gear in the tuna fishing sector.
- Raise awareness on ADLFG and its effects and opportunities for addressing the issue through an effective and practical approaches.

¹ WWF (2020). Stop Ghost Gear: The Most Deadly Form of Marine Plastic Debris.

² Richardson K, Hardesty BD, Wilcox C. Estimates of fishing gear loss rates at a global scale: A literature review and meta-analysis. *Fish Fish*. 2019; 20: 1218–1231. <https://doi.org/10.1111/faf.12407>

³ European Commission Newsroom (2018). New Proposal will tackle marine litter and “ghost fishing”.

⁴ . <https://www.sprep.org/news/fiji-calls-on-the-plastics-treaty-to-comprehensively-address-the-full-lifecycle-of-ghost-fishing-gear>

⁵ Wilcox, C., Mallos, N. J., Leonard, G. H., Rodriguez, A. & Hardesty, B. D. (2016). Using expert elicitation to estimate the impacts of plastic pollution on marine wildlife.

⁶ Kühn, S., Rebolledo, E. L. B., & van Franeker, J. A. (2015). Deleterious effects of litter on marine life. In *Marine anthropogenic litter* (pp. 75-116). Springer, Cham

Deliverables:

- **Workplan**
 - A workplan illustrating key activities, milestone deliverables and timelines.
- **Desk-Top Study Report**
 - A detailed report based on existing literature, studies, and data about the extent of ghost gear in Fiji's tuna fishing sector.
 - Identification of key sources and statistics on ghost gear in the region.
 - Identification of the legislative, policy and other frameworks (eg. MSC certification) relevant to ALDFG in Fiji.
 - Analysis of the current state of awareness and the existing response mechanisms to ghost gear in Fiji.
- **Stakeholder Interviews**
 - Conduct interviews with key stakeholders, including but not limited to:
 - Tuna fishing operators and fleet owners.
 - Yacht Club members
 - Fishing Skippers (selected)
 - Government agencies (MoF, MECC, MSAF)
 - At least 2 identified maritime communities in the province of Rotuma, Lau, Ba, Ra, Macuata, Kadavu)
 - Other relevant stakeholders, SPREP, MSC and researchers.
- **Analysis**
 - Collect and analyse qualitative data (where relevant quantitative data) from interviews.
 - Assess/Analyse the scale/extent of ghost gear in terms of gear types, materials, and geographic locations affected based on interview data.
 - Identify specific challenges faced by stakeholders in addressing the issue.
 - Analysis of the extent of abandoned, lost, and discarded fishing gear (ALDFG) based on interview responses.
 - Identification of key factors contributing to ghost gear, challenges faced by stakeholders, and gaps in current practices or regulations.
 - Challenges or barriers faced
 - Stakeholder recommendations for addressing ALDFG and or better gear management
- **Final Report**

A final, comprehensive report including:

 - Integrate the findings from stakeholder interviews regarding the prevalence and impact of ghost gear in the tuna fishing sector into the desktop report.
 - The report should include:
 - Desk-top study findings.
 - Key findings from the stakeholder interviews.
 - Summary of the extent of ghost gear and its impact based on desktop review findings and stakeholder interviews.
 - Key insights on the level of ghost gear and its impacts on the environment, economy, and fisheries operations.
 - Identified barriers or challenges preventing better gear management.
 - Summary recommendations for policy improvements and/or industry action.

Tasks and Methodology:

Desk-Top Study

- Review available literature, scientific studies, government reports, and global data on ghost gear in tuna fishing with a specific emphasis on Fiji where able.
- Review existing regulations, policies, and enforcement mechanisms.
- Analyse historical data on abandoned, lost, or discarded fishing gear in the Pacific region, particularly in Fiji.
- Identify trends, patterns, and key concerns regarding ghost gear.

Stakeholder Interviews

- Develop a target stakeholder list (selected in consultation with WWF)
- Develop an interview guide with questions related to the following:
 - Experiences and practices regarding gear loss or with abandoned, lost, or discarded gear.
 - The role of ghost gear (impacts and effects) in the local tuna fishery.
 - Existing regulations, policies, and enforcement mechanisms.
 - The economic and environmental impacts of ghost gear.
 - Practices for gear management and disposal.
 - Regulatory challenges or gaps in current policy enforcement.
 - Awareness of the environmental and economic impacts of ghost gear.
 - Existing training or outreach programs in the sector.
 - Awareness levels and current education initiatives on ghost gear.
 - Challenges or barriers faced with addressing the issue
 - Recommendations for improving national policy or supporting industry action
- Conduct interviews with a representative sample of stakeholders (eg. managers, fishing skippers via in-person, virtual, or via phone).
- Summarize findings and insights from interviews.

Required Qualifications

- Experience in marine conservation, fisheries management, or environmental policy, particularly related to plastics and abandoned, lost, or discarded fishing gear.
- Experience in stakeholder engagement, including conducting interviews with a variety of sector participants
- Knowledge of Fiji's tuna fishing sector, its challenges, and local regulatory frameworks is desirable.
- Strong report writing and analytical skills, with the ability to synthesize data and deliver actionable recommendations.

Duration

The duration of this consultancy is **31 days**, over the period **03 November 2025 – 15 December 2025**

Compensation

The consultant will be paid at a mutually agreed rate. Payment will be made according to an agreed schedule for submission of as provided in Table 1. Applicants are required to send an indicative budget.

Table 1. Outputs Delivery

03 November 2025 – 15 December 2025 (31 Day Consultancy)

Output Details		Due Date
1	Workplan Document	03/11/2025
2	Desktop Study Report	17/11/2025
3	Completed key stakeholder interviews/survey	01/12/25
4	Final Report	15/12/2025