



MARELITT Baltic- Regional Workshop  
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# MARELITT BALTIC: *reducing the impact of DFG*

**Presentation of project activities**

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# Project overview

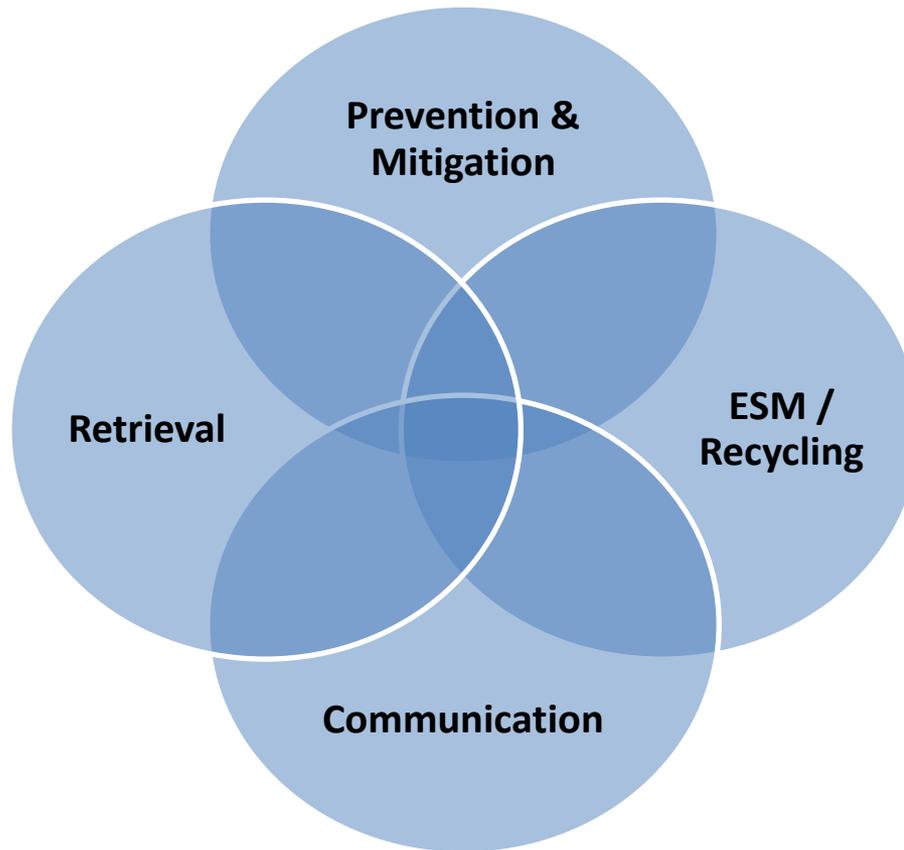
- 3 host organisations identified by MARELITT team:
  - WWF Poland
  - Keep the Estonian Sea Tidy
  - the Municipality of Shimrishamn (Sweden).
- Brussels' workshop: all 3 organisations decided to work together to develop and implement a regional Baltic project.
- Meetings with fishermen to discuss the project concept:
- Result: a Business Case (project proposal).
- Activities to be carried out in the 3 countries.
  - other countries may join the project during implementation.
- Project stakeholders include among other: Fishermen; Divers; Port authorities; Policy makers; Recycling companies; Scientific institutions; Gear manufacturers

# The project consortium:



# Objectives of the project:

*To reduce the impact of derelict fishing gear in the Baltic Sea.*



# Why a regional DFG project?

- It is a necessity, as the problem of DFG is inherently a regional problem:
  - drifting DFG knows no borders
  - fishermen are active in various waters.
- Economies of scale, with among other:
  - Combination of knowledge and expertise from various countries
  - Reduced costs and increased efficiency (e.g. for the procurement of equipment)
  - Greater opportunities for effective recycling, as one of the preconditions for viable recycling is the regular supply of sufficient DFG for recycling.
- Opportunities for regional funding (e.g. through the Baltic Sea Region Programme), while not excluding national funding (e.g. through the EMFF).
- Baltic Sea region countries are already cooperating in solving various environmental issues, through various structures, such as HELCOM.

# Measures to address DFG:

- Measures can broadly be divided between measures that:
  - prevent (avoid the occurrence of DFG in the environment);
  - mitigate (reduce the impact of DFG in the environment)
  - and cure (remove DFG from the environment).
- MARELITT Baltic considers all 3 types of measures.
  - all 3 types of measures needed to successfully reduce the DFG problem.

# Prevention and mitigation of impacts:

**Main aim:** to reduce the number of nets loss by fishermen.

**Secondary aim:** to facilitate the retrieval of DFG

- due to the environment in which fishing takes place, and the technology used, some degree of DFG is unavoidable
- 1. Analysis of prevention measures, such as:
  - Mapping of “hooks”.
    - supporting action: further development of the map of underwater obstacles developed by WWF Poland.
  - Introduction of systems to report lost gear to fisheries authorities.
  - Inclusion of DFG measures in responsible fisheries schemes.
- 2. Direct stakeholder consultation: on the applicability and their role in the application of the measures.
- 3. Stakeholder communication, to disseminate the measures and to encourage their application.
  - e.g. proposal of a set of measures to relevant authorities.

# Location of DFG spots

## Main aim: to determine the locations of DFG, through:

- Desk research: collection of available information on:
  - fishing effort: types of FG used (i.e. some types are easier lost than others); areas where certain types of FG are used
  - areas with high potential loss rate (busy shipping lanes, weather conditions, seabed morphology etc.)
  - ship wrecks (e.g. existing inventories)
- Consultation of (commercial, possibly also of recreational) fishermen: collection of practical information on the position and number of lost nets.
- Use of underwater inspection equipment (ROV robots and side-scan sonars) and divers to identify wrecks with high amounts of DFG.
- only small areas of fishing ground can be covered in retrieval projects, so precise information on the location of DFG is crucial.

# Selection of DFG retrieval locations:

- **Main aim:** to select the locations from which to retrieve DFG.
- Development of methodology under MARELITT Baltic, using a set of criteria to prioritise, such as:
  - Environmental impact:
    - Could the retrieval have any negative environmental impact, due to the ecological sensitivity of the location? Retrieval in sensitive habitats or during spawning periods should in principle be avoided.
    - What is the positive environmental impact of retrieval? One of the aspects to consider is the catching efficiency of lost nets: decreases rapidly at first, with the rate of decline in catching efficiency decreasing over time; depends also on gear type and on the nature of the local environment (currents, depth and location).
  - Economic benefits: what is, based on the existing understanding of economic impact of DFG, the economic benefit of retrieving DFG from a given location?

# Selection of DFG retrieval locations: prioritisation of retrieval locations

- Health & safety risks: to what extent will these risks be reduced if the DFG is being retrieved?
- Cost-efficiency:
  - Level of trawl activity: retrieval projects may be less necessary in areas of high trawl activity, where nets are picked up over time, provided that nets are landed.
  - How do the costs of retrieving DFG from a given location compare to the benefits?
- Effectiveness: the level of concentration of DFG at a single location (“hot spots”): what amounts of DFG can be retrieved from a single location?

# DFG retrieval – open sea

**Main aim:** to retrieve DFG from selected locations.

1. Preparation of guidance on DFG retrieval: e.g. on:
  - Retrieval equipment (will also depend on sea bed morphology)
  - Methods to locate DFG and to prioritise retrieval areas;
  - Legal issues: e.g. certification requirements for vessels that transport DFG ? fishery regulations that prohibit vessels from carrying gear that is not a gear type permitted under their license endorsement.
  - Practical implementation: e.g. Planning; Need to give advance notice to the industry of each retrieval action and request to remove all live FG from the designated areas for the duration of the action.
2. Recruitment of fishermen
3. Provision of necessary equipment
4. Training of fishermen
5. Targeted retrieval actions
6. Recording and reporting of information retrieved DFG.

# DFG retrieval: ship wrecks

Main aim: to retrieve DFG from selected wrecks.

1. Preparation of guidance on wreck cleaning.
2. Recruitment of divers
3. Training of divers
4. Targeted retrieval actions
5. Recording and reporting on retrieved DFG.

# Monitoring of DFG:

Main aim: to collect as much information on DFG as possible.

1. Development of reporting guidelines for participating fishermen and divers, i.e. on how to record and report which information.
  2. Development of an electronic reporting mechanism.
  3. Analysis of retrieved DFG by the project leader:
    - Origin: fisheries (mesh size can be used to attribute gear to a fishery)
    - Location
    - State of the DFG (e.g. for gill nets: new, damaged, panels, dumped panels);
    - Cause: abandoned or lost ?
    - Quantities: number and length of nets and other gear (e.g. per kilometre crept)
    - Composition;
    - Impacts: e.g. number and type of species found in the gear.
  4. Reporting on the main findings from the monitoring.
- The findings should be used to underpin (policy) measures

# DFG reception and treatment:

**Main aim:** to ensure the environmentally sound management of the retrieved fishing gear.

1. Ensure proper DFG reception facilities in the ports.
2. Identify the management options for the DFG: returning to the owner (if it can be identified); landfilling; incineration; recycling.
3. Identify companies interested in DFG recycling.
  - primarily in the Baltic region, to encourage the development of a local DFG recycling sector; but in other regions if necessary.
4. Identify companies that can provide environmentally sound treatment for DFG which cannot be recycled.

# Project results

1. An increased understanding of the DFG problem in the Baltic region
2. Guidance on DFG retrieval
3. DFG retrieved
4. Development of DFG recycling sector
5. DFG recycled.
6. A set of prevention, mitigation and remedial measures proposed to the relevant stakeholders.

# Communication:

## Main aims:

- To raise awareness regarding the problem and impact of DFG.
  - To disseminate (policy) measures and good practices to reduce the impact of DFG.
1. Development of communication & dissemination guidelines.
    - to ensure efficiency and consistency of communication in all 3 countries.
  2. Communication & dissemination activities in each country targeting stakeholders, i.e. parties who may have a direct impact on / interest in solving the DFG problem, e.g.:
    - Policy makers (international, regional, national, local)
    - Companies of relevant sectors (ports, fishing, shipping, tourism, plastic, gear manufacturing, waste management etc.) & their trade associations
    - Environmental and other NGOs.
    - Scientific institutions.
- Focussing on the role that each of the stakeholders can play in the prevention, mitigation and remediation of specific aspects of the DFG problem.

*Thank you for your attention.*

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