

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION
COMMITTEE FOR THE REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
MEASURES ADOPTED BY THE COMMISSION

16th MEETING

Panama City, Panama
26-27 August 2025

MEETING REPORT

AGENDA

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| 2. Adoption of the agenda | |
| 3. Recommendations of the 15 th meeting of the Committee: progress report | |
| 4. Priority elements of a draft Work Plan for the Committee: updates | |
| 5. Compliance with IATTC measures in 2024: | |
| 5a. Report by the staff on compliance | |
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| 6. Review of unresolved cases of possible non-compliance (2019-2023) | |
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The 16th meeting of the Committee for the Review of Implementation of Measures Adopted by the Commission (Review Committee, COR) was held on 26-27 August 2025 in Panama City, Panama. The meeting was suspended and then resumed on 30 August 2025, in order to resolve pending issues from the agenda. The list of attendees is included as **Appendix 1**.

1. Opening of the meeting

Mr. Antonio Vásquez, of El Salvador, the Chair of the Committee, opened the meeting and welcomed the delegations, observers, and stakeholders. He emphasized the importance of the COR's work and invited the delegations to collaborate to advance the committee's business, noting the need to maintain efficiency to cover all agenda items.

2. Adoption of the agenda

The Chair noted that, in accordance with the Rules of Procedure, no requests had been received for the inclusion of additional agenda items. The Chair also noted that a request for a presentation had been received from an NGO, PEW Charitable Trust, and added that space would be allocated for this presentation on the "Capacity Self-Assessment Tool." The agenda, along with the tentative schedule, was submitted for consideration. The Chair explained the logistics and, with the addition of the Pew Charitable Trust presentation, the agenda was adopted.

In accordance with the Rules of Procedure, the Chair requested the nomination of a rapporteur, and Panama was appointed.

3. Recommendations of the 15th meeting of the Committee: progress report

The Chair invited the Secretariat to provide an update on the progress of the tasks agreed upon during the 15th meeting of the Committee. Mr. Ricardo Belmontes, of the Secretariat, presented document COR-16-01. He noted that completed tasks included an instruction sheet for filling out the Compliance Questionnaire, additions to the Provisional Compliance Overview, and progress on developing and finalizing the template for Resolution C-24-05. Some delegations questioned the ambiguity of paragraphs 23, 24, and 25 of this resolution. The Chair noted that the COR did not have a specific mandate to review the template, but rather, it was the COR's responsibility to acknowledge that the template had been developed in accordance with paragraph 23 as part of the Secretariat's broader task of developing the remaining templates. Therefore, the COR took note of the template's development and agreed that the Commission would discuss its formal adoption through the relevant mechanism.

The Secretariat provided updates on the vessel *Mar Aral* case, citing Memorandum 377-410, in which Colombia reported closing the case. Regarding the document "Possible Infractions Reported by Governments as Under Investigation or Not Answered (2019–2023)," the COR expressed doubts about some fields and references, such as the section on the number of cases. The COR also noted the lack of important information needed to review the pending cases. The COR requested that the Secretariat update the document with information from the Final Compliance Report for the corresponding year, as well as with the Secretariat's comments and updates received from the respective CPC regarding follow-up actions, to facilitate review by the COR.

Due to the lack of necessary information to review these cases, the Chair noted that a substantive review could not be conducted during the COR-16 meeting. Therefore, it was agreed that the cases would be reviewed next year. CPCs were urged to send updated information on cases that have been identified as under investigation.

4. Priority elements of a draft Work Plan for the Committee: updates

Under this new agenda item, the Secretariat presented the COR with the progress made on the work plan regarding automatization, follow-up of infractions, categorization, priority areas, capacity building, and human and financial resources. Mr. Ricardo Belmontes presented the document "Recommended Actions for Elements of an IATTC Compliance Plan and Progress Report."

Regarding the automatization of the compliance process, the Secretariat reported that it has held meetings with the secretariats of other Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) through its participation in the Tuna Compliance Network and mentioned that financial resources are needed to move forward with this task. The Secretariat has also held discussions with the FAO to explore the possibility of accessing their software for submitting Members' reports on the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. The Secretariat will continue to move forward in this direction, aiming to inform the COR about the possibility of implementing such a system. The COR requested that the Secretariat specify the progress made and the cost of implementing such a system in the future.

Regarding the follow-up of previous infractions, the Secretariat confirmed that the Chair and Director had sent letters to CPCs regarding possible non-compliance from previous years and confirmed that responses had been received on some pending cases. The Secretariat once again referred to the document "Possible Infractions Reported by Governments as Under Investigation or Not Answered (2019–2023)," and reiterated the need to include more information to review the cases next year, as well as the need for CPCs to explain why cases remain under investigation or why they can be closed.

Regarding the categorization of non-compliance status and the follow-up action, it was noted that document COR-16 INF-A had been developed and would be discussed under agenda item 4b.

The Secretariat presented the priority areas of possible non-compliance, noting that the information to be included in the trends document was included in the Provisional Compliance Overview. The COR noted the absence of the trends document. In response, the Guatemalan delegation expressed disagreement with the Secretariat's solution and emphasized the need for a specific document. Therefore, the Secretariat was tasked with preparing and presenting a document on the review of trends in infractions at COR-17. Finally, the preparation of the capacity-building template was noted, as was the need to raise the issue with the Committee on Administration and Finance (CAF) and the Commission.

Following the Secretariat's presentation, the Committee requested that tangible results on outstanding tasks be provided for the next meeting, as well as updates on priority areas through the trends document and the automatization process.

5. Categorization of non-compliance status and follow-up actions

The COR discussed document COR16-INF-A, "Draft IATTC Categorization of Non-Compliance Status and Follow-Up Actions," which was prepared by the CPCs as part of the "Priority Elements of a Draft Work Plan for the COR" during COR-15. The delegations recognized the usefulness of the document as a starting point for deliberations. They provided extensive feedback on the categorization criteria and the assignment of severity levels for each case. They also discussed the possible subjectivity that could arise from the mitigation and aggravation criteria and the need to address terminological inconsistencies with resolutions and terminology adopted by the IATTC.

Some delegations expressed doubts about how the new system should be adjusted within the framework of the resolutions adopted by the IATTC, pointing out that the system proposes actions to be taken in the event of possible non-compliance, which would require modifying the relevant resolution. They emphasized the need for more time to review the system, given its relevance and complexity.

The COR demonstrated a strong commitment to developing a compliance promotion scheme and agreed to undertake intersessional work. To this end, the COR requested that the Chair, with the assistance of the Secretariat, prepare a document to be considered by the COR and define the timing of the intersessional work beginning sixty days after the conclusion of the current IATTC meeting cycle. There will be two rounds of correspondence consultations; during each round, CPCs will submit proposals and comments based on document COR-16 INF-A. The Chair will compile the comments and reactions received from the CPCs in a new document to be discussed at the next Special Biennial Meeting of the COR in 2026.

6. Compliance with IATTC measures in 2024

Mr. Ricardo Belmontes, of the Secretariat, presented the Provisional Compliance Overview based on document COR-16-02, summarizing the improvements in specific areas of compliance. He noted a general downward trend in possible non-compliance, pointing out specifically the reduction in silky shark retention and interaction with sea turtles, as well as the decrease in cases related to the deployment and activation of FADs, and compliance with bigeye and bluefin tuna catch limits.

He also pointed out the ongoing challenges in shark handling, observer coverage on longline vessels, and payment of financial contributions. Some delegations expressed concern about inaccurate and/or outdated information in certain sections of the document and the presentation. They emphasized the need to improve the clarity of the color coding in the general table to prevent misinterpretation and to distribute the documentation well before the meetings. To this end, the Secretariat received a series of specific recommendations for improving the presentation, including publishing it prior to the COR meeting for review, and including a general table of possible non-compliance, as well as consistently organizing the presentation of the overview and provisional draft compliance report.

The Secretariat acknowledged the comments and explained the challenges of compiling information received late. The Chair emphasized the importance of the Secretariat and CPCs adhering to the deadlines established in the IATTC resolutions.

7. Provisional Draft Compliance Report, 2024

The COR reviewed document COR-16-03, "Provisional Draft Compliance Report," using the methodology implemented since Resolution C-22-02 was adopted. The COR reviewed those cases identified by the Secretariat as "pending" on a case-by-case, resolution-by-resolution basis. The CPCs had the opportunity to report on the actions they took to resolve the pending situations and to clarify the cases they considered resolved.

At the start of the review, the Japanese delegation pointed out that paragraph 3 of Resolution C-24-02 regarding bluefin tuna sport fishing was omitted from the 2024 review. The Secretariat acknowledged the omission, and it was recommended to include it in next year's review.

Notably, numerous cases relating to Resolution C-24-01 were reviewed. Regarding processing plants, several delegations expressed the difficulties a flag State faces in ensuring that a processing plant in another jurisdiction provides the required information. Several delegations agreed on the need for improvement on this issue and that it should be reviewed at the Commission meeting.

Pending cases concerning the handling of sharks under Resolutions C-16-05 and C-23-07 (paragraph 3b) were reviewed. All the involved delegations reported that the cases were pending and under investigation, emphasizing the complexity of these types of investigations.

Regarding Resolution C-19-08 on observer coverage on longline vessels over 20 m LOA, the COR discussed what status should be assigned to cases where the CPC is argued to have taken actions to improve compliance, and whether the obligation applies only to the coverage percentage. The COR concluded that the statuses adopted in Resolution 22-02 pose interpretation difficulties for particular cases and should be reviewed.

The Committee noted the absence of Chile and Honduras, both of which had cases of possible non-compliance. Therefore, the Committee decided to leave the cases referring to these CPCs pending, noting the importance of their presence at COR meetings as a criterion for renewing their Cooperating non-Member status.

During the review of the cases, the Committee emphasized the need to update the possible statuses that can be assigned to different cases based on the CPCs' actions to resolve cases appearing in the draft as pending. The Committee also highlighted the interpretation difficulties when applying possible compliance statuses, especially when the CPC determines a situation of compliance or non-compliance. Additionally, the Committee requested that, for future reviews, the assigned statuses be consistent with those referred to in the Annex to Resolution C-22-02 or subsequent amendments.

The Secretariat noted the difficulties it faces when conducting the pre-evaluation due to ambiguous information received from the CPCs, and mentioned that CPCs sometimes request a specific compliance status in the draft. The Committee provided specific recommendations to improve and facilitate the review of the Provisional Draft Compliance Report, including updating the statuses that can be assigned and the assignment criteria contained in Resolution 22-02. The Committee also requested that the Secretariat include comments in the "Secretariat Comments" section when the information provided by the CPC is insufficient to support the Secretariat's determination of "Resolved" status, which would allow the Committee to review the case.

8. Review of unresolved cases of possible non-compliance (2019-2023)

The Chair explained the difficulties in conducting a meaningful review of these cases and noted that this had been partially discussed under agenda items 3 and 4. The Chair also reiterated the recommendation to the Secretariat to update the document on the password-protected compliance website with relevant information on each case. The Committee discussed the need for CPCs to send progress updates to the Secretariat to update the aforementioned document, and agreed to allocate sufficient time to review these pending cases at the next meeting of the COR in 2026.

9. Review of the IUU vessel list

Ambassador Jean-François Pulvenis, the Head of the IATTC's Policy and Compliance Division, presented document COR-16-06, "IUU Vessel List," and clarified the procedure for the prior nomination and inclusion of a Venezuelan vessel on the "Provisional IATTC IUU Vessel List," which had previously been nominated by Panama.

Panama informed the COR that, following a bilateral meeting with Venezuela on 26 August, the respective authorities had clarified the miscommunications, confirming that the vessel in question had received sanctions from Panama, as well as from its flag State, a fact of which Panama was unaware. Based on this new information, Panama formally withdrew its nomination of the Venezuelan vessel.

This case sparked a significant debate about the interpretation and implementation of Resolution C-19-02. There were differing views on the role of the Secretariat, including whether it should act as a "filter" to prevent the circulation of requests that do not comply with the deadlines set out in the resolution, such as the two-year reporting deadline, or if all nominations should be submitted to the COR for consideration.

As a result of this discussion, there was a general consensus on the need to review and amend Resolution C-19-02. The advisability of extending the deadline for submitting IUU fishing cases was discussed, as the current two-year deadline is deemed insufficient for the CPCs' internal identification procedures. Other CPCs pointed out that it is difficult to respond to possible identifications if the reporting deadline is too long. It was agreed that the relevant delegations should collaborate on a joint proposal clarifying the procedures, deadlines, communication mechanisms, and the Secretariat's role, with the intention of submitting a proposal amending the current resolution to the Commission for consideration. One delegation then requested that the Secretariat prepare a proposal to extend the deadline in Resolution C-19-02, to be presented at the Commission meeting.

10. Cooperating non-Members

The Secretariat reported that document COR-16-04, published on the meeting website, contained detailed information on the applicants, pursuant to Resolution C-07-02. The Chair requested that the COR consider the applications and recommend the renewal of the Cooperating non-Members to the Commission, noting the COR's decision on cases awaiting responses from Honduras and Chile.

The COR decided to refer the consideration and decision on the applications for renewal of status to the Commission, noting that the criteria for renewal include applicants' participation in the Committee and Commission meetings. The COR noted the absence of Chile and Honduras from the meeting, as well as the presence of Bolivia, Indonesia and Liberia. The COR also noted that there are pending cases from Honduras and Chile, which the Committee decided to keep pending in order to give the applicants an opportunity to clarify their situation at the Commission's annual meeting, with a view to renewing their status as Cooperating non-Members.

11. Other business

The United States delegation requested consideration of additional matters, beginning by expressing its concern about the lack of clarity in the Compliance Questionnaire regarding the communication of obligations that CPCs determine as "not applicable" to their activity. Particularly, emphasis was placed on the silky shark resolution, highlighting the need for improvement. To this end, the Committee reiterated in one of its recommendations that explanations should be provided when a CPC indicates that an obligation is not applicable, and that this should be included in future questionnaires.

Additionally, the United States expressed the opinion that a vessel exceeding its limit of active FADs in the previous year should be considered a very serious possible case of non-compliance, in line with previous discussions at the COR meeting.

Finally, with regard to financial matters, the powers of the COR to consider or not consider possible cases of non-compliance arising from CPC contribution responsibilities were discussed. This led to different

interpretations of the COR's functions under the Antigua Convention and the Terms of Reference of the Committee on Administration and Finance (Res. C-12-02). Due to time constraints, the Committee agreed to continue discussing these issues in the future, recognizing the importance of clarifying them.

12. Recommendations

The COR concluded its regular session on Wednesday, 27 August, at 6:00 p.m. and agreed to review the recommendations in an additional session. For that purpose, an additional session was held on Saturday, 30 August, during which the recommendations were adopted (see Appendix 2).

13. Adjournment

After reviewing and adopting the recommendations on Saturday, 30 August, the Chair thanked the delegations for their work and acknowledged the progress made and agreements reached. The COR officially adjourned its meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Appendix 1

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Appendix 2

Recommendations of the 16th meeting of the Review Committee (COR)

Recommendations to the Secretariat:

1. To update the document *Possible infractions reported by governments as under investigation or unanswered (2019-2023)* with information from the *Final Compliance Report* from the corresponding year, the Secretariat comments and CPC updates on the follow up actions, to facilitate the COR review. The Final Compliance Reports should be listed in chronological order in one part of the password protected compliance webpage.
2. To ensure that the *Provisional Compliance Overview* and the *Draft Provisional Compliance Report* are updated and comprehensively address the implementation of all conservation and management measures adopted by the Commission (e.g. Resolution 24-02 paragraph 3).
3. To include in the “Secretariat’s comments” section of the *Draft Provisional Compliance Report*, information on instances when a CPCs response is insufficient for the Secretariat to assign the status of “Resolved”.
4. To add a dropdown list that includes the different compliance statuses from Annex 2 in Resolution C-22-02, to the *Draft Provisional Compliance Report* worksheet to facilitate the COR review.
5. To include, as the first table in the *Provisional Compliance Overview*, an updated color-coded overview table of possible non-compliance cases like the one included in the presentation of the *Provisional Compliance Overview* at the COR16.
6. To ensure that the presentation on the *Provisional Compliance Overview* is posted on the password protected COR webpage fifteen days prior to the meeting and follows the same order as the *Provisional Compliance Overview* document.
7. To ensure strict adherence to the procedures and deadlines established in Resolutions adopted by the Commission to provide CPCs sufficient time for review of COR-related information and documentation. All data or reports submitted after the deadline shall be automatically reflected in the *Provisional Compliance Overview* and the *Draft provisional Compliance Report* as a “Not Resolved” and reviewed at the COR meeting.
8. To develop and present at the COR17, a document on the review of infraction trends, identifying the thematic areas and Resolutions that require special attention as identified in the *Priority elements of a draft Work Plan for the COR.[CAD]*
9. When the Secretariat notifies the CPCs of a possible infraction, and it becomes necessary to clarify the observer’s report, this shall be executed through an additional document attached to the report explaining the reason for the changes made as a result of the normal review process.
10. To ensure that purse seine observers from the observer program receive appropriate training to record accurate information on FAD material design, specifically for deployed FADs, noting that the COR has dealt with a large number of FAD material possible non-compliance cases in recent years.
11. To redact the vessel names in documents and reports that are displayed on screen and to virtual attendees during the COR meeting.
12. To ensure that the *Draft Provisional Compliance Overview* and the *Draft Provisional Compliance Report* provides information on the implementation by CPCs of obligations in relation to paragraph 3 of Resolution C-24-02 for sport catch of PBF by all CPCs.

Recommendations to the Committee:

13. Following the conclusion of the next COR meeting, to make public a summary of the *Final Compliance Report*, excluding confidential information, after ensuring sufficient time for review by the CPCs.
14. To conduct intersessional work to further develop the *Categorization of Non-Compliance Status and the Follow up Actions* document, using document COR16-INF-A as a basis. The Chair will lead this process, with the support of the Secretariat and seek input from all interested CPCs, to produce a document for discussion during the next special biennial meeting of the COR in 2026.
15. To ensure sufficient time is allocated for the specific point in the COR agenda in future years to review pending cases from previous years.
16. To review Resolutions and paragraphs provisionally marked “Resolved” in the Provisional Draft Compliance Report by the relevant CPC to ensure the status reflects COR consideration.

Recommendations to CPCs:

17. To ensure strict adherence to the procedures and deadlines established in Resolutions adopted by the Commission, in particular data submission, recalling that the delay submission of this information compromises the capacity of the Secretariat to prepare the relevant compliance reports and documents.
18. To provide the Secretariat with updates and information on the status or progress of outstanding possible non-compliance cases from the previous years where the CPC has stated that an investigation has started or for which the possible case of non-compliance is otherwise not marked as “resolved”.
19. To include in the *Standard questionnaire on compliance with IATTC resolutions* an explanation when assigning a “Non-Applicable (N/A)” or “Compliant” status to a given obligation. The online/automated version of the questionnaire, when available, should not allow submission unless such explanation is provided.

Recommendations to the Commission:

20. To consider the Cooperating Non-Member status renewal request of Bolivia, Chile, Honduras, Indonesia, Liberia, properly considering the absence of Honduras and Chile from the COR16 meeting and outstanding possible non-compliance cases for Honduras and Chile for the 2024 period.
21. To review and amend as appropriate, among others, paragraph 4 of Resolution C-19-02 to extend the period of the application of this provision, as well as to improve and clarify the process of elaboration of the IUU vessel list.
22. To amend Annex 2 of Resolution C-22-02 to:
 - a. Refine the definitions and criteria for all Possible Non-Compliance Issues Statuses to ensure objective and consistent application.
 - b. Introduce a distinct status of “non-compliant” to be assigned in instances where a possible non-compliance issue has been substantiated and confirmed.
23. To consider it a possible very serious non-compliance case if a vessel has exceeded its Active FAD Limit by a significant number or if a vessel is over its Active FAD limit for more than 10 days.