

**Statement to the 23rd Session of the Compliance Committee of the Indian Ocean Tuna
Commission
Male, 4th-6th May 2026**

The Pew Charitable Trusts welcomes the opportunity to participate as an observer in the 23rd Session of the Compliance Committee of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC). We appreciate the work of the Secretariat, Chair, and members to continue to convene the meetings of the CoC in a hybrid format.

As CPCs gather this year to review and assess their compliance and enforcement, we would like to share our views on several important aspects of the Commission compliance process and provide recommendations on steps CPCs can take to strengthen the work of the COC and help improve the capacity of Members to effectively engage in the review process.

1. Strengthen follow-up actions

Follow up actions are a key step in the compliance review process, as they are the mechanism to correct failures, deter future infractions, and ensure accountability for the management of shared fish stocks. After reviewing nine¹ RFMOs, we have identified five main elements related to follow-up action that are present across one or more of the RFMOs. To ensure those elements are in place and their follow-up action process is effective, all RFMOs should **1) agree to implement follow-up actions, 2) adopt a catalog of follow-up actions, 3) automatically assign follow-up actions based on the categories of non-compliance, 4) set timelines and require members to create an action plan, and then 5) monitor and assess members' responses.**

IOTC has taken many of these steps already, but based on a comparison between the Commission's current practices and the elements identified above, we recommend that:

- IOTC amend Annex A of Appendix V of the Rules of Procedure to add pre-agreed follow-up actions that would be automatically assigned in response to common non-compliance issues. This would ensure fair and even treatment of CPCs and reduce the burden on the Compliance Committee when making decisions.

¹ The nine RFMOs that were reviewed were the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna, the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean, the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas, the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission, the North Pacific Fisheries Commission, the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement, the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation, and the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission.

2. Implement changes to deter persistent partial non-compliance

At WPICMM09, there was a request for clarification on whether being identified as Partially Compliant in two consecutive years can lead to a Non-Compliant 2 assessment in the second year. To address this issue and add clarity and strengthen the compliance review process, we recommend that:

- IOTC should amend Appendix V of the Rules of Procedure to establish a process for escalating the status of persistent Partially Compliant cases, ensuring that such situations are managed appropriately according to their seriousness and that capacity assistance is considered where applicable.

3. Assess CPC capacity to engage in the CoC

To assist in assessing countries' capacity to effectively engage in the compliance process of the RFMOs where they are a member, including IOTC, we have produced a Capacity Self-Assessment Tool (CSAT) that was developed to help members self-identify their own human, technical and institutional needs and areas for capacity and capability improvements. The self-assessment tool was created for the internal use of individual RFMO members and none of the information entered in the tool is collected or shared with Pew or any other organization. However, members can use the results of this assessment to develop a list of priorities for capacity building, which may be helpful when seeking external financial and technical resources, and as an ongoing evaluation mechanism.

The CSAT PDFs, which are available in multiple languages, along with supporting materials, including a video that further explains the tool, can be found at pew.org/compliancecapacity.