



International Seed Testing Association

Secretariat, Zürichstrasse 50, CH-8303 Bassersdorf, Switzerland

Phone: +41 44 838 60 00 Fax: +41 44 838 60 01

Email: ista.office@ista.ch - <http://www.seedtest.org>

Document OGM15-02

Minutes of the Ordinary General Meeting 2014

Approved by OGM 18 June 2015

This document contains the draft Minutes of the Ordinary General Meeting 2014, published on the ISTA web site within two months following the Ordinary General Meeting as defined in the ISTA Articles.

If there are no comments requiring amendment to the minutes within the subsequent two month period, the minutes will be considered approved. If there are comments and the comments are accepted by the Executive Committee, then the minutes including the comments will be considered approved and published on the ISTA web site.

Any comments about these minutes will be considered at the Ordinary General Meeting 2015, to be held on 18 June at the Radisson Montevideo Victoria Plaza, Montevideo, Uruguay, under Agenda point 4. *Comments about the Minutes of the previous meeting.*

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The Ordinary General Meeting of the Association

[T001]

The ISTA President, Joël Léchappé (France) began the meeting by welcoming the Presidents and Directors of the international organizations who were present, the President of the National Organising Committee Valerie Cockerell, ISTA colleagues, and all others present.

He thanked Valerie Cockerell and her team for the Official Dinner the previous evening.

He then introduced Dr Kevin O'Donnell, the Deputy Director of Agriculture, Food and Rural Communities, and Head of Science and Advice for Scottish Agriculture (SASA)

[T002]

Dr O'Donnell formally welcomed ISTA on behalf of the Scottish Government. He mentioned the significance of 2014 as the year of the referendum for Scottish independence, and the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Official Seed Testing Station. He also mentioned the connection between science and agriculture in Scotland, and in particular its connection with ISTA, with two Past Presidents (Jock Thompson, 1971-1974, and Simon Cooper, 1995-1998), four Executive Committee members, Chairs and Vice-Chairs of a variety of committees, and two Honorary Members (Alison Powell and Ronnie Don).

The President presented Dr O'Donnell with a small gift in honour of Scotland's hosting of the Annual Meeting.

The President then introduced Mr. Lorne Watson, who gave a presentation on the seed sector in Scotland on behalf of Scottish industry and the Agricultural Industries Confederation of Scotland.

[T003]

This was followed by a presentation on the Scottish Seed Trade Association by its President, Mr Iain Eadie.

[T004]

1 Call to Order

[T005]

The President called the Meeting to order at 10:30 h.

2 President's Address

"Dear colleagues. I declare the Ordinary General Meeting 2014 open. Today is the last day of the official programme. It was preceded by the 7th Seed Health Symposium, with 100 participants from 32 countries and distinct economies. It will be followed by a Workshop on Sampling and Quality Assurance in Seed Sampling, which is organized by the ISTA Sampling Committee and SASA next week. As you already learned, this workshop is fully booked with 22 participants from 12 countries, and we wish every success with this workshop.

"I am very pleased to announce that there has been a total of 208 people attending this week all the meetings, from 54 countries and distinct economies. The Secretary General will come back later on how many Voting Delegates are in the room.

"I would like to bring you all the wishes from the Honorary Life President Attilio Lovato, and I would like to extend a very warm welcome to the international

organizations FAO, Wilson Hugo, ISF, Mr Michael Keller and Piero Sismundo, ISSS, Alison Powell, and from the regional organizations: ABRATES, José de Barros França Neto, AOSA, Dan Curry, APSA, Johan van Asbrouck, from the European Commission, Thomas Weber and Marco Mazzara, and ICARDA, Zewdie Bishaw. Welcome and thanks for coming to our meetings; it is very important for the Association to have you attending our meetings.

“There are many important matters to address during this Ordinary General Meeting, covering the statutory points on the agenda. Specific items will be presented on finance by Beni Kaufman, Accreditation by Rita Zecchinelli, in-house methods by Masatoshi Sato, and membership fees by Steve Jones. This last point is a point raised by consent of the Executive Committee under the agenda point 13.1.

This Ordinary General Meeting is the first Ordinary General Meeting in the term 2013-2016, and the Order of Business is as it appeared in the document OGM14-01, and as it will appear on the screen.

Agenda of the Ordinary General Meeting of the Association

1. Call to Order
2. President’s Address
3. Roll Call of Designated Members entitled to vote
4. Comments about the minutes of the previous meeting
5. Report of the Executive Committee
6. Report of the Secretary General
7. Fixation of annual subscriptions
8. Consideration and adoption of the proposed changes to ISTA Articles
9. Consideration and adoption of the proposed Rules Changes 2015
10. Consideration and adoption of reports
11. Announcement of the place and date for the next Ordinary General Meeting of the Association
12. Any other business raised by a Member, of which notice in writing has been received by the Secretary General at least two months prior to the date of the meeting
13. Any other business raised by consent of the Executive Committee
14. President’s closing address
15. Adjournment

“This is the agenda. As required by the Articles of the Association, the relevant documents were posted in April 2014 to the designated Authorities, all ISTA Members, all stakeholders and observer organizations. It was posted for information two months prior to the ISTA Ordinary General Meeting, and has been available on the ISTA web site. Please note that the roll call aimed at identifying the voting countries and distinct economies delegates will get the opportunity to test the electronic voting system, as it will replace the traditional red and green voting cards. After the roll call, the statutory agenda will be followed as usual. The topics will be presented and discussed for a vote, and the text to be voted will appear on the screen.

“The agenda points have been carefully prepared by the ECOM members together with the ISTA Secretariat. I would now like to ask the ECOM members and the Secretariat staff who are present in this room to stand, and I would like to thank them very much for their commitment and the exemplary standard of their work. Thank you very much to all of them.

“Should you have any questions, you are welcome to contact the Executive Committee members or the Secretariat staff.

“Now we start with the Secretary General, who will call the roll.”

3 Roll Call of Designated Members entitled to vote

The Secretary General, Dr Beni Kaufman:

“Good morning. I have here a list of all the official delegates verified and present. Please, when I call the name of your country and the name of the representative, if you can raise your hand. We’ll do the trial of the new voting system as a collective at the end of this process, further down the agenda.

Australia	Lindsay Cook
Austria	Andreas Ratzenböck
Belgium	Anja Ritserveldt
Brazil	Myriam Alvisi
Canada	Steve Jones
Chile	Luis Riveros Cuadra
Croatia	Sanja Špoljarić-Marković
Denmark	Hanne Kerl Poulsen
Estonia	Mari Jürmann
Finland	Leena Pietilä
France	Arnaud Deltour
Germany	Berta Killermann
Hungary	Zita Ripka
India	Rajendra Kumar Trivedi
Ireland	John Joe Byrne
Italy	Rita Zecchinelli
Japan	Masatoshi Sato
Latvia	Velta Evelone
Lithuania	Arvydas Basiulis
Luxembourg	Danielle Ruckert
Mexico	José Manuel Chavez Bravo
Netherlands	W. Joost van der Burg
New Zealand	Craig R. McGill
Norway	Birgitte Henriksen
Philippines	Ruel C. Gesmundo
Poland	Irena Gera
Republic of Korea	Eunhee Soh
Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu	Tso-Chi Yang
Serbia	Zorica Nikolic
Slovak Republic	Monika Holubicová
South Africa	Pamela Strauss

Sweden	Karin Sperlingsson
Switzerland	Annette Büttner-Mainik
Turkey	Mehmet Sahin
United Kingdom	Elizabeth Jane Taylor
United States of America	Ernest Allen
Uruguay	Cecilia Jones
Zimbabwe	Claid Mujaju

The Secretary General:

“This completes the roll call; we have altogether 38 representatives, which is more than the needed quorum of 26.”

4 Comments about the minutes of the previous Meeting

The Secretary stated that no comments had been received prior to the Meeting, and that the Minutes of the previous Meeting were hence approved.

At this point, the electronic voting system was tested. Since numerous keypads failed to function, it was decided to revert to using voting cards. Andrea Jonitz (Germany) and Karen Hill (Australia) were proposed as vote counters, which was approved by applause.

The Secretary General invited the President Joël Léchappé to present the report of the Executive Committee.

[T006]

5 Report of the Executive Committee

5.1 Executive Committee report

The President:

“According to the Articles of the Association, I am pleased to present the report of the Executive Committee. This report was prepared with the Executive Committee Members, and the full text is in the document OGM14-03 Activity Report of the ISTA Committees 2013, sent to the Members two months before the Ordinary General Meeting, that means in April. The Report focuses on the main achievements since the Meeting last year in Antalya. It will start with a review of the Strategy, followed by a summary of the work done by the ECOM. We will make review of the main achievements of the year, and goals for the coming period.

“As you can see, all regions of the world are represented by the ECOM members. Regarding the Strategy, the ECOM work is aimed at implementing the Strategy voted in 2013, for the triennium 2013-2016. The seven key areas of the Strategy are:

- Increase ISTA membership
- Maintain and develop the capacity of seed testing worldwide
- Promote harmonized Rules
- Review the audit process and the accreditation system
- Communication and dissemination of knowledge
- Strengthen the Scientific and Technical work in ISTA
- Management of ISTA affairs.

“The ECOM is organized in working groups to contribute to organize and manage the implementation of the Strategy. There are 6 ECOM working groups and 4 ISTA WG with contribution of ECOM members as described on the slide.

“The ECOM considers the communication and support to the Technical Committees as a priority. This is achieved by:

- The work of the liaison officers making the link between the TCOM and the ECOM
- Annual meetings with the TCOM Chairs
- The role of the TCOM coordinator
- Tools are made available to the Committees such as a financial support, web conferencing, and other electronic tools and documents.

And those tools are working.

“Nevertheless, there have been signs in recent years that some companies and state organizations have started to question the time spent by their employees on the work of ISTA. The cost of this work is also challenged by these companies and state organizations, and the Executive Committee is already considering this matter very carefully.

“The International Relations WG is chaired by Grethe Tarp. The work plan of the WG relates to the ISTA Strategy item, “maintain and develop the capacity of seed testing worldwide.” The Group has defined the international relation policy and started to implement it. The main goals are:

- Plan and manage the interaction of ISTA with other organisations involved in seed worldwide
- Manage ISTA’s representations to promote the association on an international basis
- Initiate and strengthen collaborations and build on synergies with other entities (FAO, ISF, OECD, UPOV, AFSTA, AOSA, ASTA, ESA, EU, etc.)
- Promote the interests of the seed testing community

More details are in the written report.

“The management and finances WG is chaired by Steve Jones. The goals are:

- Ensure the implementation of the strategy
- Analyse the finances (presentation will be made by Secretary General today)
- Ensure the membership fees are clearly defined (presentation to be made by Steve Jones later today).

“The Publications WG, chaired by Craig McGill, focused on the electronic publication of the Rules, which are now available online. The WG has also discussed how best to facilitate the translation and publication of the Rules and other ISTA publications into other languages. This opens new perspectives on how to facilitate the publication of translations, and also whether or not ISTA can decrease the costs for ease and breadth of use.

“The Review of Accreditation WG is a wider WG with members from the Designated Authorities of New Zealand and Australia, ISF, ECOM members and the ISTA Secretariat. It is chaired by Rita Zecchinelli. The aim is to answer the motion voted on by the Membership in 2012. Members were consulted via questionnaires. Two separate questionnaires have been sent to the DAs and members. The results will be presented by Rita soon after this presentation. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for answering the questionnaires.

The work of the Events and Meetings Working Group, chaired by Berta Killermann, working together with the National Organizing Committees, is to oversee the

organization and cost of meetings. Cost and participation fees are becoming a major issue which need the attention of the ECOM. The next coming Annual Meetings are the Annual Meeting in Uruguay next year, and Estonia in 2016.

The task of the Articles of the Association WG, chaired by Craig McGill, is to examine the Articles of the Association, to keep them in line with the developments and needs. This year, a change proposal is submitted to vote to change the “corporate membership” category to “industry membership”. This will be discussed later on today. The aim is to give better opportunities to the industry to participate and contribute into ISTA. More information will be provided for discussion before the vote today.

The In-House Methods Working Group: since the 2013 Congress, the introduction of in-house methods for germination testing has been looked in depth by a working group, co-chaired by Joost van der Burg (Netherlands) and Masatoshi Sato from Japan representing the Executive Committee. This Working Group includes members from the ECOM, TCOMs, ISF and the Secretariat. Its goal was to prepare a paper to present views both for and against the concept of in-house methods in germination testing. The ECOM, after considering closely the arguments of the Working Group, determined a position which will be presented this morning by Masatoshi Sato and Joost van der Burg.

In this slide are summarized the main achievements of the year 2013 and the ongoing work carried out by the ECOM:

- Beni Kaufmann was recruited and took the position of Secretary General in July
- The analysis of finances made progress and contributes to building a policy on allocation of resources versus expenses.
- The support to the Technical Committees has been strengthened
- The review of the accreditation system progressed with the questionnaire
- International policy has been put into force
- Rules were made available electronically online
- Industry involvement into ISTA’s work is being encouraged
- Membership fees are kept stable

At least that’s the proposal for today; we will come back to that later on.

- The in-house methods question comes to a decision today.

The main goals for the coming period are:

- Elaboration of a pricing and translation policy for the ISTA Rules
- Upgrade, including a redesign of the website
- Explore the use of electronic certificates
- Clarify membership fees regarding the question of late payment
- Continue to support the work of the TCOMs
- Encourage development of seed science and new technologies in ISTA labs
- Promote ISTA, define a campaign for promoting ISTA and “recruit a marketing person”

“I am very grateful for the contribution from the Technical Committees, the Secretariat, the Members of the Association and the ECOM members .

“Thank you for your attention; I am ready for questions.”

There being no questions about the Report, the vote to approve the Report was taken. The Report was approved with 38 votes in favour.

The Secretary General then invited ECOM member Rita Zecchinelli (Italy) to present the report of the Accreditation Review Working Group.

[T007]

Accreditation review

Rita Zecchinelli (Italy):

“I’m going to present to you the work done in the framework of the review of the ISTA Accreditation system project, and in particular we’re going to share with you some of the results of the questionnaires that were distributed in the last months. As you may remember, during the Ordinary Meeting 2012, the Membership of ISTA approved a motion that was presented by the ECOM together with the Designated Authorities of New Zealand and Australia. This motion had the aim to propose a review of the audit process, in order to improve its cost-effectiveness. During the Meeting of last year in Antalya we presented two questionnaires, one addressed to the ISTA laboratories, the other to the Designated Authorities. A month later, the questionnaires were distributed, the responses were received and analysed. This work was done by a Working Group, where we have people representing ISTA, the seed industry, and the Designated Authorities of New Zealand and Australia.

“Going to the questionnaires, they had the aim:

- To identify the needs of ISTA Members and stakeholders
- To collection information concerning other accreditation systems
- To evaluate the ISTA accreditation system, with the final aim to develop proposals to review this system if necessary.

“The evaluation of the answers we received was not an easy job, because we could derive from this evaluation a lot of figures, and it is not easy to summarize these results. The time available today does not allow to go into all the details, but let’s say that we wanted to provide a comprehensive feedback to all of you. So you will find this presentation with much more figures than I will explain today on the web site with all the other presentations that have been given during this Meeting. Maybe you won’t be able to see all the figures, all the small numbers or words, but we try to find a compromise about these two aims.

“Starting from the questionnaire that was addressed to the laboratories, the slide gives you a picture about the participants. I think that this questionnaire can be considered successful. We received answers from more than half of the ISTA laboratories: 106 out of 202, from 70 % of the ISTA-accredited labs (81 out of 120), and from laboratories based in more than 80 % of the ISTA countries and distinct economies. These laboratories belonged to all types of labs, governmental, private and company labs.

“Again here, more figures about the participants. I want to underline that it is interesting that 46 out of 81 labs that are accredited with ISTA are also accredited with another accreditation body: 29 of those based on ISO17025, 19 based on other standards, mainly national standards.

“The participants come from different parts of the world.

“The questionnaires were divided into sections. After the first, collecting information about the participants, the second tried to address the identification of the needs of the laboratories. It’s not surprising to see that for most of the participants there is a very important need to be accredited by ISTA in order to issue ISTA certificates. This is true for 78 % of the labs. For some laboratories (this is maybe a figure that we didn’t know before), 43 % of these labs, ISTA accreditation is needed because it is requested either by the national authority or by the company or institute the laboratory belongs to.

“For ISTA it’s nice to see that most of the laboratories think that ISTA accreditation is the most important recognition for a seed testing lab, and it’s also prestigious. It is also interesting to note that more than 50 % of the labs that are accredited by ISTA

and at least also another accreditation body would be more happy to be accredited by only one accreditation body.

“So, what is mostly appreciated in the ISTA accreditation system? I would say that the Proficiency Test Programme is very, very popular; 94 % of the labs like it, and this is also confirmed in the third part of the questionnaire we are speaking about a little bit later. There are other reasons to appreciate the ISTA accreditation system. One is the competence of the ISTA auditors (and I thank you on behalf of the group of the auditors), and there are also other reasons for appreciation, maybe more abstract reasons, such as that the ISTA accreditation system is focused on seed testing, that it is a way to be part of a community of seed testing laboratories, that the laboratories are receiving support from the Association. Also the possibility to be accredited for the performance-based approach method is something that is appreciated by many laboratories.

So, what is not appreciated in ISTA: as a general statement, 52 % of the participants state that they have no reasons to criticize the ISTA accreditation system, and 27 % say that they have some reason. The remaining part either did not give any answer or say, we neither agree or disagree. So what are these reasons? The costs are a concern for 52 labs out of 106, that means 49 %. There are some other reasons of concern. One is the frequency of the audits, that is not appreciated by 28 labs (26 % of the participants). Another reason is the way the auditors conducted; this not appreciated by 12 labs (11 %). As far as the costs are concerned, we wanted to see if there are differences between the different areas of the world, or the different types of laboratory, governmental or private. There are not big differences between governmental and private labs or company laboratories. There are maybe more differences looking at the figures related to the area of the world; we have to note that the number of labs from each is not the same, so this should be also evaluated looking at these figures.

“In general, the ISTA accreditation system is widely recognized; this is the opinion of 90 % of the participants; 19 laboratories (18 %) think that the ISTA accreditation system is not recognized as equivalent to other accreditation systems.

“Going to the third part of the questionnaire: this was aimed to collect some feedback from the direct experience of the audited laboratories. We think that as a general overview, the feedback is good. You can maybe look later on at these figures.

“For the important question related to feedback about the link between the audit programme and the Proficiency Test Programme: for the purpose of ISTA audits, 80 laboratories (75 %) think that the PT results should be taken into greater consideration. 64 laboratories (60 %) agree, and 35 laboratories (33 %) disagree, that laboratories with low PT ratings should be audited more frequently. What is difficult to evaluate is that most of the labs also do not expect that laboratories having low PT ratings will have a larger number of nonconformities during an audit, or the other way around, laboratories having high PT ratings, showing to be very good, will have fewer nonconformities. This is something that is not really easy to put together and to evaluate.

“Looking at the frequency of the ISTA audits, you know that in our system today we have one audit every three years. 75 laboratories (71 %) are happy about the current frequency, and 26 laboratories (25 %) of the total number are not happy. The happy labs, let's say, are distributed in all the areas, and when we asked laboratories accredited to more than one system to compare the frequency of the ISTA audits with the frequency of the other audits, we had this reply: 20 laboratories state that ISTA audits are less frequent; 15 labs say that the frequency is the same, and 10 laboratories say that ISTA audits are more frequent than the others.

“At the end of the questionnaire we also gave the possibility to submit suggestions or comments. We tried to group somehow the suggestions and comments, and some of them are addressed to differentiate the fees. For example, tailoring the fees based on the species or the country, or the scope of accreditation, the size of the laboratory, the number of certificates that are issued, the type of organization the laboratory belongs to, and also the possibility or not to use the results of other audits. Someone also suggested that laboratories that are preparing on a voluntary basis the proficiency test

rounds should pay a lower fee. Someone suggested instead of having a large fee every three years, to distribute this fee in each of the three years. Other suggestions were more focused on reviewing the system. Someone suggested to group the audits in the same region, something that ISTA is already trying to do as far as it is possible. Someone suggested to change the frequency of the audits for all the laboratories or only the “good” or “bad” labs, or only for “old” labs, i.e. all laboratories accredited for a long time. Then we have the suggestion to use more the proficiency test results to confirm the proficiency of the laboratory and to use more desk or video audits. And then to differentiate the organization, for example to commit audits to local independent bodies, or to organize the audits with one or two days or with one or two auditors, depending on what is more cost-saving. And there are other suggestions.

“Some other participants suggested in addition to reduce the costs, somehow to add benefits, to make the audit and the audit fee more valuable. For example, to include a number of certificates in the audit fee, or to provide a check list of requirements that are requested by the auditors, or to allocate time during the audit to receive questions from the laboratory.

“Going to the second questionnaire, the one addressed to the Designated Authorities, looking at the numbers and the percentage of the answers, it was not as successful as the one addressed to the laboratories. We received a total of 16 answers out of the 71 Designated Authorities we had in 2012 (23 %). We had responses from all the areas of the world.

“If we look at the needs of the DAs, we can see that 13 out of 16 Designated Authorities state that ISTA accreditation is necessary in order to issue the ISTA certificates. 6 Designated Authorities state also that ISTA accreditation is requested by the law, and these Designated Authorities are from Europe (4) and Africa (2). 14 Designated Authorities believe that ISTA is the most important recognition for a seed laboratory, or another group that is very prestigious, and 2 of them state that it is necessary for a seed-testing laboratory to be accredited both by ISTA and another body. Four think that ISTA accreditation is not necessary at all.

“What is appreciated by the Designated Authorities: again, the Proficiency Test Programme is appreciated by the DAs as well as the focus that our system has on seed testing and also the support that is given by the Association to the Member Labs.

“Which concerns do the DAs have: The costs are a concern for 8 DAs out of 16, so again 50 %, and 7 of them agree that the ISTA accreditation system at the same time gives good value for the costs. One of the Designated Authorities think that ISTA Accreditation is expensive compared to other systems.

“As far as the PT Programme is concerned, again in this case it is not very easy to have a clear picture of the opinions. 14 Designated Authorities say that Proficiency Test results should be taken into greater consideration for the purpose of ISTA audits. 11 of them think that laboratories having low proficiency test ratings should be audited more frequently than laboratories having higher ratings. But at the same time, not all of them expect that laboratories with low PT ratings will have a larger number of nonconformities, or that laboratories with high PT ratings will have a smaller number of significant nonconformities.

“As well as the laboratories, the Designated Authorities provided some suggestions and comments. Again, we tried to group them somehow. Some are the same that had already been seen for the laboratories, for the first questionnaire; but we have some others too. So for example, for Designated Authorities: we should decrease the audit frequency if we don't have disputes or complaints regarding the certificates, that the laboratory has issued. A Designated Authority suggests the use of the financial tool to increase the transparency of the fees, and this is something I hope we could start to address, and it will be shown later on in the Report of the Secretary General.

“Also in this case, we received some suggestions to add benefits, so some Designated Authorities think that the audits should be also a learning occasion for the lab; the audits should be conducted in the local language (for example Spanish). Some other suggested to add new kinds of Proficiency Test to cover the whole set of ISTA

methods. Other suggested to enlarge the possibility to be accredited only for sampling for no-laboratory institutions.

So, having received these answers, we think that there are some issues that we should focus on or discuss more. One of these is, most of the laboratories (75 %) think that the frequency of the ISTA audits that we have today (one in three years) is appropriate. The question is, should we continue to discuss this item or this issue? Most laboratories think also that the Proficiency Tests should be taken into greater consideration, but then we have seen that there are some contradictions with other expectations, and so: how to deal with these results? Costs are a concern for at least half of the laboratories, so how can we address these needs. One of the aims of the questionnaire was also to compare the ISTA accreditation system with others. We didn't succeed too much on this because we received only very few answers, that were difficult to be analysed. So are we still interested in this, or not? If we are, are the ISTA labs that are accredited also on the base of other standards ready to provide more information to help us in this task?

“Our Working Group will continue the work, because we had the goal to provide some proposal for changing, and so we will continue to focus also after your opinion, if you can provide it, about the fees, about the audit frequency, about the organization; this is one point; and the other point is to see if there is any possibility to improve the recognition of the ISTA accreditation system, for example to have a mutual recognition between ISTA and ISO, and make some benefits of the audits performed by the other.

“At the end, maybe to stimulate some discussion or questions, we have prepared a couple of slides with just ideas coming from the suggestions that have been provided by some participants. So for example in this case, there is a possible reconstruction of the fees, and in order to avoid having a large fee every three years, to split this fee as a yearly fee. We see some benefits from this kind of change, because it avoids to have a large fee every three years, and also by the point of view of the management of ISTA it could be a good change to reduce the yearly variation that is caused by the different number of audits that there are in different years. We don't know that this could be an issue for some labs

“Another possibility is to try to tailor the fees based on the scope and, of course, to have a larger fee for a laboratory having a larger scope. Here, we see some risks that are connected to this possible change. Will laboratories stay with their current scope of accreditation if they could save money by removing tests from the scope? We know very well that for not all the tests that are in the scope of accreditation laboratories in reality issue report results on ISTA certificates; these tests could be removed from the scope. And of course such a decision could need more administration in the Secretariat. So I do not know if such a decision could at the end be really useful in the end to be more cost effective. So, before taking these decisions, we should look at them very carefully.

“I thank you for your attention, I thank you for replying to the questionnaire, as already the President did, and I think the floor is open”

The President:

“Thank you very much, Rita, for this presentation. That was a lot of work to look at the questionnaires. That's only part of the information, and it was very difficult to summarize. The idea was on one part to summarize, and on the other part to report to you all the main ideas that have been exchanged. It is obvious that there were many, many ideas, and that it was not an easy task for the Working Group. Special thanks to Rita and Rasha El-Khadem for having summarized and trying to propose main goals for the near future, and the proposals to go step by step. One of the first steps proposed, as you have seen, is to look at the structure of the Membership fees. That would be one step, but there are more steps to come. So we would like first to ask you if you have any questions, comments on this presentation?

“All this analysis will be on the web site, you will have the opportunity to look at it.”

Rita Zecchinelli:

“If I may add something: together with Rasha we were thinking also – this is not discussed within the ECOM, but I think you will agree (I hope so) – that there is a possibility also to publish in Seed Testing International some of the results of the questionnaires.”

The President:

“Do you agree in principle that the first step is to look at the structure of the fees? Can we ask you to raise your hands just to say whether you agree that it would be the first step for the Working Group? If you are in favour of looking at the structure of the fees, please raise your hand

“Those who are against the review of the structure of the fees, please raise your hand.

[T008]

“Who doesn’t have any opinion on this revision?”

“Thank you for this opinion; it gives some advice for the Working Group to continue the work. I thank again very much the Working Group for the work done.

The next presentation will be done by Masatoshi Sato on behalf of the Working Group on In-house methods. May I call on the stage Joost van der Burg from the Netherlands, who co-chaired with Masatoshi this Working Group.”

Masatoshi Sato:

“Good morning, everybody. I would like to make a presentation about the work of the Working Group on In-house Methods.

“During the recent ISTA Annual Meeting, it has been suggested that ISTA stops carrying out the time-consuming task to validate additional methods for species for which there are already several methods existing, and could even consider reducing the number of methods prescribed in the Rules. ISTA alternatively could allow in-house methods to be validated and accepted which are used for special purposes, especially in laboratories of seed companies, but not for certification, or official seed control and trading.

“Regarding in-house methods: during the ISTA Annual Meeting in Venlo (NL) in 2012, ISTA held a discussion on in-house germination methods. Considering that background, a side meeting took place to install a Working Group on in-house methods, during the Congress in Antalya, Turkey, 2013. The participants of this meeting were the 14 persons shown on the screen. During this meeting an Working Group on In-House Methods in germination test was established.

“The members of the Working Group are: Cheryl Dollard, Sylvie Ducourneau, Rasha El-Khadem, Andrea Jonitz, Berta Killermann, Jean-Louis Laffont, Joël Léchappé, Masatoshi Sato (Co-chair from ECOM), Piero Sismondo, Marcel Toonen, Joost van der Burg (Chair of the Working Group).

“We discussed and added opinions from each within the Working Group, and agreed on a document as a discussion paper. This discussion paper has been produced by the Working Group, and aims at presenting all arguments in favour and against the concept of in-house methods in germination. This paper was presented to the Executive Committee, and served to discuss this issue further and in a wider context in due time.

“First, the Working Group agreed on some definitions. Variables are: temperature, substrate, water and so on. “Method” is a combination of variables. “ISTA method” is a combination of variables as described in the ISTA Rules. “In-house method” is a combination of variables not prescribed in the ISTA Rules and developed in one or more laboratories. “Validated in-house method” is an in-house method which confirmed not to have significant differences from the ISTA method by an in-house validation study. Results of the validated in-house methods are seen to be equivalent to the results of ISTA methods.

There are arguments in favour or against the concept of in-house methods. As comment of pros:

- ISTA serves the industry better by allowing in-house methods for issuing ISTA Certificates;
- innovation of methods in ISTA laboratories is stimulated because their application becomes more likely;
- more laboratories may be interested to join ISTA and become accredited to issue Certificates;
- Some of these methods, if shared, may be interesting for ISTA to consider in future;
- In-house methods will be used during the regular PT rounds. These PT rounds may obtain more consistent results because the laboratories are using their preferred method.

“Before going to the cons, I would like to give some information. Regarding validation: instruction must be developed on how to perform a correct validation, including the statistical requirement to be able to assess accuracy, repeatability and reproducibility. On Reporting: the Germination Committee requested to make a statement like “The germination method used in-house methods validated by comparison with an ISTA standard method” and suggested that the germination conditions shall be reported. On Proficiency Tests: in-house methods, if used routinely, must be used during PT rounds. At audits: auditors must be able to verify the soundness of the validation. The laboratory should indicate to the auditors that the preferred method is an in-house validated method and provide them with the related documents prior to audit. The fact that a laboratory has validated in-house methods could be added to the scope of accreditation.

On the other hand, there are arguments against the concept of in-house methods:

- There is no transparency, because in-house methods may be secret and no details of the method need to be reported on the ISTA Certificate. There is increasing auditors’ work to verify in-house methods.
- Allowance of secret in-house method would add additional and invisible diversity.
- No increased uniformity directly by further standardisation, because ISTA would have no longer an overview on germination tests used in laboratories.
- Laboratories will be confused and no longer know what is meant with ‘the ISTA Rules’.
- No longer any need to develop the Rules: why should ISTA members work on the improvement of Table 5A, which is no longer used?
- Losing ground as a standardizing organization: possessing standardized methods is the major pillar of the success of ISTA. The approach of in-house methods is strengthening individual laboratories, but not the Association.
- No need for a performance-based approach: there were good reasons for GMO testing to introduce the performance-based approach, that is based on in-house methods. Do we have a similarly difficult situation in the germination test?

“Consequences of the pros: the ECOM decides to further develop the approach of in-house methods in germination testing, and decides how this will be discussed with a broader audience in order to improve the proposal and to see if sufficient support for allowing in-house methods exists to prepare proposals for Rules changes. If the principle is accepted, a special set of Rules must be developed and proposed to the Ordinary General Meeting.

“Consequences of the cons: the ECOM stops all activities regarding in-house methods in germination testing. The ECOM starts a concerted action with the goal to establish an efficient procedure for reviewing Table 5A, to encourage new approaches in germination testing, and to develop an efficient system for including new methods and new principles of germination testing into the ISTA Rules.

“Taking into account the document prepared by the In-house Working Group, the ECOM carefully discussed and considered the arguments of the Working Group during the ECOM Meeting in February this year, and made a decision:

1. The balance between the current ISTA practice of only including new methods in the Rules after validation should continue.
2. The demand to include in-house methods for germination into the Rules was not accepted.
3. The work on in-house methods did not need to continue.

“On the other hand, the ECOM recognized that there are two main questions that led to the establishment of the working group on In-house methods. These were:

- The increasing numbers of requests for validation of new substrates. The ECOM encourages the Germination Committee to consider all such requests, and determine if it is practical to follow them up. The Germination Committee is welcome to contact the ECOM liaison officer for further guidance on this topic.
- The request from the seed sector for changes to the germination methods to meet their specific needs (e.g. an usable plant test).

“The ECOM recognizes that there is an issue that needs to be addressed, and the ECOM also takes appropriate actions.

“The ECOM appreciates very much all members of the Working Group on In-house Methods for their efforts, in particular Joost van der Burg, the Chair of the Working Group, for his hard work. And also thanks to the ISTA Secretariat and the ECOM members. Thank you very much.”

The President asked for comments or questions.

David Johnston (Monsanto, USA):

“My only question would be on the last point where there was a question by the industry to look at using the Germination Committee to address the usable plant test. To me, that’s far more in the Vigour Committee, and not a germination test.”

The president:

“Could we come back to the slide: just check whether it was mentioning Germination Committee... No, that’s a general statement saying that the ECOM will consider how to address the demands, and then it will be forwarded to the appropriate Committee.

“May I ask Joost to take the floor?”

Joost van Burg (Netherlands):

“Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You realize we’ve had a lot of discussion on this subject, and I appreciate very much the way the ECOM and the general audience has participated in the discussion, so we really have had the opportunity to discuss this issue thoroughly. And I’m also happy with the fact that this issue has now been brought into light, and that there is a recommendation for the Germination Committee to look more carefully at all kinds of requests for new methods, and hopefully also will find the time to reduce the number of alternative methods in the present Rules, which some of them have a historical reason, and may not even be used at the present time. Thank you very much.”

The President:

“Regarding the last point about the needs of the industry: there will be a link to this point later this afternoon regarding the proposed change to the Articles. The last point presented by Masatoshi will find its first proposal to be addressed with the agenda point on the proposal to have a industry membership category scheduled this afternoon.

“I propose now to close this agenda point, to thank again the Working Group, and to move on to the next agenda point. The next Agenda point is the report of the Secretary General.”

[T009]

6 Report of the Secretary General

The Secretary General, Dr Beni Kaufman:

“This is the report of the year 2013. I want to draw your attention to the fact that the whole Secretary General’s Report is actually online, and what will be presented is highlights or different specific points, and if you want the whole thing, you can find it.

“What will be addressed are the following points. I’ll be talking about the Secretariat; changes in the Membership in the last year; some points regarding Accreditation; our workshops and training programmes; publications; the finances of the Association will not be touched in this presentation, those I refer to the one that is coming after that; and at the end there will be obviously the acknowledgements. So if I start with the Secretariat, and before I go into the changes and the report itself, I want to make the point, and give wishes to Miss Muschick. I think she was involved in all the Annual Meeting in this format since they were beginning. She has a health problem, and we want to wish her from here the best wishes and a fast recovery. We definitely are missing her.

“And with that, in the year 2013 we had some personnel changes. Martina, our Event Organizer, left, and Axel, our Finance and Office Administrator as well; also since it is mentioned, at the end of the year and during this year also we no longer have the office assistants Steffi and Julia, who some of you I’m sure know.

“This is the structure of the Secretariat today. We are from an operational point of view, and the hierarchical point of view, three different units. The Administration Unit, which is headed by Patricia and includes Agnes, Cannice and two new participants, Sejal and Olga, who you have already met. The Accreditation and Technical Department, headed by Rasha and includes Branka and Florina, the system auditors. Nadine, the TCOM Coordinator, and Jonathan, the Publications Specialist are now reporting directly to me.

“In the year 2013, in addition to making these structural changes, there was an emphasis put on improving the environment in the Secretariat; that meant changes to the physical environment. Then we also had some team-building activities and some social activities. This was supposed to be working towards better work environment for all; we like to go willingly to work and more efficient. To increase efficiency we also introduced the Baseline, which is a document that drives all our routine work and governs this routine, because this is an important component of the Secretariat, we introduced personal goals, and we hope that all this will bring to a higher efficiency and better work.

“Regarding Membership: so, at the end of 2013 the number of Member Laboratories was 212. This number includes two laboratories that were reinstated. Six Member Laboratories left us, but ten new have joined during 2013. Obviously I make the point that these numbers are again true to the end of December of 2013; We had positive changes since then. Nevertheless, by the end of the year, these are the ten new laboratories that joined us; you have them listed in front of you, from Bosnia and Herzegovina, from Brazil, China, Germany, Japan, India, Sudan and Ukraine.

“As far as Personal Members goes, the number of Personal Members at the end of the year is 47; 4 new Personal Members joined us during the year; Margus Friedenthal, who is a member of the ECOM, he is involved in the organization of the next Congress in 2016, then three more as you can see listed. Associate Members: we had 50 at the end of the year, and there’s quite a few that joined us. And if we’re looking at the trend, the changes in the Membership in the last few years, you can in this slide that the Personal Members are relatively stable, and the new category of Associate Membership actually grew in popularity. I think actually the trend will continue this year as well.

“Another Membership item is that in 2013, Alison Powell was recognized as an Honorary Member of the Association. She joins the previous Honorary Life Members

Dr Juliana Banyai, Ronald Don, Norbert Leist, and we also have an Honorary President, Attilio Lovato.

The number of voting countries or distinct economies for the Association by the end of the year is 63 Members, and you can their distribution by the green highlighted areas of the world.

“Moving to the Accreditation Programme: Rasha had given a presentation about this earlier, so I’m just going to highlight a few items. The first one is the Proficiency Tests. There were three ordinary Proficiency Test rounds during the year, and one vigour Proficiency Test. You see the high number of participants throughout. During the year there were three reports sent to participating laboratories, as well as some reports of seed health proficiency tests. Yes, I chose here two slides that represent what I want to point out. The point that I want to show is that, as you can see, the level of proficiency within the accredited laboratories is very high; if you’re looking at the As and Bs here, it brings it high into the nineties. And an important addition point is if we compare the rating in the PTs between the accredited laboratories and non-accredited laboratories, you see that overall, the accredited laboratories have a better performance. And I think this says something in favour of the accreditation programme.

“2013 was a very busy year for our auditors, altogether 51 accreditation audits and visits were carried out. Out of these 51, for 8 laboratories, this was the first accreditation audit, and you see them listed, two were in China, one in Italy, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Russian Federation and United States. 13 laboratories were accredited under the performance-based approach.

All in all, there were at the end of the year 127 accredited laboratories, coming from 59 countries, and you see the distribution within this pie graph.

“I was asked to point to the fact that this scale here is going from 65 to 130, so there’s no intent to blow this up, but the point still is showing that there is an increase in the number of ISTA accreditation over the last few years. So if we concentrate only on the last four years, the number increased by 7 laboratories.

“Moving to sales of ISTA Certificates: a topic tightly connected to accreditation, a nice total of 158 000 Certificates were sold by the end of year. This may represent a decrease compared to 2012, but 2012 was an off year, because the change of price of the Certificates brought a surge for people rushing to buy them still at the old price. So if you’re comparing 2013 to 2011, you see that actually there is an increase in the number of Certificates sold.

“Training and Education programmes: In 2013 there were 7 workshops held on various seed testing subjects. The workshops were held in different parts of the world: Denmark, Turkey, Switzerland, New Zealand. There were some novelties this year: in December there was a Quality Assurance workshop that was held in the Secretariat. That was an advanced QA, and it was a very successful experience, and we’ll try to recreate it this year, and I guess in the years to come. This workshop was organized by Ronnie and Rasha. There were 25 participants from 17 different countries. It included practical exercises and lectures, and the focus of the lectures was on the process of internal audits, and the participants performed internal audits in groups. Calibration and verification of equipment was the technical focus. If you’re interested, as I said, this will be repeated.

“Moving on to Publications and publication products: in 2013 there was a big effort put forward by the Publications Working Group and our Publication Specialist, Jonathan, to move from the hard copy Rules to the electronic Rules. This effort included all kinds of technical parts to the appearance of the Rules themselves; resizing the page size, changing the layout, and that culminated in the Rules that were successfully put online electronically at the beginning of 2014. In addition, Chapters 1, 2 and 7 are available for non-members at no cost. Some were available earlier, now we have three full chapters that are available to all. Of course, ISTA Members are able to download and print as many copies of the Rules or individual chapters as they wish, and that is yet another change that the electronic publication brings, the fact that you can get only, or print only chapters of interest.

“Sales of the Rules: you can see that 2013 was pretty steady compared to the previous year. Maybe altogether the trend is of some decline, and we are very curious to see how that will look like at the end of this year, which will be the first year of the electronic version. Altogether, we sold 351 copies of publication products. This includes the Rules, as I mentioned, and SST. Regarding SST, in 2013, there were 236 papers submitted. Out of these, 49 were accepted for publication, and they came out in three different issues. 300 of each issue were printed, and these went to 177 subscriptions. This publication, as you all know, is available to all ISTA Personal Members and staff of ISTA Member Laboratories.

“With that, I’m getting to the acknowledgments, and again I would ask all the ISTA Secretariat people to stand up, please. I want to acknowledge the work. I think that much of the work that we’re doing, is behind the scenes, but some people will tell you otherwise, but I let you know that this is what keeps the Association going.

I also want to acknowledge the help and the leadership of the ISTA Executive Committee, and obviously, above all, to you, who are the bosses of us all. Thank you.”

The President:

“Before we come to the questions, I would like to mention something which doesn’t appear in this report and was not obvious in the Executive Committee report; it is that the Secretary General is part of all the Executive Committee Working Groups, all the groups which are in ISTA. So that is to be added to the report. Thank you very much, Beni.”

Since there were no question or comments, the President proposed to proceed to the approval of the Secretary General’s Report. The report was approved with 38 votes to zero.

Cost Analysis of ISTA Business Areas

[T010]

The Secretary General:

“This is the third part from the Secretary General’s Report, addressing the finances of the Association for the year 2013. I’m going to present this in two parts. In the first part I’ll give an overview of the finances in the form of the balance sheet, and this is pretty close to what was given to some degree in previous years. The second part will focus on the financial tool, so I will be reminding you what the financial tool is, and we’ll look at business areas year over year, and look at selected processes. The vote will not be part of the presentation; it will come later.

“If I move to the balance sheet view of our finances at the end of 2013: this first slide is capturing the income. You can see that the main source of the Association income is the annual membership of you all. I hope you are able to see the different parts of this table. I’m not going to go over every number, and again I remind you that all this is published on the Internet, if you want to be able to look at each cell independently. All in all, if we’re looking at subscriptions of sorts, you can see that there is a slight decline compared to the previous year, but I think it is relatively steady. If we go into service centres, that is the sales of the Rules, money that is coming from non-member participants of PTs, GMO PTs, monies coming from workshops, subscriptions of SST and so forth; again, slight decline relative to last year, but all in all, the number at the end of 2013 was close to 2 900 000 Swiss francs as income.

“If I have to concentrate some of the observation, there is as I said a slight decrease in the overall turnover for the year; the balance after taking out the expenses, as you will see, is still positive though. Membership subscriptions stayed stable with a slight decrease, and there was some decrease coming from Rules Sales. Some of this decrease was recaptured by an increase in the Handbooks and Workshops that they saw increase; altogether without looking to previous years, as I showed earlier compared to 2012, there was a decrease in the sale of the Certificates, but we know why.

“Now I’m going to the expenditure balance sheet, and there are some differences in how this is presented, compared to previous years. The first difference is the fact that, and I don’t want to get to the historical reasons for that, but some of the payroll was presented differently or separately in previous years, so in this balance sheet, the Accreditation and Technical Department payroll is included together with everybody else in the Secretariat. And the second change is that we are presenting here the financial reserves under the line “Provisions for fluctuations.”

“Now, provisions for fluctuations are the Association’s financial safety net. The build-up of this safety net was a recommendation of our financial auditors. The idea behind it is that we should have a buffer for an unpredicted drop in our income. The recommendation is that these provisions should be high enough to enable the Association to cover the operational cost for a full year. This is also, if you will, a sort of savings account, because it enables forward planning and budgeting for new projects.

“This is the Expenditure balance sheet. If you are looking at direct costs, they are pretty stable year over year; you see the differences in the sales of Rules that were mentioned earlier; the audits and proficiency test costs, and so forth. And the line for provisional fluctuations shows as a service centre, and the provisions for fluctuation for 2013 were slightly over CHF 900 000. Operational costs: There was a decrease in the cost of operations in 2013, and this comes from the fact that there was a smaller payroll for part of the year, and also less travel.

And as mentioned earlier, the result: if we take the expenditures relative to the income, it is positive: 24 000 francs.

“Let’s see what other observations can be made: the Executive Committee costs were higher, because there was an additional ECOM/TCOM Meeting in the year to prepare for the Strategy over the next three years; I guess that also I can point out that there was some additional higher costs that were associated with the fact that it was a Congress year. I have mentioned that the reduction in payroll because of the reimbursement for maternity leaves, which I guess is a good thing; and there was no Secretary General for six months. Travel costs went down. The Association didn’t spend all the money that was put aside for recruitment of the Secretary General, and as I showed, we have put aside the surplus as provisions for anything that will come our way in the future.

“And with that, I go to the second part, where I’m going to use the financial tool in some ways; and before I do this, I want to remind you what the financial tool is; it is an instrument that was put by the Finance and Management Working Group of the ECOM in 2012, and the idea behind it was to be able to estimate indirect costs; basically, to partition the cost of labour. So the way that this was done was by identifying almost 300 activities, captured here. Now, these activities actually are broken down or are pulled together in 65 groups, defined as processes, and then we collapsed it further, those are nested within nine business areas. So the monitoring is done at the activity level, and then it is being pulled, to be able to estimate the processes and business areas. And this is actually very powerful, because, yes, the original aim was to be able to estimate the cost of the business areas, but it also, in the process, enables us to estimate the cost of different functions within the Secretariat, and these are things that are sometimes needed for pricing and so forth.

“So to demonstrate: if we’re looking at cost and income of a given business area, the heart of estimating the indirect costs will be to be able to estimate the cost of labour. So, the way that it is done for certain business areas: if we’re looking at a process such as IT, on this particular day, this particular person spend half an hour of some work. We multiply it by the hourly rate for that person, and that gives us the cost of 30 minutes. And so forth, and altogether, it enables the estimation of the indirect costs of labour.

“So, if I’m looking at the back office, which is a large business area, it dominates our operational costs; you can see that this is giving us some much clearer breakdown where this money is gone, and in this particular example, you can see that the indirect costs of the labour in 2013 was higher than 2012, and there’s a decrease, on the other hand of the direct costs, but that’s not the point of this slide, it’s just to demonstrate to

you how this is being used. And it is used like that for the different nine business areas that were recognized, and those will be:

1. Method Standardization
2. Science and Dissemination of Knowledge
3. Accreditation Programme
4. Membership Administration
5. Certificates
6. Proficiency Tests
7. International Relationships & Strategy
8. Overhead (Management & Back-office)
9. Projects

“Now the other part of all this is that once you have these results of these different business areas, it enables you to allocate cost to income. So, overall, if we’re looking across these nine areas, there are three of them that capture all the income of the Association. So, points 3, 4 and 5 are those business areas where the money is coming in, and the rest 6 business areas is where the money’s going out. This structure allows to point, for example, if I take proficiency tests, then the cost of proficiency tests is allocated to the income that comes from the Accreditation Programme, and there will be a more detailed slide about this later.

“So, the results of 2013, divided by business areas, is captured here. You can see that the income is coming from the green columns: Accreditation by the end of the year brought in 400 and some thousand francs. Membership: 1.1 million, and Certificates were sold for 460 000. And then there was all the expenditures in the other six business areas Method Standardization 65 000, Science 200 000 and so forth. Back Office, as I said, od overheads, dominates the expenditure with almost 1.5 million.

So if we’re following the model, because this is part of what was, I understand, required earlier, to have a higher level of transparency, or higher resolution of how money is allocated in the Association; so if we’re doing the allocation according to this model, and according to how it was done in 2012, so we are here recreating some allocation scheme as it was done in 2012, You can see that the cost of method standardization is allocated to Membership Administration, because this is a membership service. The same thing with Dissemination of Knowledge and Science: the cost associated with this is allocated to Membership Administration. Proficiency Test, on the other hand, is something that is allocated to Accreditation. International Relationships, conceived as a membership service, benefits the whole Membership, is allocated to No. 4. And then comes the problem ones: the Projects, that can be a problem or not, and the Back Office are the places where there is some challenge, because it’s not clear-cut how to allocate this: you can go one way or the other, and there are things that... the question is not that easy to answer. For example, some of the cost that is associated with IT, basically, we are using an external provider for our IT costs of sorts, so how do you allocate this? Because it benefits the different business areas that provide income, and it’s very hard, if not impossible, to break it down between them. Postage costs, other office items, the same thing; So there are some challenges here to allocate income to the expenses when it comes tom the Bask Office.

“So, one of the questions that was asked, and I can use it to demonstrate the Financial Tool, is the question: is the Accreditation Programme profitable? As I showed earlier, at the end of the year there was 412 000 francs that are coming from money that was paid for Accreditation. What does it mean? To be able to answer the question: is the Accreditation Programme profitable, we need to do some allocation of cost to profit, and if we’re looking at income from Accreditation, and income from Certificates, we can say that those two are closely linked together. Only accredited laboratories at the moment are selling or providing Certificates. So, on the other hand, if we look at the

Membership income, this is something is being paid by everybody, and if we look at the division, the income, divided in this form, we say that, all in all, our income is coming, to make it simpler, out of two sources almost equally. So the two sources now are Accreditation and Certificates on the one hand, and Membership on the other hand. So if I take these two as our sources of income, and allocate all the expenditures to them, and use the value of half-and-half to allocate the back office, we end up for the results of 2013, that shows a balance of 43 000 expenditure over income for the Accreditation and Certificates, and a shortage of 20 000 for the Membership Administration. Now, if I'm looking at what was the result of 2012, where there was a different allocation scheme used, you see that the result was actually somewhat different. So, when I'm taking the previous scheme of allocation, the result shows significantly different numbers, and our ability to answer the question, is the Accreditation Programme profitable, I guess it's very dependent on how do you do this allocation scheme, and what are we using. Now, in parentheses, moving aside for just a moment from the overall finances, I am asking myself, are we asking here the right question, but that's as I said a step aside.

“To conclude, the overall results shows the income and expenses are well balanced for the year, if you're looking at the bottom line. We ended up with a reasonable profit of 24 000 francs. Again, this stability was reaffirmed by our external financial auditors, which confirmed that we have a sound financial practice and outcome. So, 2013 ended up with a stable financial outcome. The financial tool proves to be a very powerful and useful instrument. It needs some further refinement, and we're learning how to maximize its benefits. Some of the things that we're considering is to allocate time at the process or activity level, so that will be more accurate and will give us higher resolution. We're thinking to revisit the definitions of activity and process and make them more relevant to the allocation and more accurate. We need to define how the allocation of income to expense is done from one business area to the other in the way that best serves the flow of information and benefits the Association, and that's a pretty large question.

“I want to thank the Executive Committee again, the ECOM Working Group on Finances and Management, again the Secretariat, and thank you for listening to my rambling.”

The President suggested to take questions for clarification only, and to continue the discussion after lunch. There were no such questions at this point. The Meeting was adjourned for lunch.

Approval of Minutes, Financial Report, Budget and Financial Auditors

[T011]

The Meeting reassembled after lunch at 13:45.

It was established that there were 35 Voting Delegates were present. The Meeting was therefore still quorate.

The Secretary General asked for approval of the Minutes of the 2013 Ordinary General Meeting. This was granted with 35 votes to zero no votes.

The Secretary General then asked for questions about the Financial Report 2013. There being no questions, the President asked for approval of the Financial Report 2013. This was granted with 35 yes votes to zero no votes.

The President then asked for approval of the Budget 2014. This was granted with 35 yes votes to zero no votes.

The President then asked for approval that the BDO company should be the financial auditors for 2014 [accounts]. The proposal was accepted with 35 yes votes to zero no votes.

Presentation by Secretary General of ISF

The President then invited the new Secretary General of the International Seed Federation (ISF), Michael Keller, to say a few words on behalf of ISF.

[T012]

Michael Keller (ISF):

“Thanks, dear President, cher Joël, dear delegates, dear Secretary General, dear Beni: as new ISF Secretary General, it’s important for us as the International Seed Federation, and I want to remind you: non-profit, and non-political association, present in 74 countries, with 200 members, it’s important for me, for us as ISF, to be here with you and to participate at the Ordinary Meeting. I’m very happy to have this opportunity to take the floor, and as you mentioned, Joël, I think it’s important that we will reflect together how to strengthen our relationship, and I hope we will discuss, and I hope we will find time also to meet.

“In my new position I want also to point out, as you heard, I’m new in my position as Secretary General, but I’m not new in the seed business. For several years I was Regulatory Affairs head in an international seed company, and I was also until 3 weeks ago Vice President of the French Seed Union.

“ISF and ISTA, and I think it’s always good to remember where we’re coming from, were founded at the same time, even in the same year, 1924. Since then, we have been working together for the advantage of the world seed industry, developing rules and standards aimed at facilitating international trade. Regulatory scientists at one side and seed merchants at the other side were convinced that there is a real need for standardization methods for testing seeds in the laboratories and of developing harmonized rules and terms for trading.

“The importance of these initiatives was to give to trade the possibility of having in different parts of the world comparable and consistent rules for quality of seed lot exchange, and of adopting common terminology to clearly write and understand the commercial agreements and contracts. Besides these important inputs given to the development of seed trade, and you will see how seed trade increased in the last years, it was very important to achieve this together by two initiatives, to solve disputes based on clear and recognized rules and procedures. The goals of our associations I think did not change really since 1924.

“As the new Secretary General of ISF, I feel it is important to remember this. The tools for achieving those goals have been modernized. Technology has brought new solutions. Innovation is continuously a driving factor, and innovation will continue. I think that’s also important to remember, of our activities, but the goals remain the same: facilitate international trade; develop science-based solutions explore alternatives to improve the use of resources, speed up, accelerate reaching an objective.

“Seed movement is more and more global. And ISF since its foundation continues to support seed trade and to facilitate seed movement and to promote the creation of reasonable regulations – reasonable. Thanks to harmonized rules, international agreements and science-based measures, seed movement is increasing. The volume of exchange reached in 2013, based on the annual survey from ISF, is estimated at a global seed market of 45 billion US dollars and international trade at 11 billion dollars.

“But this growth of trade is faced with an increasing number of regulations. Concerning today’s production of seed, it may be always interesting to know that, before reaching the hands of the users, seed can cross many borders, from the stage of seed stock to that of commercial products ready for marketing. At every step, a phase of production takes place: increase of parentals, hand-pollination and hybridization, harvesting, cleaning and grading, vigourization, seed treatment, coating and packaging. At every border, there may be different regulations for import and export. Different methods of assessing quality, different requirements as far as protection of

the environment. Harmonization of all these measures is essential for seed trade. In some instances, harmonization has been faster and easier than in others.

“Internationally recognized testing methods to determine seed quality are key for us, for the seed business. ISTA has been a leader in developing standardized methods for seed testing. The ISTA International Seed Lot Certificate, the Orange International Certificate, and I think it’s always good to remember, was established the early thirties at the request of ISF. It is currently the most recognized document widely in general use in the global exchange of seed. Today, the seed trade needs an internationally recognized sampling and testing method, also for genetically engineered seed, to facilitate the solution of situations where the movement of seed is hindered, and to reduce the risk of wasting resources and opportunities. As producers of seed, we want to be compliant. Our customers want to know and be sure of what they are buying and sowing. National authorities need to assure an agreed level of quality. I think there are many other topics we can explore and solve jointly, in the seed health domain, in the field of enhancement technologies, in the promotion of science-based regulations, in capacity building, to help emerging markets, create an infrastructure, and reach the level of performance that is found in other regions of the world. I believe that strong and strengthened co-operation between the public and private sector is a winning situation. Thanks again for the opportunity to engage with you during your Annual Meeting, and I think we will have a very fruitful co-operation in future. The aim we have together is to reach our long-term goal: a unified system to provide the user with good-quality seed in respect of variety, varietal identity, germination capacity, specific purity, field performance, seed health and management of co-existence. Thank you.”

The President:

“Thank you very much for all this information, and reaffirming the willingness we have all together to strengthen our collaboration. There are many fields where we can collaborate. We already started some years ago, but there’s even more to do. Thank you very much, Michael.”

7 Fixation of Annual Subscriptions

“The next agenda point is the fixation of annual subscriptions.

[T013]

“May I ask Craig McGill to present this item.”

The Vice-President Craig McGill (New Zealand):

“The fixation of the ISTA membership fees and the proposal to increase the fees effective 1 January 2015. The proposal from the ISTA Executive this year is not to increase the membership fees. This is based on the very low rate of inflation in Switzerland, and because staff salary increases that have occurred can be covered from within the current membership fees. So the proposal is not to increase the current membership fees. While there is a proposal not to increase the current membership fees, the next item of business is the Article change proposal. If this is approved by the Membership, there will be a change in the structure of the fees. So it’s important to note that if the Article change proposal, agenda item 18.1, is approved for 2015, the industry membership fee structure will be 7500-12 500 Swiss francs. If it is not approved, the Corporate membership category will remain, and the fee will be the same as 2014 at 10729 Swiss francs. So before we ask for the vote, is there any clarification needed?”

The President repeated the proposal and asked for a vote. The proposal was accepted with 36 yes votes to zero.

8 Consideration and adoption of the proposed changes to ISTA Articles

The President introduced the next agenda point, to change Corporate Membership to Industry Membership, and asked the Secretary General to provide the background.

The Secretary General:

“The role of industry in the seed world is getting bigger and more important, and I think that this is happening and being facilitated much by the presence and emergence of biotechnology. You may like it, you may not, I think it’s a fact. If you really want to see in numbers, I suggest here our web site that is monitoring worldwide the acceptance of biotechnology, and I think that my statement is reflected in these numbers. This didn’t go unnoticed in ISTA in years past. I think this was reflected in the structure and the participation of industry members in various Technical Committees, and it ended up in opening the Membership for seed industry in the late 1990s, and we have since then industry Member Laboratories. We got contributions from the industry. I personally ran 6 or 7 workshops, each one of them had contributions from the industry. And of course you see this in the Technical Committees. I don’t think that you can imagine the work of any of the ISTA Technical Committees without the help of the Statistics Committee, for example, and the Statistics Committee is dominated by people coming from the industry. The GMO TCOM also enjoys the contributions from people from the industry, and many other Technical Committees too.

“So in 2007, there was the Corporate Membership introduced into ISTA, and the problem with the Corporate Membership is that it’s a kind of a misnomer. What ISTA was really looking for is sponsorship, and it was called membership, and that didn’t work that well, as is evident from the fact that since 2007, we really don’t have any Corporate Members. With this in mind, the Industry Membership was proposed. It introduces a number of elements. It introduces a sensibility to the size of the company, which is right now absent in the Corporate Membership, and it tries to offer or to build in, within this membership some tangible benefits to the company, to make an incentive for them to join as Industry Membership. So here are the proposed changes:

First off, the name will change, because not every commercial entity is a corporation, and we would like to make this category more inclusive. There are contract laboratories out there that touch upon and live off the seed world and are an important part of it, we would like to have them here; there are companies that are technology providers; the tests that are being used in seed companies; we would like to have them here as well. That’s why the name was changed.

“The Corporate fee is one fee for everybody; that is not right, because you have contract laboratories that have a few people, and you have the huge international global corporations, which in Corporate Membership are treated the same way, and we’re trying to be more sensible, and therefore we’re offering this scaled fee structure that is dependent on the size of the company. What we’re offering in an attempt to make tangible benefits is that within the Industry Membership will be included one laboratory, so that is if a company X has x number of laboratories, the membership of one of them will be covered by the Industry Membership fee. This laboratory will come with the usual membership benefits that are coming with Laboratory Membership.

We try to throw in some advertisements, so we take advantage of the fact that we have Seed Testing International. This offer, up to this point, with the structure presented so far, was put in before a number of companies, just to get their feedback. You have the companies that I was talking with in alphabetical order; it pretty much covers the large seed companies. It includes a large contract laboratory as well. I also brought this to trade associations, so this was introduced to ISF, ASTA, ESA; all were very receptive.

“But of course the point of having more benefits and something real associated with this membership is coming over and over, and they provided some feedback, so what I’ve presented so far is something that was introduced and presented in front of the ECOM, and they have accepted it and approved it as a proposal. The next things that

come here in red are feedback that I got from the industry of sorts are things that they would like to have included. And the most important thing right out this is really to create yet another, if you will, committee, we call it here Industry Advisory Committee, and this will be a committee that will be built on the template of a Technical Committee, and it will serve as a channel for the industry, to give us information, and to present the challenges that they are facing and the wishes that they have, on the technical level, it all concerns testing and science, straight into ISTA. The ISF will be a member of this advisory committee, and we still have to work out the details, this is something that the ECOM Articles Working Group is working on.

“Another interest is to have a global subscription for the Rules and SST. Right now, we don’t have such a subscription available; we have a multi-user subscription that was created with educational institutions in mind. So if University X has a subscription, it is made available in a number of places, let’s say in the library, in the department and so forth within that institution. What companies are looking for is a subscription that their lab in Thailand and their lab in Germany will be able to have under that subscription access available to the Rules and to Seed Science and Technology. That’s yet another benefit to consider. The last benefit, which is the result of the last few days of this Meeting, was a request that ISTA will provide more training, and make it available to the industry, and we have to discuss exactly how we do this in a non-discriminatory way.

“With that, this is what we have in mind. I hope that I didn’t confuse here the parts that are already approved as a proposal by the ECOM and parts that are still on the table and need to be defined, but this is the background for this Article change.”

The President then opened the discussion.

Ray Shillito (Bayer CropScience):

“As you know, we are a supporter of the organization, we’re very supportive of what you’re doing, we find it very important; we actually have one Member Laboratory. We have a couple of Members. When we looked at the Corporate Membership, basically, what the Corporate Membership, as it was, and I didn’t see, I didn’t have time to look at all the things you had on the slide before you showed the extra benefit thing; basically, if you’re here as a Corporate Member, you actually have less ability to serve on committees etc. than you did as a Personal member like myself. And so there was absolutely no reason to be a Corporate Member. So, one of the things, I think, that I would consider is to remove the restrictions on a Corporate Member... if you’re here as a Personal Member as part of a Corporate Member, you actually can do less than you can as a Personal Member, which doesn’t make any sense in the present rules. You’re not allowed to serve on ECOMs and things like that. The other thing is, I think, one of the goals, and I have not... I have been involved in these discussions to some extent, I have put input in, but I never got anything back, so I don’t know how many times it went round. For us, I think one of the important things is, if you want organizations like ourselves, or I would think people like SGS, Eurofin, as the testing laboratories now start to consolidate, some way of getting more of our laboratories involved in ISTA, and as ISTA laboratories would be advantageous, I think, to the organizations, so you should consider some way you could induce us to get more of our labs into the system, in a way which is beneficial to both of us. It would mean you’d have more labs in the system, you’d get fee per lab, in some way, but then, on the other side, we would have the benefit of having more labs in the system. And we do appreciate access to proficiency testing, this is valuable in itself. So I think there’s still some work to do to get to the point where it’s of real value to both ISTA and organizations like ours. Again, my first reading of the rules, I said that I’m not going to be a Corporate Member, because I can’t do as much as I can as a Personal Member. And that just didn’t make any sense to me. And that’s probably a historical thing. As you say, there’s a number of us that are heavily involved in ISTA, and want to contribute, and if there are places where we can’t contribute, it doesn’t make any sense.

“So that’s really where I’m coming from. It’s the first time I’ve seen the fee structure. Obviously you’re going to have to figure out what “employees” means, but that’s a detail. So I would suggest that a Working Group is set up to work on this, and have a continuous conversation over the next 6-9 months, and come back with a concrete

proposal that we can really all benefit from, and I would say, it's not only the technology providers, but also the test providers, because there's a lot of consolidation going on in that area as well. I know some of them have laboratories and people that are involved, but I think it's very important to get those organizations involved in this as well, on a global scale. And it's an opportunity for you too. I hope that's helpful."

The Secretary General:

"Ray, I think that what you're saying is that you want to have this proposal better defined. Would that capture what you're saying? Because the fee proposal, for example, some other people in a company did see them."

Ray Shillito:

"The fee proposal is one thing, ... what I'm saying is I don't think there's been enough... there's been some dialogue, but I don't see the sort of things that we were looking for at the moment.

The Secretary General:

"So let me break this into two: one is, the thing that is on the table right now is the creation of this membership category, and it's not really the whole package that is being voted on. This is one important distinction to make, and this vote is needed before we put any further work on refining the proposal. That's important to remember. The other thing is, membership in the ECOM is jumping three steps ahead. It's not something that is realistic at this point.

Ray Shillito:

"I realize that, but it's still a restriction on the activities of ... just because I'm here as a member of a corporate organization... my expertise is not valued in the same way. That's maybe a little excessive, but you understand what I mean, I'm restricted from doing certain things in the organization, whereas if I join as a Personal Member, like I am now, I don't have those restrictions."

The Secretary General:

"But that's a consideration that your company has to do, and it's not intended to change the nature of the Association, and it's not built like that, because we value less your skills, and that's why you can't be part of this committee or the other, it's because that this will affect the nature of the Association at all and that is not what is on not the table right now."

Ray Shillito:

"OK, what I'm saying is: the proposal you have is fine; personally, I don't think it's going to change matters. I think you still won't get industry members. Because what you haven't defined is what that membership means. Basically, you're saying, we've got a sliding scale. Fine. It's a sliding scale, we still don't know what it is. I think what I'm proposing is, if you really want to make this a way to grow ISTA, which I assume is what the goal is, then I think you have to get the people involved that might become Industry Members to get round the table and work out how we can produce a win for both ISTA and the targeted members. Otherwise, we just continue to join as Personal Members, and that's where it goes. Or laboratories. And it doesn't go anywhere else. That's our perspective as a company, we've discussed it internally, and I'm here representing that perspective, that at the moment, just making a sliding scale doesn't do anything as far as getting us to be Industry Members. We're very, very supportive of what ISTA is doing, we want to contribute, we want ISTA a valuable and worldwide organization, and to grow, and this is not going to change our perspective, whether it's Corporate, Industry or whatever you call it. It doesn't matter what you call it, it's what the actual activity is.

Steve Jones (Canada):

"Just to come onto a couple of things you said during the discussion there: there is no requirement to be a Personal Member to be on a Technical Committee of ISTA. There is a requirement at the moment that you have to be a Designated Member to serve on the Executive Committee. ISTA's voting rights are tied to the Designated Members,

which is tied to the countries, so going forward, that may be something in the future, but this isn't what this proposal is aimed at. This proposal was aimed at giving ourselves a name that is more reflective of it, so "Industry", and then the option within it to give a structured fee scale according to size of industry, and then after that, like you said, what's going to be worked out, having changed that in the Articles, we have a legal basis to go from that. What is then going to be worked is really, what would be useful for the Industry Members. And that's what Beni's working on in the background, to actually develop that. One of the ideas that was thought about was whether there should be the equivalent of a Technical Committee at some stage, where it has Industry Members on that Committee. And then equally, we're also talking about some other Committees that would reflect other needs in ISTA to reflect these different needs. So that's really where Beni's thinking was at for now, but like you said, I think there's more work to do, but we needed the initial vote on the name and the fee scale here, to allow us to move forward within the Articles, within that framework."

Ray Shillito:

"I have one question: because of the way it's set up: if I was a single for-profit testing laboratory, and I wanted join ISTA obviously, as a laboratory, would I be forced to join as an Industry Member if I had 50 employees, or would I continue to join as a laboratory? Because that's not defined here. And by the way you've put it, it seems to be ambiguous. I think it would be nice to define that."

Craig McGill (Vice-President, New Zealand)

"Essentially, that would be your choice whether you chose to join as an Industry Member or a Laboratory Member".

Steve Jones:

"For me, if I was in your position, I'd choose the cheapest option that would give me the best benefits, and that option's open to you, there's no restriction in that, or there's no intention to be that restrictive, so maybe we should make that clear, as well.

Alison Powell (United Kingdom)

"I think this is a useful proposal, as a proposal to enable ISTA to move forward. In introducing the Industry Membership, you have already given some small extra benefits for the Industry Members, and there is clearly the intention to discuss and develop those benefits further. If you just vote to accept an Industry Membership, it's a step forward, and further steps can be taken on from there, with discussion with the industry. So I think it's a very good proposal."

Rajendra Kumar Trivedi (India):

"In fact, making the industry as a Member is the right decision, but we have some little bit apprehension, I want to make it very clear. You see, ISTA is non-profit, non-commercial organization, so when we are making the entry for the industry, we have to be very careful where the steps have to be taken that decisions are not influenced by such industry, because many countries, their testing procedures and laboratories is still not such a highly modernized or technical sophisticated where all matters can be adopted, so in such a case, we have to be very careful, making a member is perfectly all right, but when ECOM or Technical Committee, it has to be decided how they will be represented in such committees so that things will be a balance, not as a commercially any decision would come forward from such a ... because many big companies have their business interests also. This is a little apprehension which I'm making clear. Thank you."

Craig McGill:

"The proposed Industry Advisory Committee is a committee like any Technical Committee within ISTA. I think what you're talking about is the issue of voting within ISTA, which is not part of this proposal."

[T014]

David Johnston (Monsanto, USA):

“I appreciate the leadership and forward-thinking on this proposal; I know, like Beni mentioned on his slide, we have been part of this discussion, and we look at it as a way to provide things from our side of the business to seed testing in general, because we’re all in the same business of testing seed, and sometimes the larger companies have more resources to put at different problems and solving issues that maybe in the government sector, you find limitations in funding. Our funding sources may be a little more available than what you face, and so I think it’s a great first step, and that my understanding is that all the voting Membership is just to change the name, and then the other part is to be worked out, and at that point, a corporation or industry can decide, is there still benefit. And if there isn’t, then there isn’t. And we appreciate the idea of forming a committee that can really put the industry members that choose to join, put them in a room together to talk about the needs that they see and face. And then those needs can be, instead of coming to ISTA from maybe 10, 12 sources, it can come from one source that’s been hashed out, so it’s more of a centralized voice to help clear out the background noise, and bring it together to a focus and bring it to the ISTA leadership, because the leadership in the ECOM, they’re the ones, and the Membership, you’re the ones that vote, it’s not the private industry, so I don’t see any threat in the industry, that was raised as a concern; the industry isn’t going to really be a threat, because we really basically have no power; all we’re doing is wanting to provide an avenue to provide input and work towards that end. That’s our goal, really to be available and to help. Like in our business alone, we have dozens of laboratories across the globe, so we have a lot of resources that we can offer to other laboratories, so we appreciate the avenue that you’re looking forward to providing that sort of thing. I think it should be supported.”

David Johnston (Monsanto):

“I just wanted to address the concerns from the back here. I have worked in many, many non-profit organizations, as a scientist, and in my case, I’m supported by the company to do that from a science point of view and support the science, and so ... there are many non-profits that have members from industry that contribute, and are really not a threat to this organization. So I would think... I appreciate your concern; I hope that that concern is not valid, I think, concrete. Thank you.”

Marcel Toonen (Netherlands)

“I really support the idea to get the industry more involve within ISTA, and I think an advisory committee would be one way, but I think another way would also be to get industry more incorporated in the other Committees that are there within ISTA, because there the work is being done, and there the Rules are being set, and if companies already in that stage are involved in the process, then you maybe would not need an advisory board on the end to maybe make it more applicable for industry also. So I think that would be really good also to get industry also involved in all the other Committees.”

The Secretary General:

“I want to respond to two comments. First, Ray, if you noticed the last two slides, they are the result of some sort of round table, as you called it, only that it was done by web conference, and this is feedback that came from the industry and from the large companies mostly; I have the feeling that you may be coming to this a little bit from behind.

“The other comment to you, Marcel, is that I agree with you completely. There is room to have more participation from industry in the Technical Committees. I had the opportunity in an ISF dinner to address people from the industry, and what I told them, bluntly was: I need your money and I need your talent. And if we are able to make this industry membership more appetizing to them, what we’ll be getting is not only the money that they bring to the table, but they will be more engaged with the Association, and that will make it easier for people from their laboratories to go and ask to be active in the Association, in ISTA. So, this membership will bring further involvement, it’s not just the increased fee.”

Piero Sismundo (International Seed Federation):

“First of all, I would like to thank on behalf of ISF, the International Seed Trade Federation, ISTA for having considered this option to open not only to the corporations but to the seed industry the membership of this Association, because I think it’s useful to mention that there are corporations that are active in biotechnologies, but there is a large number of medium-, large- and small-sized companies that are still active in other sectors, that are conventional, or even organic. In ISIS, I believe, if not 50 %of the volume that our Secretary General mentioned earlier, it’s a large part of this amount of seed which is traded every year globally. Also, I think that we have not to forget that there is a sector that we call field crops, where maize, sunflower, oilseed rape are the main species, but we have a very important sector with very high value products that is vegetables. And for the time being they are not yet considered in these GMO sectors, so it’s important also to remember.

“So to me, giving to the industry the possibility to join ISTA with a special membership, that is also providing some conditions that will favour the participation of these medium-sized companies, will bring in some enrichment. You will have different points of view, you will have also representation of different areas in the world, and this is important in order to make this Association more representative of the business worldwide. I think that, as it was mentioned before, what is important for us, as representatives of the industry, to know, is the Membership and the membership fees are fair, at least from what I’ve seen on the screen, but what will be beside the advantages that were proposed, also the practical advantages of participating to the life of ISTA. So, is it possible to participate to the Meetings like the Annual Meeting and other technical meetings, I think yes. Will it be possible to participate also to the Committees? So, as you were saying, is there the possibility to become member in one of these Technical Committees, in order to share, to bring in the point of view of the industry? Probably the future needs of the industry in order to help and developing the Rules.

“At the end, the conclusion is in my opinion a very good proposal. It’s worth to evaluate, to discuss it, but to move it forward. Thank you.”

The President then proposed to move to the vote. As Chair of the Executive Committee Working Group on the Articles, Craig McGill presented the protocol for this vote:

- The proposal will be placed on the screen before the vote.
- The President will formally put the motion to the membership.
- The membership will vote.
- The proposal will require a two-thirds majority of those voting to be adopted (i.e. two-thirds of those who cast a vote, not two-thirds of the quorum).

It was then confirmed by a show of cards that the Meeting was quorate.

There being no questions on the voting procedure, the President put the motion to the Meeting:

8.1. Proposal to change corporate membership to industry membership

Document OGM14-07 Article Change Proposals 2014

Article Change Proposal OM14-07-1: To change the corporate membership category from a single membership to one that allows for different levels of membership depending on the size (number of employees) of the organisation.

Current:

Article 4 Governments, Authorities and Members

g) Corporate Member

A Corporate Member is any organisation which supports the Association and its objectives, pays an appropriate annual fee to the Association, and is admitted by the Association.

Proposed:

Article 4 Governments, Authorities and Members

g) Industry Member

An Industry Member is any entity which supports the Association and its objectives, pays an appropriate annual fee to the Association, and is admitted by the Association. The industry membership fee depends on the number of employees.

The proposal was accepted with 34 votes.

9 Consideration and adoption of the proposed Rules Changes 2015

The President introduced the next item, the consideration and adoption of the proposed Rules changes for 2015, and invited Steve Jones, the Chair of the Rules Committee, to present this item.

Steve Jones (Canada):

“For the people that were here yesterday from the Technical Committee of the Rules, we went through the Rules process in detail. Here I’m just going to do a very short, 3 or 4 slide recap of the process before we start launching into the Word file that we reviewed yesterday as well.

“I’m here as the ISTA Rules Chair. I’m also supported here by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, who I work for, and based in Saskatoon at the Seed Science and Technology Section there.

“The ISTA Rules Committee consists of the Chairs of all the different other Technical Committees, plus the Editor of SST, Fiona (Hay). Alison’s been standing in for her for the last three months, but Fiona’s due back from maternity leave in the next few weeks. The other members of the Technical Committee for the Rules are the ex-officio members, which are Attilio Lovato, Honorary President, and Mike Stahr and Susan Alvarez from AOSA and SCST Rule Chairs.

“Craig used to be a Chair of one of the Technical Committees, but he stepped down from that, and has stayed in the role as Vice-Chair of the Committee for me.

“What year is it? I keep having to remind myself, with all the Budget discussions of 2013 I think it’s a year behind, but it’s 2014 already. The Rules edition that’s current is the 2014 edition of the Rules. The proposals that we vote here in June, once accepted, become the 2015 edition of the Rules, effective from 1 January.

“That covers the details I just wanted to recap on for people, and unless there are any questions on the Rules process, we can go to the Proposal document.”

PART A. INTRODUCTION OF EDITORIAL CHANGES

A.1. Editorial corrections

Steve Jones:

“We didn’t have any more editorial corrections I was given at the moment. If there are any that we find as we’re formatting or re-formatting, we will automatically do those, because they’re editorial, but we like to try and present them to you here, if there’s anything major. We presented the major things there, which is the change in the reference for the seed health methods.”

Editorial Changes to Seed Health Method Sheets

Remove the option of copies of the Seed Health Method Sheets to be available by mail or e-mail from the ISTA Secretariat from all Seed Health method sheets.

Replace with the text:

Copies are available by download from the ISTA website at:

http://www.seedtest.org/en/download-ista-seed-health-testing-methods-_content---1--1132--746.html

ACCEPTED BY VOTE RESULT YES

PART B. NEW SPECIES AND CHANGES TO SPECIES NAMES

B.1.2 Changes to the ISTA Stabilized List

Steve Jones:

“On to page 6: the Stabilized List and the reduction to only the species in Table 2A. We have had a motion to amend this proposal, and in talking with Craig, the procedural way to go would be a motion to amend the proposal where, instead of being reduced to Table 2A only, it’s reduced to Table 2A plus the Universal List. But this is where we want to ask you the questions as to how you ... this can be a motion which is proposed and seconded, and then that would be the vote, but at this point, before we do any of that voting, I would like to open to questions or comments.”

Karin Sperlingsson (Sweden):

“I think you should have the same procedure for all different species, because otherwise, first you have to look if it’s in Table 2A, is it in Universal List, or is it something else, and then if you have for example automatically updating your computer system, you have to tell the system, now this you shouldn’t bother about that one, so I think whatever we decide, we should have the same for all. If we have every year or every 6 years I can understand some advantage every year, but don’t distinguish between different species.”

Steve Jones:

“So really, by saying it reduces from the Stabilized List to Table 2A, that’s one option, but if you have to then go and look in the Universal List, or you have to go and look somewhere else, that would be too complicated for you. The only place that you could look at it in one place, would be the GRIN web site, where the GRIN web site maintains a filtered list of GRIN, where it’s filtered to be the list that’s AOSA, or the list that is ISTA, but that is another step within the process. So really, like we said yesterday, this is a decision for the Membership, and this is why the ECOM wasn’t comfortable in making it; they wanted the Membership to discuss and vote what was needed for them. The complication, if you like, is that we have one proposal for a vote, where it reduces to Table 2A only, and that means all the other species that were in the Stabilized List, several hundred, you would have to automatically go and look at GRIN. If you don’t like that, you need to reject the proposal, and then the Nomenclature Committee will be revising the Stabilized List every 6 years, and it will be the whole List. And that is the choice that’s in front of the Membership. It’s really whether the Membership wants to amend the motion, to include the Universal, or leave it where it is, and then go from there. But it does complicate the process.”

Lindsay Cook (Australia):

“I think labs would be looking for some leadership from ISTA on this, and that labs would be comfortable with using what’s in GRIN, the species listed in GRIN, but want ISTA to give them a list annually of what they agree. I’m sorry, I’m not explaining this very well. I think the concern is that if labs have to look up GRIN, regularly, or almost every time they are writing a Certificate, they’re not very comfortable with that. Whereas if ISTA gives them a list, or access to a list, annually, perhaps January 1 or whenever, of what it regards as the then current, the snapshot of what’s in GRIN, I think most labs would be more comfortable with that. They don’t want to be looking up GRIN on a regular basis to see what the name of the weed they’ve always used one name for, whether it’s changed or not. So I wondered if there’s enough confusion, whether this should be deferred for a further year, and a more detailed proposal, more explained proposal might be put next year, but that’s only a suggestion, I’m not moving that. Clearly there is some confusion and some concern about this proposal with just the two options on the table at the moment.”

Steve Jones:

“I think that’s a very good comment because it helps me think what we’re trying to explain to people, because when we say the Stabilized List will be smaller, the Stabilized List itself will still be published on the ISTA web site. So there will be one

place to go to. You can go to the ISTA web site now and download the Stabilized List. That ISTA Stabilized List has in it all of the species, crop kinds, listed in Table 2A Parts 1-3. But it also has in it additional species. So there is that one point of contact at the moment for the labs, if they want to go and look what name they should be using and reporting, they would go to the ISTA web site, download the Stabilized List, which is stabilized for 6 years, and they would have to go back for it every year. But there is that one point of contact. Electronically, that's duplicated within GRIN, but if we think of it just within the ISTA context and being accessible to the labs, you can download that list, and it's consistent with the Rules, what's in Table 2A, and it's a kind of duplication of what's in Table 2A. That exists there. So the proposal is really... Let's just say there's 2000 species in the Stabilized List at the moment, that would just reduce and come out of that. And the challenge for labs then would be if they find something that isn't on that List, they would have to go to GRIN, and they would have to go to GRIN on a more regular basis. But as I'm talking it through, like you said, is it really explained enough for people what they're voting on, and I can see a few shaking heads. What I would do is finish the discussion and questions, then we'll go for a coffee break, and then we'll come back and put forward some clear proposals for you."

Joost van der Burg (Netherlands):

"I agree with Lindsay about the desire to have an annual update, and not to have to go to whatever place to check names. It would be nice to have just the possibility that annually ISTA, in collaboration with Mr Wiersema, the head of the Nomenclature Committee, would generate a new list, because it's all computer-based, indicate with dashes, or whatever, what has changed in comparison with the list last year, and that would greatly help the analyst to check the list and then before coffee, they can finish this annually in one day. And I think we should not change too much to the proposal now; I would like to have it deferred to next year, and ask the Nomenclature Committee whether this is feasible. Not to vote on this proposal at the moment because I think we are modifying, we are also increasing or decreasing the work of the Committee, and we're not able to do that here."

Steve Jones:

"The way to maybe keep it tidy within the process would actually not to modify the motion..."

[T015]

"... which was only a suggestion from the discussion; we haven't tabled that yet. The way to go ahead would be to vote on it here, but you get to use your red cards. And you actually vote against it, and if you vote against it, you're leaving the status quo as it is, and the opportunity to bring all this forward as a bigger discussion next year."

The Meeting then adjourned for coffee, to reconvene at 15:30.

[T016]

After the Meeting had reassembled, it was confirmed that it was quorate, with 26 delegates present.

Steve Jones:

"Any other comments or views on the Stabilized List before we go for a vote? Here to be clear, people seem to be unhappy with it. If you don't want to accept it, that's perfectly OK.

The proposal was rejected with 28 no votes to zero yes votes.

VOTE TO ACCEPT ITEM	YES VOTES	NO VOTES	RESULT
B.1.2	0	28	NO

Steve Jones:

"Could I have a show of hands from people who would be interested in the Nomenclature Committee to work on this and come up with a solution next year,

maybe revising it or some other proposal? Anybody against? It looks like they would like the ECOM to talk to the Nomenclature to do some work on that.”

The remaining Rules changes were then introduced and voted on as follows. Changes from the original Rules Proposals are marked in green.

Part C. Rules changes and new methods requiring a vote

Chapter 2: Sampling

C.2.1. Revision of text in 2.5.1.1

CURRENT VERSION	PROPOSED VERSION
<p>2.5.1.1 Preparation of a seed lot and conditions for sampling</p> <p>At the time of sampling, the seed lot must be as uniform as practicable. If there is documentary or other evidence of heterogeneity, or the seed lot is found to be obviously heterogeneous, sampling must be refused or stopped.</p> <p>.....</p>	<p>2.5.1.1 Preparation of a seed lot and conditions for sampling</p> <p>At the time of sampling, the seed lot must be as uniform as practicable. If the seed lot is found to be obviously heterogeneous, sampling must be refused or stopped.</p> <p>.....</p>

VOTE TO ACCEPT ITEM	YES VOTES	NO VOTES	RESULT
C.2.1	GREEN	0	YES

C.2.2. Clarification about suitable collecting containers in 2.4

CURRENT VERSION	PROPOSED VERSION
<p>2.4 Apparatus</p> <p>Sampling and sample reduction must be performed using appropriate techniques and equipment that is clean and in good condition as described in 2.5.1 and 2.5.2.2.</p>	<p>2.4 Apparatus</p> <p>Sampling and sample reduction must be performed using appropriate techniques and equipment that is clean and in good condition as described in 2.5.1 and 2.5.2.2.</p> <p><u>Containers used to collect primary samples, composite samples and during mixing and dividing must be static-free to avoid chaff or small seeds adhering to the inside of the containers. Containers can be made of any static free materials or treated with an anti static spray.</u></p>

Vote to accept item	Yes votes	No votes	Result
C.2.2	green	0	yes

Chapter 3: The Purity Analysis

C.3.1. Clarification of rounding procedure in the purity test

CURRENT VERSION	PROPOSED VERSION
<p>3.6.1.3 Rounding procedure</p> <p>Add together the percentages of all fractions. Fractions that are to be reported as a ‘trace’ (see 3.7) are excluded from</p>	<p>3.6.1.3 Rounding procedure</p> <p><u>Fraction percentages must be rounded to one decimal place. After rounding, add together the percentages of all fractions.</u></p>

<p>this calculation; the other fractions must then together total 100.0%. If the sum does not equal 100.0% (either 99.9 or 100.1%), add or subtract 0.1% from the largest value (normally the pure seed fraction).</p> <p>Note: If a correction of more than 0.1% is necessary, check for a calculation error.</p>	<p>Fractions that are to be reported as a 'trace' (see 3.7) are excluded from this calculation; the other fractions must then together total 100.0%. If the sum does not equal 100.0% (either 99.9 or 100.1%), add or subtract 0.1% from the largest value (normally the pure seed fraction).</p> <p>Note: If a correction of more than 0.1% is necessary, check for a calculation error.</p>
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VOTE TO ACCEPT ITEM	YES VOTES	NO VOTES	RESULT
C.3.1	GREEN	0	YES

C.3.2. Clarification of the need to retain the component parts found during the purity analysis

CURRENT VERSION	PROPOSED VERSION
<p>3.5.2 Separation</p> <p>.....</p> <p>4. After separation, each component part (3.3) and any species of seed or kind of other matter for which a percentage is to be reported, must be weighed in grams to the minimum number of decimal places necessary to calculate the percentage to one decimal place (3.5.1).</p>	<p>3.5.2 Separation</p> <p>.....</p> <p>4. After separation, each component part (3.3) and any species of seed or kind of other matter for which a percentage is to be reported, must be weighed in grams to the minimum number of decimal places necessary to calculate the percentage to one decimal place (3.5.1).</p> <p><u>After weighing, the components found must be retained and stored for reference until sample disposal (see 2.5.3 and 2.5.4.7).</u></p>

VOTE TO ACCEPT ITEM	YES VOTES	NO VOTES	RESULT
C.3.2	GREEN	4	YES

Chapter 4: Determination of Other Seeds by Number

C.4.1. Clarification of how to report when seed cannot be identified with certainty to species level

CURRENT VERSION	PROPOSED VERSION
<p>4.7 Reporting results</p> <p>.....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The actual weight of seed examined to the minimum number of decimal places indicated in Table 4.1. - The scientific name and number of seed of each species sought and found in this weight. - If the full weight prescribed in Table 2.A was examined..... 	<p>4.7 Reporting results</p> <p>.....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The actual weight of seed examined to the minimum number of decimal places indicated in Table 4.1. - The scientific name and number of seed of each species sought and found in this weight. - <u>Where it is impossible to determine with certainty on the basis of seed characteristics, the genus name only is reported (e.g. <i>Malus</i> sp.)</u>

	– If the full weight prescribed in Table 2.A was examined.....
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VOTE TO ACCEPT ITEM	YES VOTES	NO VOTES	RESULT
C.4.1	GREEN	0	YES

C.4.2. Clarification of the need to retain any seeds found during the other seed determination analysis

CURRENT VERSION	PROPOSED VERSION
<p>4.5.2 Determination</p> <p>The working sample is searched either for seeds of all other species or of certain stated species, as required by the applicant. The number of seeds found of each species sought is counted.</p> <p>If the search is limited to certain stated species, the examination may be stopped when one or more seeds of one or all of the stated species (as appropriate to the applicant’s requirements) has been found.</p>	<p>4.5.2 Determination</p> <p>The working sample is searched either for seeds of all other species or of certain stated species, as required by the applicant. The number of seeds found of each species sought is counted.</p> <p>If the search is limited to certain stated species, the examination may be stopped when one or more seeds of one or all of the stated species (as appropriate to the applicant’s requirements) has been found.</p> <p>Seeds of the other species found must be retained and stored for reference until sample disposal (see 2.5.3 and 2.5.4.7).</p>

VOTE TO ACCEPT ITEM	YES VOTES	NO VOTES	RESULT
C.4.2	GREEN	4	YES

Chapter 5: The Germination Test

C.5.1. Adding more categories to describe root defects

Current version	Proposed version
	<p>12 The seminal roots:</p> <p>12/01 are stunted</p> <p>12/02 are stubby</p> <p>12/03 are retarded</p> <p>12/04 are missing</p> <p>12/05 show negative geotropism</p> <p>12/06 are glassy</p> <p>12/07 are decayed as a result of primary infection</p>

Vote to accept item	Yes votes	No votes	Result
C.5.1	green	0	yes

C.5.2. Allowing combinations of suitable substrates

Current version	Proposed version
<p>5.4 Growing media</p> <p>5.4.1 Definition</p> <p>Growing media used for germination tests are products which provide sufficient pore space for air and water, for the growth of the root system and for contact with solutions (water) needed for plant growth.</p>	<p>5.4 Growing media</p> <p>5.4.1 Definition</p> <p>Growing media used for germination tests are products which provide sufficient pore space for air and water, for the growth of the root system and for contact with solutions (water) needed for plant growth.</p> <p><u>With paper as the base medium (see 5.6.2.1.1) Any combination of growing media listed in 5.4.3 is permitted, prescribed in Table 5A for that species is allowed, provided that each growing medium component is verified and meets the specifications prescribed in 5.4.2.</u></p>

Vote to accept item	Yes votes	No votes	Result
C.5.2	green	4	yes

C.5.3. Clarifying procedures for acceptance testing of media

Current version	Proposed version
<p>5.4.3 Growing media characteristics</p> <p>5.4.3.2 Sand growing media</p> <p>The sand should be reasonably uniform and free from very small and large particles. Round particles are preferable, and it is recommended that sand with sharp particles, which may impair seedling development, is avoided. 90% of the particles should pass through a sieve with holes or meshes of 0.8 mm width, and be retained on a sieve with holes or meshes of 0.05 mm width.</p>	<p>5.4.3 Growing media characteristics</p> <p>5.4.3.2 Sand growing media</p> <p><u>At least</u> 90% of the particles <u>must</u> pass through a sieve with holes or meshes of <u>2.0</u> mm width. <u>If the particle size characteristics given by the supplier are in accordance with these specifications then the laboratory does not need to perform a quality check of the sand particle size. In the absence of a supplier's specification sheet, the laboratory must check the particle size for each batch of sand received.</u></p>

<p>5.4.3.3 Organic growing media</p> <p>Organic growing media are defined as containing the following elements in known proportions and fitting the requirements of 5.4.2:</p> <p>Organic compounds: fibres such as peat, coconut fibres or wood fibres with a size less than 5 mm;</p> <p>Mineral particles: for example sand, perlite, or vermiculite. The proportion should be around between 20% in volume. It is recommended that 90% of the particles should pass through a sieve with holes or meshes of 2 mm width and be retained on a sieve with holes or meshes of 0.05 mm width.</p>	<p>5.4.3.3 Organic growing media</p> <p>Organic growing media are defined as containing the following elements in known proportions and fitting the requirements of 5.4.2:</p> <p>Organic compounds: fibres such as peat, coconut fibres or wood fibres with a <u>recommended</u> size less than 5 mm;</p> <p>Mineral particles: for example sand, perlite, <u>dolomite</u> or vermiculite. The proportion should be between <u>15 to 30%</u> in volume. It is recommended that 90% of the particles should pass through a sieve with holes or meshes of 3 mm width.</p> <p><u>Any other mixture of organic compounds and mineral particles, fitting the specifications included in 5.4.2 can be used. The media composition must be clearly described.</u></p>
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Vote to accept item	Yes votes	No votes	Result
C.5.3	green	0	yes

C.5.4. Clarifying procedures for counting errors during the germination test

This item was withdrawn by the Germination Committee for this year. It will be discussed with the Statistics Committee and submitted again.

Current version	Proposed version
<p>5.6 Procedure</p> <p>5.6.1 Working sample</p> <p>...</p>	<p>5.6 Procedure</p> <p>5.6.1 Working sample</p> <p>...</p> <p><u>When more than ± 4 seeds (i.e. less than 396 or more than 404 seeds which is $\pm 1\%$ on a total of 400 seeds) are tested for germination, due to counting error, then the test must be repeated.</u></p> <p><u>If ± 4 seeds or less are found in the test, then each replicate has to be adjusted to 100 by calculation. For example, if one replicate gives 80 normal seedlings, 10 abnormal seedlings and 9 dead seeds, with one seed missing, then the result has to be adjusted to 100 with the following calculation: $80 \times 100/99$ normal seedlings, $10 \times 100/99$ abnormal seedlings and $9 \times 100/99$ dead seeds. Rounding follows the principles described in 5.8.2.</u></p>

Vote to accept item	Yes votes	No votes	Result
C.5.4			

WITHDRAWN

Chapter 6: Biochemical Test for Viability. The Topographical Tetrazolium Test.

C.6.1. Additional information for the preparation and storage of tetrazolium solutions.

CURRENT VERSION	PROPOSED VERSION
<p>6.4.1 Tetrazolium solution</p> <p>An aqueous solution of 2,3,5-triphenyl tetrazolium chloride or bromide of pH 6.5-7.5 is used. The concentration normally used should be 1.0%, however, lower or higher percentages are permissible. Distilled water should be used in the preparation and the tetrazolium solution should have a pH of between 6.5 and 7.5. If necessary to ensure the pH is within the required range, a phosphate buffer, as described in 6.4.2, should be used.</p> <p>When using buffer the correct amount of tetrazolium salt (either chloride or bromide) is dissolved in the buffer to obtain a solution of the correct concentration, e.g. 1g tetrazolium salt per 100 mL buffer gives a 1% solution.</p>	<p>6.4.1 Tetrazolium solution</p> <p>An aqueous solution of 2,3,5-triphenyl tetrazolium chloride or bromide of pH 6.5-7.5 is used. The concentration normally used should be 1.0%, however, lower or higher percentages are permissible. Distilled/<u>deionized</u> water should be used in the preparation and the tetrazolium solution should have a pH of between 6.5 and 7.5. If necessary to ensure the pH is within the required range, a phosphate buffer, as described in 6.4.2, should be used.</p> <p>When using buffer the correct amount of tetrazolium salt (either chloride or bromide) is dissolved in the buffer to obtain a solution of the correct concentration, e.g. 1g tetrazolium salt per 100 mL buffer gives a 1% solution.</p> <p><u>The tetrazolium solution can be stored in the dark at 5–10 °C for up to one year.</u></p>
<p>6.4.2 Buffer solution</p>	<p>6.4.2 Buffer solution</p> <p><u>To achieve the correct pH range it may be necessary to prepare the tetrazolium solution in phosphate buffer solution.</u></p>
<p>The buffer solution should be made up as follows, using distilled water.</p> <p>Prepare two solutions:</p> <p>Solution 1: dissolve 9.078 g KH₂PO₄ in 1000 mL distilled water</p> <p>Solution 2: dissolve 9.472 g Na₂HPO₄ in 1000 mL distilled water, or dissolve 11.876 g Na₂HPO₄ · 2H₂O in 1000 mL distilled water</p> <p>Mix two parts of solution 1 with three parts of solution 2 and check the pH, which must be between 6.5 and 7.5.</p>	<p>The buffer solution should be made up as follows, using distilled/<u>deionized</u> water.</p> <p>Prepare two solutions:</p> <p>Solution 1: dissolve 9.078 g KH₂PO₄ in 1000 mL distilled/<u>deionized</u> water</p> <p>Solution 2: dissolve 9.472 g Na₂HPO₄ in 1000 mL distilled/<u>deionized</u> water, or dissolve 11.876 g Na₂HPO₄ · 2H₂O in 1000 mL distilled /<u>deionized</u> water</p> <p>Mix two parts of solution 1 with three parts of solution 2 and check the pH, which must be between 6.5 and 7.5.</p>

VOTE TO ACCEPT ITEM	YES VOTES	NO VOTES	RESULT
C.6.1	GREEN	0	YES

Chapter 7: Seed Health Testing Methods

C.7.1. Modification to existing seed health method. 7-009: Detection of *Gibberella circinata* on *Pinus* spp. (pine) and *Pseudotsuga menziesii* (Douglas-fir) seed.

Modification to 7-009 after comments and review by the authors and the SHC.

This proposal is submitted by the Seed Health Committee, approved by vote of the TCOM and is supported by a validation study.

[Please see separate PDF file with the revised method.](#)

VOTE TO ACCEPT ITEM	YES VOTES	NO VOTES	RESULT
C.7.1	GREEN	0	YES

C.7.2. Modification to existing seed health method. 7-019a: Detection of *Xanthomonas campestris* pv. *campestris* on *Brassica* spp. Modification to 7-019a after comments and review by the authors and the SHC.

This proposal is submitted by the Seed Health Committee, approved by vote of the TCOM and is supported by a validation study.

[Please see separate PDF file with the revised method.](#)

VOTE TO ACCEPT ITEM	YES VOTES	NO VOTES	RESULT
C.7.2	GREEN	0	YES

C.7.3. New seed health method. 7-030: Detection of *Acidovorax valerianellae* in *Valerianella locusta* (Corn salad) seed. New seed health method.

This proposal is submitted by the Seed Health Committee, approved by vote of the TCOM and is supported by a validation study.

[Please see separate PDF file with the revised method.](#)

VOTE TO ACCEPT ITEM	YES VOTES	NO VOTES	RESULT
C.7.3	GREEN	0	YES

C.7.4. Revision to Table 7A ISTA official seed health testing methods

Amended Table 7A to list the method names, replace crop/host with crop names as in Chapter 2, Table 2A and names of pathogens with authority names.

Correct in the names of viruses, as in below titles proposals, e.g. Tomato mosaic virus instead of Tomato Mosaic Virus

VOTE TO ACCEPT ITEM	YES VOTES	NO VOTES	RESULT
C.7.4	GREEN	0	YES

Chapter 9: Moisture

C.9.1. Clarification of the method to be used for new species

CURRENT VERSION	PROPOSED VERSION
<p>9.0 Basic reference method for determination of moisture content</p> <p>The basic reference method for the introduction of a new species and methods into the Rules is the low-constant-temperature oven method, i.e. 17 h at 103 °C.</p>	<p>9.0 Basic reference method for determination of moisture content</p> <p>The basic reference method for the introduction of a new species and methods into the Rules is the low-constant-temperature oven method, i.e. 17 h at 103 °C. Comparative testing must be completed to validate that the moisture determination for the new species can be done accurately and reproducibly between laboratories using 17 h at 103</p>

	<u>°C.</u>
9.0.1 Test necessity for grinding The necessity for grinding depends on factors such as seed size and seed coat permeability to water.	9.0.1 Test necessity for grinding The necessity for grinding depends on factors such as seed size and seed coat permeability to water. <u>However, if the seed size is too small to meet the requirements for fine grinding then testing for the effect of grinding is not necessary.</u>

VOTE TO ACCEPT ITEM	YES VOTES	NO VOTES	RESULT
C.9.1	GREEN	0	YES

C.9.2. Review of requirements for moisture calibration samples

CURRENT VERSION	PROPOSED VERSION
9.2.1.5.2 Calibration sample Calibration sample containers should be moisture proof and filled to approximately two-thirds of their capacity.... ... The containers should be sealed and stored at 5 ±2 °C until-used .	9.2.1.5.2 Calibration sample Calibration sample containers should be moisture proof and filled to <u>at least</u> two-thirds of their capacity. ... The containers should be sealed and stored at 5 ±2 °C. <u>The sealed containers must be moved to the room containing the moisture meter at least 24 h prior to use to ensure that the temperature of the seed has equilibrated with the temperature of the meter.</u>

VOTE TO ACCEPT ITEM	YES VOTES	NO VOTES	RESULT
C.9.2	GREEN	0	YES

Since the validation studies for items C.9.3. and C.9.4 were not presented in time to the Membership, these items were withdrawn, and will be resubmitted in 2015.

C.9.3. Changes to methods for cutting seeds for moisture testing

CURRENT VERSION	PROPOSED VERSION
9.1.5.2 Working sample For cut seed the working sample must be sufficient to draw two replicates each of the weight approximately equal to five intact seeds (see 9.1.5.5).	9.1.5.2 Working sample For cut seed the working sample must be sufficient to draw two replicates <u>of approximately 5 g each by cutting at least ten intact seeds</u> (see 9.1.5.5).

9.1.5.5 Cutting ...The cutting must be carried out on a working sample of a weight approximately equal to the weight of ten intact seeds drawn from the submitted sample.	9.1.5.5 Cutting ...The cutting must be carried out on a working sample from the submitted sample of <u>at least ten intact seeds to arrive at approximately 10 g (two replicates of approximately 5g each).</u>
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VOTE TO ACCEPT ITEM	YES VOTES	NO VOTES	RESULT
C.9.3			

WITHDRAWN

C.9.4. Changes to methods for cutting large tree seeds for moisture testing

CURRENT VERSION	PROPOSED VERSION
9.1.5.5 Cutting Large tree seeds (thousand-seed weight >200 g) and tree seeds with hard seed coats such as those of <i>Fabaceae</i> (<i>Leguminosae</i>), and/or species with high oil contents, should be cut into	9.1.5.5 Cutting Large tree seeds (thousand-seed weight >200 g <u>and if prescribed in Table 9A Part 2</u>), tree seeds with hard seed coats such as those of <i>Fabaceae</i> (<i>Leguminosae</i>), and/or species with high oil contents, should be cut into...

Change to Table 9A Part 2. Details of methods for moisture determination: tree and shrub seeds

Species	Grinding/cutting (9.1.5.4, 9.1.5.5)	Remarks
1	2	3
<i>Pinus</i> spp. (TSW > 200 g)	Cut <u>No</u>	-

VOTE TO ACCEPT ITEM	YES VOTES	NO VOTES	RESULT
C.9.4			

WITHDRAWN

Chapter 10: Weight determination

This proposal was withdrawn by the Purity Committee for improvement.

C.10.1. Clarification that 10.5.3 applies to all chaffy seeds and the procedure for weighing replicates

CURRENT VERSION	PROPOSED VERSION
10.5 Procedure	10.5 Procedure <u>There are two methods that can be used to count:</u>

<p><i>Either</i> the whole working sample (10.5.2),</p> <p><i>or</i> replicates of pure seed from the working sample</p> <p><i>or</i> replicates from a representative fraction of the submitted sample (10.5.3) must be used.</p>	<p><i>Either</i></p> <p>a) the whole working sample (10.5.2),</p> <p><i>or</i></p> <p>b) replicates of pure seed from the purity working sample (10.5.3), or replicates from a representative fraction of the submitted sample (10.5.3), must be used.</p>
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CURRENT VERSION	PROPOSED VERSION
<p>10.5.2 Counting the entire working sample by machine</p> <p>Put the whole working sample through the machine, and read the number of seeds on the indicator. After counting, weigh the sample in grams to the same number of decimal places as in the purity analysis (3.5.1).</p>	<p>10.5.2 Counting the entire working sample by machine</p> <p>Put the whole working sample weight, for the species being tested as indicated in Table 2A for the purity analysis, through the machine and read the number of seeds on the indicator. After counting, weigh the sample in grams to the minimum number of decimal places as in the purity analysis (3.5.1). The table from 3.5.1 is repeated as Table 10A.</p>
<p>10.5.3 Counting replicates</p> <p>From the working sample count out at random, by hand or with a germination counter, eight replicates, each of 100 seeds. Weigh each replicate in grams to the same number of decimal places as in the purity analysis (3.5.1), i.e.</p>	<p>10.5.3 Counting replicates</p> <p>From the working sample or the representative fraction of the submitted sample count out at random, by hand or with a germination counter, eight replicates, each of 100 seeds. Weigh each replicate in grams to the minimum number of decimal places as indicated in Table 10A.</p>
<p>Weight of working sample (g) Decimal places (minimum)</p> <p>.....</p> <p>If the coefficient of variation does not exceed 6.0 for chaffy grass-seeds, or 4.0 for other seeds, the result of the determination can be calculated. ISTA does not define grass seeds as a group.</p>	<p>Weight of replicates or whole working sample (g) Decimal places (minimum)</p> <p>.....</p> <p>If the coefficient of variation does not exceed 6.0 for chaffy seeds, or 4.0 for other seeds, the result of the determination can be calculated.</p>
<p>10.6 Calculation and expression of results</p> <p>If counting is by machine, calculate the weight of 1000 seeds from the weight of the whole working sample.</p>	<p>10.6 Calculation and expression of results</p> <p>If counting is by machine, calculate the weight of 1000 seeds from the weight of the whole working sample indicated in Table 2A for the purity analysis and weighed to the minimum number of decimal places as indicated in Table 10A.</p>

If counting is by replicate, from the eight or more weights of 100-seed replicates, calculate the average weight of 1000 seeds.	If counting is by replicate, from the eight or more weights of 100-seed replicates, calculate the average weight of 1000 seeds sample to the minimum number of decimal places as indicated for the replicate weights as indicated in Table 10A.
The result must be expressed to the number of decimal places used in the determination (10.5.3).	The result must be expressed to the number of decimal places used in the determination (10.5.2 or 10.5.3 as appropriate), e.g. if 8 replicates were weighed to 2 decimal places the results must be reported to 2 decimal places.

VOTE TO ACCEPT ITEM	YES VOTES	NO VOTES	RESULT
C.10.1			

WITHDRAWN

Chapter 11: Coated Seeds

C.11.1. Clarifying suitable media as defined in Chapter 11

After some discussion, the text was amended to the final version as below.

Current version	Proposed version
<p>11.5.4 Growing media</p> <p>Paper, sand and in certain situations soil are permissible as substrates. For pelleted seed the use of pleated paper, and for seed tapes a between paper method of which the upright rolled towel has proved satisfactory in many cases, is recommended.</p> <p>The pleated paper recommended for tests on pellets has a weight of 100 to 120 g/m² and a water absorption of 220-240%. The pleated filter papers are enveloped by cover strips, of a weight of 70 g/m² and a water absorption of 220-240%.</p>	<p>11.5.4 Growing media</p> <p>Paper, sand, organic growing media and in certain situations soil are permissible as substrates. For pelleted seed and seed tapes, the use of pleated paper has proved satisfactory and is recommended (with a covering paper strip) For seed tapes only, a between paper method using upright rolled towels has proved satisfactory and is recommended.</p> <p>Specifications and characteristics of growing media for germination tests are indicated in Chapter 5, 5.4.</p>

Vote to accept item	Yes votes	No votes	Result
C.11.1	green	0	yes

Chapter 15: Seed Vigour Testing

C.15.1 Addition of a species to which the conductivity test can be applied

CURRENT VERSION	PROPOSED VERSION
<p>15.8.1.2 Scope and field of application</p> <p>The conductivity test offers a vigour test for Pisum sativum (garden peas only), Phaseolus vulgaris and Glycine max which relates to the field emergence of seed lots. The test does not apply to field</p>	<p>15.8.1.2 Scope and field of application</p> <p>The conductivity test offers a vigour test for Cicer arietinum (Kabuli type) Glycine max, Phaseolus vulgaris and Pisum sativum (garden peas only) which relates to the field emergence of seed lots. The</p>

peas or the so-called ‘petit pois’ varieties of peas	test does not apply to field peas or the so-called ‘petit pois’ varieties of peas (<i>Pisum sativum</i>).
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CURRENT VERSION as Table 15A	
Validated ISTA vigour tests are listed in Table 15A, and detailed methods are given in 15.8.	
Table 15A. Vigour tests that have completed validation	
Vigour test	Species
Conductivity	<i>Pisum sativum</i> (garden pea only, excluding petit-pois varieties); <i>Phaseolus vulgaris</i> ; <i>Glycine max</i>
Accelerated ageing	<i>Glycine max</i>
Controlled deterioration	<i>Brassica</i> spp
Radicle emergence test	<i>Zea mays</i>

PROPOSED VERSION
15.3 General principles
...
<u>The following ISTA vigour tests have completed validation:</u>
<u>Conductivity test: <i>Cicer arietinum</i> (Kabuli type), <i>Glycine max</i>, <i>Phaseolus vulgaris</i>, <i>Pisum sativum</i> (garden peas only, excluding petit-pois varieties)</u>
<u>Accelerated ageing test: <i>Glycine max</i></u>
<u>Controlled deterioration test: <i>Brassica</i> spp.</u>
<u>Radicle emergence test: <i>Zea mays</i></u>
<u>Detailed methods are given in 15.8.</u>

Vote to accept item	Yes votes	No votes	Result
C.15.1	green	0	yes

[T017]

C.15.2 Addition of a species to which the Radicle Emergence (RE) test can be applied
The name “Argentine canola” was added, since this is the name in common use in North America.

CURRENT VERSION	PROPOSED VERSION
15.8.4 Radicle emergence (RE) test for <i>Zea mays</i>	15.8.4 Radicle emergence (RE) test
15.8.4.1. Principle A slower rate of germination is an early physiological expression of seed ageing, the major cause of reduced vigour. The rate of germination of <i>Zea mays</i> is	15.8.4.1. Principle A slower rate of germination is an early physiological expression of seed ageing, the major cause of reduced vigour. The rate of germination of <u>all validated</u>

<p>accurately reflected in a single count of radicle emergence early in germination and this single count relates closely to other expressions of the rate of germination. High counts of radicle emergence early in germination are indicative of high seed vigour; low counts indicate low seed vigour.</p>	<p>species listed in 15.3 is accurately reflected in a single count of radicle emergence early in germination and this single count relates closely to other expressions of the rate of germination. High counts of radicle emergence early in germination are indicative of high seed vigour; low counts indicate low seed vigour.</p>
<p>15.8.4.2 Scope</p> <p>The RE test provides a vigour test for Zea mays which relates to field emergence.</p>	<p>15.8.4.2 Scope</p> <p>The RE test provides a vigour test which relates to field emergence for the species listed in 15.3.</p>
<p>15.8.4.3 Apparatus</p> <p>Paper towels: as used in a germination test (Chapter 5.4.3.1).</p> <p>Plastic bags or containers: to prevent towels drying out during the test.</p> <p>Germination test facilities: to maintain a temperature of 20 ± 1°C or 13 ± 1°C.</p>	<p>15.8.4.3 Apparatus</p> <p>Paper growing media: as used in a germination test (Chapter 5.4.3.1) and specified in Table 15A.</p> <p>Plastic bags or containers: to prevent towels drying out during the test.</p> <p>Germination test facilities: to maintain the prescribed temperature (Table 15A).</p>
<p>15.8.4.4. Radicle emergence test procedure</p> <p>15.8.4.4.1 Setting up the radicle emergence test</p> <p>Set eight replicates of 25 seeds to germinate on paper towels, following the normal procedure for a rolled towel germination test in your laboratory. The seed should be placed on the papers with the embryo radicle pointing to the bottom of the paper. Two rows of seed are suggested to assist counting, one of 12 and one of 13 seeds. The towels must be rolled up and placed upright in plastic bags or containers to prevent them drying out. Place the seeds at the required temperature. A control seed lot must be included with each test.</p>	<p>15.8.4.4. Radicle emergence test procedure</p> <p>15.8.4.4.1 Setting up the radicle emergence test</p> <p>The test must be set up using the media and conditions described in Table 15A, following the normal procedure in your laboratory for a germination test using the prescribed medium. A control seed lot must be included with each test.</p>
<p>15.8.4.4.2 Temperature for the test</p> <p>The radicle emergence test may be conducted either at 20 ± 1°C or at 13 ± 1°C. Temperature is the most important potential variable in the test. Monitoring of temperature is desirable and rotation of seed lots and replicates is advised at time intervals of 24h. It is also advisable to limit the area over which tests are distributed in the incubation room/incubator in which the test is conducted.</p>	<p>15.8.4.4.2 Temperature for the test</p> <p>The radicle emergence test must be conducted at the temperature prescribed for the species in Table 15A. Temperature is the most important potential variable in the test. Monitoring of temperature is desirable and rotation of seed lots and replicates is advised at time intervals of 24h. It is also advisable to limit the area over which tests are distributed in the incubation room/incubator in which the test is conducted.</p>
<p>15.8.4.4.3 Timing of radicle emergence counts</p> <p>The timing of radicle emergence counts</p>	<p>15.8.4.4.3 Timing of radicle emergence counts</p> <p>The timing of radicle emergence counts</p>

<p>depends on the testing temperature.</p> <p>At 20°C: count at 66 h ± 15 minutes after the test has been set up. To achieve these counts at a reasonable time of day, for example, if the test is set up at 16.00 the count will occur at 10.00 the next day. Accurate timing of the count is particularly important at 20°C where radicle emergence occurs quickly.</p> <p>At 13°C: count after 144 h ± 1h (i.e. 6 days ± 1 h). The test should be set up at a time of day convenient for making the subsequent radicle emergence counts.</p>	<p>depends on the species (Table 15A).</p>
<p>15.8.4.5 Calculation and expression of results</p> <p>The number of seeds that have produced a radicle at least 2 mm long is recorded for each replicate. A clear and obvious radicle is a quick and uniform method of assessment, with a radicle length of 2 mm being judged by eye.</p>	<p>15.8.4.5 Calculation and expression of results</p> <p>Record the number of seeds that have produced a radicle for each replicate. The criterion for radicle emergence in each species is defined in Table 15A.</p>
<p>The number of seeds showing radicle emergence in each replicate is converted into a percentage for each replicate.</p> <p>Calculate the average radicle emergence percentage according to Chapter 5 by combining four of the 25 seed replicates to one 100 seed replicate. If the two 100 seed replicates differ by more than the maximum tolerance value for radicle emergence shown in ...</p>	<p>The number of seeds showing radicle emergence in each replicate is converted into a percentage for each replicate.</p> <p>Calculate the average radicle emergence percentage. If necessary combine seed replicates to 100-seed replicates according to Chapter 5. Where two 100 seed replicates differ by more than the maximum tolerance value for radicle emergence shown in ...</p>

Table 15A. Specific conditions for the radicle emergence test procedures

Species	Germination medium	Replication	Germination temperature	Criterion of radicle emergence	Timing of radicle emergence count
<i>Brassica napus</i> (oilseed rape, Argentine canola)	Pleated papers	2 replicates of 100 seeds	20 ± 1°C	Appearance of a radicle after breaking through the seed coat. Seeds in which the seed coat has split, but no radicle has emerged, must not be included.	30h ± 15 min
<i>Zea mays</i>	Paper towels	8 replicates of 25 seeds	20 ± 1°C or 13 ± 1°C	Production of 2mm radicle	66h ± 15 min at 20 ± 1°C 144h ± 1 h at 13 ± 1°C

[Consequential change to text in 15.3 needed after C.15.1 accepted.](#)

<p>PROPOSED VERSION</p> <p>15.3 General principles</p> <p>...</p> <p>The following ISTA vigour tests have completed validation:</p> <p>Conductivity test: <i>Cicer arietinum</i> (Kabuli type), <i>Glycine max</i>, <i>Phaseolus vulgaris</i>, <i>Pisum sativum</i> (garden peas only, excluding petit-pois varieties)</p>
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[Accelerated ageing test: *Glycine max*](#)
[Controlled deterioration test: *Brassica spp.*](#)
[Radicle emergence test: *Zea mays*, *Brassica napus* \(oilseed rape, *Argentine canola*\)](#)
[Detailed methods are given in 15.8.](#)

Vote to accept item	Yes votes	No votes	Result
C.15.2	green	0	yes

C.15.3 Revision of ‘General directions’ text

CURRENT VERSION	PROPOSED VERSION
15.5.2 General directions Different vigour test methods (direct and indirect) are described under three general categories: stress tests, seedling growth tests and biochemical tests.	15.5.2 General directions Different vigour test methods (direct and indirect) are described under three general categories: physiological, biochemical and ageing tests.

Vote to accept item	Yes votes	No votes	Result
C.15.3	green	0	yes

C.19.1 Revision of GMO Chapter 19 text

CURRENT VERSION	PROPOSED VERSION
19.4.1 Sample size For quantitative methods, the size of the sample must be consistent with the limit of quantification to allow the quantification of even one GM seed in the sample.	19.4.1 Sample size For quantitative methods, if a laboratory aims at quantifying the presence of a single seed in the working sample then the size of the sample must be consistent with the limit of quantification.

Vote to accept item	Yes votes	No votes	Result
C.19.1	green	0	yes

The President asked for special thanks to Steve Jones for chairing the Rules session.

10 Consideration and Adoption of the Reports of the Technical Committees

The President asked all Technical Committee Chairs to stand, and asked the Meeting to approve all the Reports together by applause, which was duly granted.

[T018]

[T019]

11 Announcement of the Place and Date of the next Ordinary Meeting

Cecilia Jones (Uruguay) extended to the Meeting an invitation to Montevideo, Uruguay, as the venue of the next Annual Meeting in 2015, and gave a presentation with some information on Montevideo and Uruguay. This was followed by a video on the Instituto Nacional de Semillas (INASE) Laboratory.

The President thanked Cecilia Jones for her presentation and invitation.

The President then asked Margus Friedenthal (Estonia) to present Tallinn as the venue of the 31st ISTA Congress, with the preliminary dates 14-22 June 2016.

Margus Friedenthal also showed a video on Tallinn.

The President also thanked Margus Friedenthal for his presentation.

12 Any other Business raised by a Member, of which notice in writing has been received by the Secretary General two months prior to the date of the Meeting

[T020]

There was no such business.

13 Any other Business raised by consent of the Executive Committee

Late payment of ISTA membership fees

Steve Jones (Canada):

“This has been of concern to ISTA Members over the last few years. There was a need to put in a penalty fee for late payments, because ISTA relies on its membership fees, and at the time there were issues of Members not paying in time. ISTA’s cash flow was being severely impacted, so several years ago the 5 % penalty for late payments was put in. More recently, it has been enforced in a different way, and it’s also, the timetable of it has been brought forward. So there have been some discussion from Members that have been affected by this, and discussions within the Executive Committee about the best way forward. The penalty fee was put in as an administrative procedure without discussing it with the Membership, because at the time, when that was done within the Executive, that was thought of as the best way to proceed. That’s the history of why and how it came into being, and I think some of the labs know how that’s put into practice. And I’ll raise some of the issues, and come up with some possible solutions and also open this up to questions.

“Really, what we’re focusing on is the Laboratory Membership, plus the additional membership for an accredited lab. So for example, if the normal Membership was CHF 6438, there’s be a 5 % penalty on that, to be 322 Swiss francs. The idea at the moment is that if you don’t pay the normal fee by 1 January in the year, you owe the extra 5 %. That’s not easy for some government departments to work out; it’s not easy for some government departments to pay at all, let alone on time, but those issues are the same for government departments as they are for private laboratories. It’s difficult, and the Membership fee is said to be high enough already. So really, what we’re asking the Membership is: what does the Membership think, and does the Membership agree to the idea of late payment fees, or would they suggest that those late payment fees should be taken away for the 2015 year? If ISTA continues with the

penalty fee, who should decide on it? Should it be a vote like we've just voted on for Membership fees, should that also include a vote to say, if the Members don't pay by a certain period of time, they also should lose these benefits, or they should pay a fee, or they lose these benefits again, or they need to pay, so really we're trying to be transparent and open with the Membership as to what they feel is appropriate. Instead of a penalty fee, would you also prefer a discount for early payment? An incentive payment for early payment? These are just ideas we're trying to share with you to get feedback. One possible proposal would be that we suspend all penalty fees for the Membership year starting 1 January 2015. But any Member not paying their fee before 31 March 2015 would not have access to membership benefits and discounts after 1 April 2015

"If the fees are not paid by the end of that year, then the Membership is terminated and if accredited, the laboratory can no longer issue Orange International Certificates, because they've been 12 months without paying their fee.

"Having put that in front of you, creating that as a discussion point, it's really open to comments and questions from the room as to what people's opinions on that are.

"If we go back to the questions: do you think we should continue with a penalty fee? Could you raise your hands to give us an idea whether you think we should continue with a late Membership penalty fee? Who thinks we shouldn't have a late penalty fee? Who's undecided at the moment? Does that give you an impression, Joël?

"Raise your hands if you want the Membership to vote on the penalty fee. Who would prefer the Membership doesn't vote and the ECOM takes care of the penalty fee? Who's undecided? It looked as though in the room there were more people in favour of the ECOM deciding on the penalty fee; was that your impression, Joël?

Ernest Allen (USA):

"It's really difficult for some government agencies and universities to be able to make payment fees within a deadline; a lot of times, we don't make payments ourselves, we answer to the larger organization, which has specific processes they have to go through in order to get things approved, so in effect, if you were to make penalty fees normal, some government agencies might always be paying a penalty fee; basically, that's their new Membership costs. It's really not a fair thing for those organizations that really don't have any choice because they're a government agency, or some kind of private agency."

Steve Jones:

"I can understand that, that's why the Secretariat were starting to send out the invoices for payment of the 1 January fees; I think they were starting to do that in October, or even earlier."

Danielle Ruckert (Luxembourg):

"We are not able to pay before the year has started, so we will never be able to pay at 1 January, so it's impossible for us, so that's why I'm not in favour, and I prefer a discount for early payment then a penalty, because even a penalty fee is difficult to pay afterwards."

Steve Jones:

"Would they let you pay early?"

Danielle Ruckert:

"No. then it's a normal payment, but our government doesn't want to pay a penalty, and we can't pay before, so it's a tricky situation."

Steve Jones:

"That's a useful comment, because there are other countries that said to us that they can't pay before a certain service has started."

José Manuel Chavez Bravo (Mexico):

“In the beginning, Mexico had a lot of problems with late payment. Since two years ago and today, we are now paying in advance. So we can resolve this problem. That’s why I don’t prefer discount for early payment.”

Steve Jones:

“Who would be in favour of discount for early payment? Anybody not in favour? People undecided? Would people in general be supportive of a proposal like this from the Executive for the 1 January? Maybe we don’t have time to put in a discount idea, but certainly we’d like to look at the issue again. Would there be anything that concerned anybody about the proposal, the way it’s put forward at the moment?”

Rasha El-Khadem (ISTA Secretariat):

“I’m referring to the second point, saying if the fee was not received by end of March, no access to Membership benefit, I think at that time the Membership benefit, at least the ISTA Rules, have already gone out. So that’s really not a restriction.”

Steve Jones:

“It would be a restriction of no discounts for the June Meeting. That was where we were thinking. You’re right, we couldn’t restrict the other things. And this is one of the things we’re dealing with, is what could be the penalty for late payment? We thought people might want a few months to pay, and then really, the first time it would bite would be when they try to register and get a discount for the June Meeting.”

Ernest Allen:

“I don’t think you would really want to restrict the benefits for the Rules anyway, otherwise... just for uniformity purposes; people might decide not to use it, or not to update until they get their Membership paid at that point, so you don’t really want to put the Rules on that basis if you pay or not, because they might decide not to do it, and have an old book until...”

Steve Jones:

“So with this proposal at the moment they would get the ISTA Rules. ”

The President:

“It would be good for the ECOM to know the opinion of the Members, but having no penalty fees from 1 January 2015, until we are back with a proposal.”

(Speaker not identified):

“This proposal, would this be a transitional proposal till something else has been decided?.”

Steve Jones:

“That’s what we were proposing.”

Pamela Strauss (South Africa):

“We are in the situation that we will not be able to pay by 1 April, due to our financial year, and the fact that we have a financial system in place which doesn’t allow membership fees to be paid twice in one year. I would just like to find out if we pay after April, as soon as we pay, will the discounted benefits come into place?”

Steve Jones:

“That was the intention.”

Joost van der Burg (Netherlands):

“Maybe my memory doesn’t serve me well; didn’t we have some voting on giving the General Meeting the authority to vote on the cancellation of Membership in our regulations, at that we needed a two-thirds majority for that.”

Steve Jones:

“I think you’re right; within the Articles there is something about terminating membership, but I think there’s also something in the Articles about termination due

to non-payment; we ought to check that, and make sure that they're consistent, and we're not doing anything against the Articles."

The President:

"That's only the exclusion of Members which requires the two-thirds majority. Any other decisions require a simple majority.

Steve Jones :

"But we do need to vote?"

The President:

"That's not clearly mentioned in the Articles, we need to vote on the Membership fees, but not on the penalty. There is nothing about penalties."

Steve Jones:

"I think what Joost is saying is about excluding a Member. So we can look at that. Would you like an indication as to whether a show of hands, or..."

The President:

"Whether this proposal is approved for the transitional period till we come back with a final proposal to be voted. Would you accept this proposal."

Steve Jones:

"In principle by a show of hands. Who would support this proposal as it is, with a show of hands? Who would oppose it? Anybody undecided? It looked as though most people were OK with this in principle, so we could actually discuss this and further refine it within the ECOM. "

Craig McGill:

"Coming back to the point made by Joost: in terms of the exclusion, that is to exclude a current financial Member, in my interpretation. If you look at the proposal there, what we're saying is that the Membership would not be terminated until the end of December 2015, when they haven't paid the fee for a year. So they would no longer be a financial Member."

The President:

"Thank you for this presentation. And I would like also to thank the counters for today, so thank you, Karen and Andrea."

[T021]

14 President's closing address

The President:

"We are now coming to the end of our Meeting here in Scotland. It started on Monday with the Seminar on Seed Sampling, which dealt with the important aspect of statistics applied to sampling and quality assurance, training and monitoring of samplers, and we all remember that it was a very successful Seminar. On Tuesday and Wednesday, the presentations of the Technical Committees summarized the significant progress that these Committees have made in less than one year since the 2013 Congress, and the work of the Technical Committees is the heart of ISTA. The members of the Committees represent all regions of the world, They come from the regulatory sector, from official labs, as well as from seed companies and the private sector. This diversity of members guarantees that the work that we do here in ISTA is in line with the needs of the seed sector worldwide, and we have seen today that we still can improve that with the Industry Membership. The 225 Committee members, who all have great expertise and scientific knowledge, give many hours of their time to the work of ISTA. This is a strength of our Association. It does, however, mean that the work of ISTA is dependent upon the continued willingness of employers to allow their staff to spend time on the ISTA work. On behalf of the Executive Committee, I would

like to thank all of the organizations and employers for their continued investment in ISTA, and for the quality of their contribution which is essential.

“However, there have been signs in recent years that some companies and state organizations have started to question the time spent by their employees on the work for ISTA. In response to this, the message I want to share with you today is: examine the services provided by ISTA, for example the Rules, the Proficiency Test programme, the Accreditation System, and the opportunity ISTA gives for sharing of knowledge and expertise on an international basis. And this week is a good example of it. Then assess the contribution that this makes to the seed quality, to the international trade of seeds, to agriculture in general, and the benefits it gives to your organizations. Examine and assess, and I am sure that you will reach the conclusion that the contribution of staff to the work of ISTA is worthwhile.

“I would once again like to thank the state organizations, the seed industry, and of course the Members, who devote so much of their time, of their free time sometimes, to the work of ISTA.

“Today, we voted on the Rules Proposals, which is a main or important production of ISTA, and as I said, this is the heart of ISTA, at least the ISTA technical work, and thanks a lot to the Technical Committees.

The intense discussions on different topics, the discussions on in-house methods, that have taken place over the last few years have underlined the necessity of retaining the standard methods, which guarantee the uniformity of results, based on harmonized results. However, these discussions have also highlighted the need for the availability of alternative methods, or other methods, which better serve the requirements of certain categories of seed producers, such as the vegetable seed sectors, or other seed sectors of production.

In acknowledgement of the work done, and in acknowledgement of the need of the seed sector, ISTA wanted to offer more opportunities for the industry to express its needs, and it was for this reason that we voted today on the new membership category called Industry Membership. The strength of this new category is that it combines the opportunity for industry to express its needs for the future, together with a financial contribution towards the work that would be necessary to respond to these needs.

“The work done on finances and presented by Beni has also allowed us to retain the membership fees at the current level, which means that there has been no increase for the past two years, but it also gives transparency and a lot of data to prepare for the future. Good progress has been made on the Accreditation review. The questionnaires have given all Members and Designated Authorities an opportunity to give their views on the future. It is an excellent source of information as proved by the presentation made by Rita, and this will allow us to define the further action plan.

“I would like to thank all of you who have participated in this Meeting, and anyone who has supported the work of ISTA this year. Thanks go to the Executive Committee members, to the Technical Committees, and to the ISTA Secretariat, who not only do such a good job on a daily basis, but who have also contributed so much to the organization of this Meeting. Thanks to all of them.

“Those of you who have already organized an international meeting will know how much hard work and stress is involved. And you will also know soon, I’m talking to Valerie and her team, the great feeling of satisfaction derived when the meeting has been a success. May I call on the stage Valerie Cockerell, Gillian McLaren, Gerry Hall, Marian McEwan, Laura Bowden, Tina Langan, Wanda Cross, Jean Angles, Jean Smith, Gill Laird, Annabella Stirling, Alexandra Costello, Sam Borrowman, Hayley Trainor, and Gayling Cockerell.

“On behalf of ISTA, I would like to congratulate you on your organization, which has been first-rate, and the facilities, which have been excellent. The social events have been a great success, and the pleasure of whisky tasting and the dinner and all social events and other Scottish specialities have strengthened our friendship, and can only enhance future collaboration within ISTA. Thank you for hosting this Meeting in Edinburgh, which is such a beautiful historic city, and we have time now to visit it properly. You can now relax and celebrate the anniversary of the laboratory and the

success of the Meeting. On behalf of all participants, we wish your organization success for the next 100 years at least. I would like also that all of us show our appreciation of the technical staff, for the sound and lightings, and all the technical assistance who have done such an excellent job.

“Valerie and her colleagues as well as her family, in recognition of your involvement in such a successful Meeting, and on behalf of ISTA, we are very pleased to present you some ISTA Swiss gifts, and I would like now that altogether we show Valerie and her team our appreciation with a standing ovation.”

15 Adjournment

“The Executive Committee, together with the Uruguayan Organizing Committee, represented by Cecilia Jones, have the great pleasure inviting you to our next Ordinary General Meeting in Montevideo, Uruguay, next year. Now I wish you all a safe and pleasant journey home, and I declare this 2014 Ordinary General Meeting adjourned. Thank you very much.”