



ISTA
Seed Quality Assurance

ISTA Secretariat

Address: Richtiring 32, 8304 Wallisellen
Post Address: Richtiarkade 18, 8304 Wallisellen
Switzerland

Position Paper on Rule's Harmonisation in Seed Testing

Any hardcopy of this document is not a controlled copy

CREATED	REVIEWED	APPROVED
18 May 2026	08 June 2026	20 June 2026
ISTA Executive Committee Working Group on AOSA-SCST Collaboration	ISTA Secretary General	ISTA Executive Committee

Rule's Harmonisation in Seed Testing

Introduction

Seed testing rules based on agreed procedures and validated methods play a pivotal role in facilitating international seed trade. Established methodologies from the International Seed Testing Association (ISTA) and the Association of Official Seed Analysts (AOSA) have served as benchmarks for seed testing since 1931 and 1908, respectively. These standardised rules promote uniformity, reliability, and reproducibility, crucial for the advancement of the seed industry and movement of seed internationally.

With increased movement of seeds in volume and speed globally, seed industries are demanding testing rule harmonisation, where it is possible, to facilitate seed trade or movement of seeds across different regions of the world.

Objectives:

In many cases, especially multi-national companies or international companies, ship the same seed lot to different countries. Harmonised testing rules and methods simplify the seed testing process, enabling efficient use of resources without the need for repeat tests and possibility of inconsistent results due to differences in testing rules.

With advanced technologies, such as machine deep learning, computer vision with artificial intelligence looking to be adopted in seed testing, harmonisation of testing rules, where it can, will make technology development more efficient and effective.

ISTA has a strategy to collaborate with other seed testing and seed science and technology organisations. AOSA-SCST is a seed testing organisation that has a long collaboration with ISTA, including through exchanging information and collaborating on common challenges. Both organisations have affiliation status with each other, joint meetings, working groups, and technical training. The AOSA procedure for testing rules proposals has required a testing rule harmonisation statement for many years. ISTA Rules proposal procedures have had a similar harmonisation statement since 2025. The efforts of both organisations to harmonise testing rules and methods, where it can, are to further facilitate seed trade and respond to the request from seed testing laboratories and seed industry.

ISTA Position on Rule's Harmonisation

ISTA is committed to further facilitating global seed trade through the harmonisation of testing rules. By collaborating with AOSA-SCST, ISTA aims to create a unified framework based on science that addresses the diverse needs of stakeholders within the seed industry. The integration of advanced technologies,

such as machine learning and artificial intelligence, into seed testing processes will further enhance technological efficiency and effectiveness as testing rules become more standardised.

Action Plan for Seed Testing Rule's Harmonisation

To advance the harmonisation of testing rules, ISTA is implementing an action plan that encompasses the following initiatives:

- Collaborate with AOSA-SCST to develop standardised testing methods for new species or new methods to ensure alignment between ISTA and AOSA rules.
- Jointly deliver technical training sessions focused on seed testing practices in collaboration with AOSA-SCST, enhancing skill development and knowledge transfer.
- Foster collaboration between technical committees of ISTA and AOSA-SCST to ensure continuous adaptation and improvement of testing methods.

Through these efforts, ISTA seeks to respond to the ongoing needs of the seed industry and facilitate smoother international trade, ultimately leading to improved efficiency and consistency across global seed testing practices.

ISTA Position on Rule's Harmonisation

- ISTA facilitates seed trade by promoting testing rules' harmonisation, where **it is possible and feasible**.
- ISTA collaborates with AOSA-SCST, for harmonising testing rules based on science to address stakeholders' needs.
- ISTA promotes innovation and technology applications for seed testing through continuous collaboration and rules' harmonisation.