



ISTA
Seed Quality Assurance

ISTA Secretariat

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Document OGM26-02

Minutes of the Ordinary General Meeting 2025

This document contains the Minutes of the Ordinary General Meeting 2025, published on the ISTA website two months before the Ordinary General Meetings 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 website. Any comments about these minutes will be considered at the Ordinary General Meeting 2026, to be held on June 25, Calgary, Canada.

Contents

1. Call to Order
2. President's address
3. Roll call of Designated Members entitled to vote
4. Reading and acceptance of Minutes
5. Report of the Executive Committee
6. Report of the Secretary General
7. ISTA Strategy 2025-2028
8. Election of Officers and Members-at-Large of the Executive Committee
9. Fixation of annual subscriptions
10. Consideration and Adoption of the proposed Rules Changes
11. Consideration and Adoption of Reports
12. Announcement of the place and date for the next Ordinary General Meetings:
Annual Meeting 2026
Annual Meeting 2027
Congress 2028
13. 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
14. Any other business raised by consent of the Executive Committee
15. Discharge of the Executive Committee
16. Installation of the Executive Committee 2025-2028
17. Speech of the incoming President
18. President's closing address
19. Adjournment

The Ordinary General Meeting of the Association

1. Call to Order

ISTA Secretary General, Andreas Wais invited ISTA President Keshavulu Kunusoth for the opening remarks.

2. President's Address

The President of ISTA, Keshavulu Kunusoth welcomed all participants to the 2025 Ordinary General Meeting of ISTA.

Good morning, esteemed guests, designated authorities, country's representatives, members of ISTA, and ladies and gentlemen. It is with great pleasure and appreciation that I welcome you to the 2025 Ordinary General Meeting of the International Seed Testing Association. Today represents the final day of the official programme for the 34th ISTA Congress, an event that has been both inspiring and memorable.

This Congress is particularly significant as it marks the first time since 1986 that we have convened in Australasia. Over the past one hundred years, ISTA has made remarkable contributions to seed science, testing, and sampling, establishing itself as a cornerstone in global efforts to ensure seed quality, agricultural productivity, and ultimately food security. Our history is closely interwoven with the evolution of seed testing itself, and we continue to lead with the same passion and purpose.

Currently, ISTA's focus has evolved from routine seed testing to addressing complex challenges facing the global seed sector. Through advancing laboratory methodologies and supporting international seed trade, ISTA upholds its mission to promote uniformity, reliability, and reproducibility in seed testing worldwide. The 2022-2025 triennium has witnessed significant growth and achievement, driven by strategic initiatives, forward thinking partnerships, and a strong commitment to innovation. Our centenary celebrations in 2024 were not only a source of pride but also a powerful reminder of our collective accomplishments and ongoing responsibility to advance sustainable agriculture and global food systems.

The 34th Congress in Christchurch commenced with a two-day seed symposium under the theme "Seed Quality for Global Food Security and Biodiversity," which included an engaging forum on new plant breeding technologies. These sessions brought together experts from across the globe to explore emerging research and innovations in seed testing, plant health, phytosanitary measures, and breeding technologies—areas crucial for the future of food and biodiversity.

I am proud to report that the Congress drew over 152 participants from 32 countries, representing a diverse cross-section of the seed science community and industry. The symposium provided invaluable opportunities for laboratory analysts, researchers, and stakeholders to exchange ideas, forge collaborations, and strengthen the foundation of quality seed systems worldwide.

On days three and four, the ISTA Technical Committees met to discuss technical reports, capacity building, and the development of new methodologies aimed at advancing global standards in seed quality evaluation. These activities are central to ISTA's mission to facilitate international seed trade and ensure a reliable global supply chain. Today, as we convene for the 2025 Ordinary General Meeting, our attention turns to the formal business of ISTA. The agenda, detailed in document OGM25-01, will be displayed for your reference. Proceedings will include voting on proposed amendments to the ISTA Rules, presentations and discussions of Executive Committee reports—including those from working groups, Seed Health Initiatives, Advocate System, and the ISTA Advisory Panel—as well as approval of the financial budget, activity reports, and amendments to the Articles of Association.

A key item today is the election of the Vice President and eight Executive Committee members at large for the 2025-2028 triennium. A roll call of designated voting members will be conducted, with official voting cards used to cast votes. All relevant documents were distributed two months prior to this meeting. Voting will be conducted manually, and proceedings will be recorded for inclusion in the official minutes.

On behalf of the ISTA Executive Committee, I extend my sincere thanks for your presence, participation, and ongoing support. Together, we shape the future of seed testing and quality assurance, reinforcing our shared commitment to sustainable agriculture and global food security for generations to come.

Now I invite the Secretary General of ISTA to call the role of designated voting countries.

3. Roll Call of Designated Members entitled to vote

ISTA Secretary General Dr. Andreas Wais reads the names of the countries with nominated voting delegates present at this OGM of the 34th ISTA Congress.

We require a quorum of 14 voting delegates (40% of 35).

Roll call: Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, India, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, The Netherlands, Norway, New Zealand, The Philippines, Poland, Slovak Republic, Thailand, S.C.T. of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu, United Kingdom, USA, and Zimbabwe. Rwanda and Kenya are absent.

22 delegates are present, which meets the required quorum.

Note: Rwanda and Kenya voting delegates joined later to make the maximum voting delegates 24.

4. Comments received on the Minutes of the previous Ordinary Meeting

Next, we move to acceptance of the minutes from the 2024 Ordinary General Meeting held in Cambridge. The minutes were distributed on time and no comments were received. Are there any comments now? Seeing none, the minutes are accepted. If anyone objects, please raise your card. No objections noted.

5. Report of the Executive Committee

ISTA President, Keshavulu Kunusoth (India):

I will now present the Executive Committee Report for 2024, including events and activities from the first four months of 2025. This annual report covers the period from 2024 up to the present and summarizes the contributions of the Executive Committee. The committee operates primarily through working groups focused on special topics and projects.

The presentation offers an overview of key topics, beginning with an introduction, relevant for both new and current members, followed by the strategy framework implemented from June 2024 to May 2025. It also details Executive Committee meetings, online sessions, and the organization of working group meetings.

Recently, ISTA marked its centenary in Cambridge and will continue to maintain relevance for stakeholders. The committee aims to quickly address stakeholder needs, encourage new generations to participate in ISTA, and foster strategic collaborations with organizations such as OECD, UPOV, FAO, and IPPC. Where necessary, ISTA will seek additional support, adapt its services for future stakeholder requirements, and advance initiatives like developing methods for seed health and integrating new technologies into its rules, including AI and digital solutions. Expanding ISTA's global presence remains a priority, including forming new partnerships.

ISTA's vision is to facilitate the use of internationally agreed and validated methods for seed quality assurance, supporting sustainable agricultural productivity, food security, and nutrition for all.

The current Executive Committee (2022–2025) includes: Steve Jones (Immediate Past President, Canada), Ernest Allen (Vice President and incoming President, United States), Ignacio Aranciaga (Argentina), Vanessa Sosa (Uruguay), Claid Mujaju (Zimbabwe), Sergio Pasquini (Italy), Ruel Gesmundo (Philippines), Sylvie Ducournau (France), Berta Killermann (Germany), Craig McGill (New Zealand), and myself (India). Steve Jones and Vanessa Sosa are unable to attend due to various reasons. The President oversees all ISTA activities and represents the association, supported by the Vice President, while the Immediate Past President ensures continuity and guidance. Members-at-large contribute to policies and new initiatives in line with ISTA strategy.

The strategy for 2022 to 2025 provides a framework focused on six primary goals. These include developing scientifically sound rules for sampling and seed testing to support the seed sector, addressing stakeholder needs, and strengthening the accreditation system to serve the seed industry. Each goal is accompanied by specific action points overseen by the Executive Committee, which implements these actions throughout the triennium. This strategy was approved at the 33rd ISTA Congress in Cairo, Egypt, in 2022 through a membership vote.

The structure of the ISTA Executive Committee includes multiple working groups organized to align with ISTA objectives and strategies. There are currently 11 main working groups, as well as dedicated to special projects such as electronic certificates and young at ISTA. The Executive Committee is responsible for executing existing

actions and adopting new ones as required by the strategic plan and stakeholder feedback. ISTA's overarching objective is to facilitate and promote seed trade globally. Additionally, individual countries occasionally request ISTA's assistance to enhance their seed quality assurance or seed testing laboratories, and ISTA provides support and promotes its standards where needed.

During this period, the Executive Committee held 2 physical meetings, including an annual meeting and centenary celebration in Cambridge. Major decisions included updates to the TCOMs, adjustment of travel policy, and hosting the joint ISTA-ISF forum to discuss the role and future of ISTA seed testing and quality seed production in sustainable agriculture. Further events included the Ministry Conference, focusing on ISTA's role and seed testing in response to climate change, and a recent meeting in Manila (February 15–23, 2025) where version 8 accreditation standards for seed sampling and testing were approved, along with applications for new advocates and other administrative decisions.

Other actions include approval of upcoming annual meetings, changes to membership categories, plans to dissolve the SSAG at the end of the triennium, and establishment of the ISTA Seed Advisory Panel. Expansion initiatives, validation reports, rules approvals, and health initiatives were addressed and documented during these meetings. Proceedings from the centenary celebrations have been published and made available on the ISTA website. The final Executive Committee meeting, scheduled for May 1–3, 2025, addressed validation studies concerning tropical and subtropical species, seed health strategies for the next triennium, and guidelines advanced technology application for the seed testing computer vision.

This document summarizes the activities and key outcomes of various working groups. The TCOM working group developed policy proposals for technical committees and identified methods to enhance their effectiveness.

The key achievements during the period under report the approved the revision of TCOM responsibilities document, improvement of editorial rules change against the regular rules change guidelines for the advanced technology application for seed testing, reviewed the 100K projects and also implemented the strategic fund initiatives guidelines.

The working group also proposed the establishment of a science advisory panel, which was approved, initiated the wild species TCOM, and supported the development of an imaging consortium for the next triennium.

The accreditation working group focused on verifying individual and laboratory competence in seed testing according to international standards. A triennium plan was established covering accreditation, laboratory evaluation, document revisions, extending accreditation scope, developing detailed procedures, proficiency tests, and auditor recruitments. In 2024, 62 audits were performed: 54 for re-accreditation and 8 for initial accreditation, including one sampling entity. The group revised accreditation standards, conducted quality assurance workshops, organized six webinars, and updated guidelines related to assessment risks, opportunities, and computer vision-based quality management.

An interactive learning tool was created for electronic certificate implementation, and procedures for contracting new auditors were addressed.

The articles of association working group, ensured that the association's articles reflect current practices and stakeholder expectations. Changes included introducing a new member organization category and additional editorial updates were made.

The designated authorities and international relations working group focused on strengthening collaboration between ISTA and its designated authorities, as well as with international and regional organizations. Activities included organizing webinar series, reviewing strategy, ongoing discussions about global partnerships and technical collaboration. Efforts continued to develop partnerships and improve implementation of electronic certificates versus paper certificates.

The events working group, organized the 2024 centenary celebrations in Cambridge and a joint ISF-ISTA forum session. Organised 2025 Congress in New Zealand and Seed Symposium.

Then coming to the electronic certificate updates. In July 2024, the electronic certificate system was introduced with four laboratories (Canada, Denmark, India, South Africa) issuing 264 certificates. As of the latest report, three additional laboratories are preparing to implement the system, and 52 laboratories have requested to participate in the pilot. Feedback was collected from member laboratories, with 25 responses indicating varying levels of readiness and interest in future adoption. Future plans include a marketing strategy featuring social media, webinars, and engagement with software developers and member labs.

The global expansion remains a priority, especially in regions where ISTA is underrepresented, and for including new species, particularly tropical and subtropical, into guidelines. Validation studies, membership growth, new regional partnerships, and planning for major ISTA events are all ongoing.

In South America, efforts focus on strengthening associations, increasing ISTA accredited laboratories, and supporting workshops and MOUs. In Asia, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Cambodia, China, and Laos are priority countries, with Bangladesh recently adding its first accredited lab. Africa has hosted quality assurance workshops, especially for Francophone countries, with Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Morocco, Mozambique, and Rwanda as focus countries. Both Africa and Asia have seen increases in accredited labs.

The Seed Health Working Group is advancing strategies and validation studies for seed health and collaborating with international organizations. Special budgets support reference pest lists and method validation, while a Seed Health Image Database has been developed.

The Wild Species Working Group, now a technical committee is creating a wild species website and testing protocols database for the wild seeds.

Vegetable Industry Working Group has made progress revising protocols. ISTA has developed a testing protocol for determination of heterogeneity in vegetable seed lots to support further possible changes to the number of sublots that can be taken from the vegetable seed lots again which has been discussing for the long time.

Finally, the Publication and Marketing Working Group, continues to expand digital outreach, evidenced by growing LinkedIn followers and ongoing efforts in digital marketing.

The group has produced 16 webinars this year and consistently developed digital marketing materials, such as brochures, flyers, banners, and supported specialized website maintenance. External communications have reinforced ISTA's brand through print and digital media, promotional materials, and by maintaining an updated website with news, events and membership content.

The Young ISTA, this year the group approved 20 applications for workshops, trainings, events and publications in seed science and technology. ISTA's engagement initiatives successfully attracted more young members from various regions.

Then the important part is here the budget highlights.

Financially, ISTA saw notable growth, with the 2025 budget reaching 3.2 million Swiss francs and increased income from accreditation audits and membership dues. Detailed financials will be covered in the Secretary General's report.

From 2022–2024, ISTA held seven executive committee meetings (in USA, Argentina, the Philippines, and alongside annual meetings in Egypt, Italy, UK, New Zealand), including three virtual sessions. Regular regional industry meetings helped align ISTA strategies with local needs, fostering collaboration and guiding future actions.

Under these the achievements were for this triennium rules refinements and introduce new ones to meet the evolving needs of the global seed sector. To meet the needs of the industry here and then species expansion initiated project like to add more new species including tropical and subtropical species into the ISTA rules. And then another important initiative, the seed health initiatives to advance the seed health quality assessment including updating the ISTA reference pest list and pest image database. Then so when we look at the second goal or the initiative to contribute and to develop the collaborations to increase the seed sampling and testing capacities worldwide global expansion ISTA successfully expanded its regional expansions in Asia, South America, Africa.

Then other important capacity building initiatives have aimed to extend seed testing capabilities to previously unreached areas and membership, primarily through training sessions, workshops, and webinars during this triennium. Notable collaborative projects include those between APSA, the Mekong project, FAO, and ISTA activities in Africa. Publications such as the ISTA FAO guidelines for establishing and managing seed testing laboratories were started in the 2019–2022 triennium and published during this period. The Secretariat released centenary celebration proceedings, while advocacy efforts introduced the ISTA advocate system and Young ISTA project supported 50 candidates. Many seed organizations have initiated programs targeting younger generations.

A key initiative has been the reinforcement of the accreditation system to meet stakeholder and laboratory needs. Updated standards and documents reflect accrediting procedures for laboratories and sampling entities with multiple sites. A total of 163 audits were performed, including 14 newly accredited laboratories and 149 reaccreditation audits delayed due to COVID-19 disruptions. The accreditation working group led these efforts, implementing process adoption for remote audits when required.

Laboratory growth continued during the triennium, with an increase from 153 to 163 accredited labs. There was also a 5% improvement in A and B proficiency test ratings, reflecting enhanced competency among member laboratories aligned with ISTA rules. Research and innovation were promoted through policy development,

including guidelines for new technology comparable to human analysis and computer vision protocols, recently approved by the Executive Committee. Advanced technologies such as digital X-ray and 3D imaging were incorporated into ISTA rules.

Project funding was facilitated by the TCOM working group, leading to the launch of the ISTA Strategic Fund to support technical committees and technological advancements in seed analysis. The Seed Science Advisory Panel (SSAG) transitioned towards becoming the ISTA Advisory Panel, with plans to expand terms of reference in the next triennium under new leadership.

The committee established a technical group focused on wild species, which is progressing as planned. Understanding stakeholder needs was furthered by integrating technologies like AI image analysis and launching ISTA eCertificates, enhancing the speed and security of seed testing communications. Membership expansion included a new category for all agriculture related affiliated or NGOs.

Industry engagement increased through additional partnerships and regional meetings, facilitating direct communication among ISTA, national authorities, and industry associations. The number of designated authorities rose to 59. Overall membership grew from 242 to 253, accompanied by financial growth increasing income to 321,000 Swiss francs, attributed to rising numbers of accredited labs and members.

This report concludes the executive committee's assessment for 2024–2025.

So now may I request Craig McGill, ISTA Executive Committee Member (New Zealand) to give an update on ISTA Seed Health Initiatives.

I would like to provide additional details on the seed health initiative. To begin, I'll offer some context. Seed health is recognized as a key factor in seed quality, which is a principal focus of ISTA with regard to seed assessment. The initiative examines the impact of seed health on seeds intended for sowing, considers the movement of seeds in international trade, and acknowledges that seeds can function as vectors for pests, presenting biosecurity concerns managed under phytosanitary systems such as the IPPC, NPPO, and regional plant protection organizations.

The initiative was established in response to an increasing need for methods to detect a growing range of pathogens, based on requirements related to both seed quality and phytosanitary regulations. There is also recognition that rapid method development can be urgent, especially if emergent pathogens affect trade. ISTA's role includes supporting the global seed trade by facilitating the rapid development and adoption of such methods when necessary. As an association of seed laboratories, ISTA emphasizes building capability and capacity within its accredited laboratories system, primarily through accreditation as well as workshops and training.

Currently, the Accreditation and Technical Department and the Seed Health Committee are developing a proposal to explore alternative approaches to laboratory accreditation for seed health. Traditionally, accreditation has been method-specific; new approaches could broaden access for more laboratories. Constraints discussed previously include comparative testing and the logistical challenges of moving pest-containing samples internationally—an ongoing consideration for the initiative.

ISTA's existing method validation process will remain unchanged for incorporating Seed Health methods into the ISTA rules, which continues to involve a proposal and voting at the ordinary general meeting. The current discussion centres on whether a pre-approval process is feasible, particularly for methods validated outside ISTA's standard process and considering acceptable differences between methodologies. This discussion is ongoing and represents initial considerations from the Executive Committee, the Seed Health Committee, and the Accreditation and Technical Department. One possibility under review is whether externally validated methods should be eligible for inclusion in the ISTA rules or adopted as ISTA methods.

Collaboration has consistently been a central theme throughout both this Congress and the Triennium, as Keshavulu has noted. As part of the Seed Health initiative, which Keshavulu has already discussed in his reports, efforts have focused on enabling more rapid method development and enhancing capability and capacity through partnerships with international organizations, including the International Plant Protection Convention, regional and national plant protection organizations, and scientific bodies such as the American Phyto pathological Society. These groups are also exploring collaborative opportunities to accelerate progress.

Thank you very much. In the meantime, we have received the Rwanda in the room. Innocent. We need Rwanda here. And during the coffee break we received all necessary documentation for Kenya.

Now may I request Ignacio Aranciaga, ISTA Executive Committee Member (Argentina) to make a presentation on ISTA Advocates as a part of expansion of seed testing worldwide.

I'd like to highlight the importance of the ISTA Advocate role for expanding ISTA's presence in regions or countries where it is not yet established or is underrepresented. This initiative aligns with the second goal of the 2025 ISTA Strategy—to enhance global seed testing capacity through collaboration and targeted outreach.

ISTA currently has members in 83 countries and over 400 scientists worldwide, but there is still a need to grow into new areas. The ISTA Advocate position, approved at the Annual Meeting in Cambridge 2024, aims to identify potential collaborators, encourage membership, and promote ISTA activities such as workshops and conferences in these regions. Advocates are selected by the ECOM based on their demonstrated commitment to ISTA. This voluntary role requires leadership, strong knowledge of ISTA, strong regional connections, and a willingness to undertake advocacy tasks and maintain ethical standards.

Key responsibilities include recruiting new members and partners, supporting marketing efforts, representing ISTA at events fostering communication with stakeholders, and submitting trimester reports to the Secretariat. The term is three years, extendable by the ECOM. ISTA will recognize advocates with a certificate, local event participation, member pricing for publications, and free ISTA Rule access. Our collective goal is to help ISTA expand internationally.

Craig McGill, a member of the ISTA Executive Committee from New Zealand, announced the launch of a new ECOM initiative: the Science Advisory Panel. This panel is still under discussion following feedback from technical committees earlier in the week. Its purpose is to provide ISTA with external scientific expertise and perspective, building on the existing internal structures and evolving from the previous Seed Science Advisory Group, which will conclude at the end of this Congress.

The Science Advisory Panel will comprise 11 experts from diverse fields, including science, social science, policy, and industry—mainly external to ISTA. Members will serve three-year terms, with the possibility of extension to six years, and their appointments will be staggered to ensure continuity. The panel aims to advise on trends and innovations that may affect ISTA's mission in seed quality assurance, method development, and laboratory accreditation. It will also allow ISTA to proactively address changes rather than merely reacting.

The panel will report to ECOM at least twice annually and provide advice to both ECOM and TCOM as needed. The Secretariat will handle administrative support; however, there will be no direct funding for panel members. This initiative aims to broaden ISTA's expertise and enhance its ability to adapt to rapid global changes impacting seed science and technology.

6. Report of the Secretary General

ISTA Secretary General, Andreas Wais:

Thank you for the introduction, Keshavulu. As noted, Florina will cover accreditation, while I'll present statistics from the Secretary General's report, highlighting key activities of the ISTA in 2025. The full report is available on the ISTA website.

To summarise, I'll review ISTA Secretariat updates, membership, training and education, publications, achievements, and finances, using end-of-year 2024 data. Financial figures and statistics refer to last year's data.

This year, Beata Hubnerova joined as Audit and Accreditation and PT Administrator at 40% capacity, following an internal redistribution of tasks to support audit, marketing, finances, and sales. This shift relieved Florina's workload and allowed focus on essential duties. We also increased full-time staff and saw growth in accredited laboratories, with over 10 added in recent years and six more between 2023 and 2024.

Such growth supports our income and helps offset inflation, so we do not need to raise membership fees. Most accredited labs are in Europe and Asia, with other regions seeing steady numbers, reflecting areas of association growth.

Now I would like to hand over to Florina. She's covering the next part of this presentation. I join you later.

ISTA Head of Accreditation & Technical Department, Florina Palada :

Good morning. I am presenting a summary of the Accreditation Department's activities since 2016, covering achievements, challenges, and plans for the future. This report provides an overview of the department, audits performed in 2024, feedback from contracted auditors, recent changes to nonconformities policies initiated in 2023, and revisions to accreditation standards and directives. It also outlines other departmental objectives and support from the ECOM Accreditation Working group.

The current team includes me as the manager, with support from Branka, who manages the standard proficiency test and serves as quality manager. Neelam and Beata handle audit administration, while Stella is both a system auditor and deputy for the proficiency test. In 2024, the department conducted 62 audits, including assessments for eight new accreditation candidates (one as a sampling entity). Most audits were performed onsite due to specific circumstances, following approval from the Accreditation working group; three were conducted completely remotely. The accreditation process for a few laboratories is ongoing, but by the end of 2024 there will be 163 accredited laboratories, reflecting growth in both audit numbers and accredited facilities.

From 2023 to 2024, fourteen new laboratories achieved accreditation, and several new candidates are in process for 2025. Projections for 2024 include 50 reaccreditation audits, approximately five accreditation audits, and one planned re-audit. For 2025, two audits will focus on scope extension for sampling. To extend their scope, laboratories accredited for testing must undergo an onsite assessment. By April, thirteen laboratories had been audited, while two voluntarily terminated their accreditations for reasons unrelated to departmental policy.

In 2025, the department will have a total of 25 contracted auditors across several categories, including three at the ISTA Secretariat, with Branka and Stella serving as system auditors. Both system and technical audits are conducted, and there are additional candidates for these roles. Recent applications for seed health expertise have been received, increasing available resources. Two experienced auditors, Rita and Valerie Cockerell, have reduced or ceased their auditing roles, prompting the approval of two new technical auditors in 2025. The approval process for independent auditors typically takes 1.5 to 2 years.

The department continues to monitor auditor distribution and strives to maintain competent audit coverage. Feedback from laboratories audited in 2024 met key performance indicators, with a satisfaction rating of 93.8%. Any less than satisfactory evaluations prompted corrective action, such as follow-up meetings.

Updates to the nonconformity policy, effective since 2023, set deadlines of six months for substantial and nine months for non-substantial issues. The transition has been smooth, with minimal inquiries. Crop group classifications were updated in 2024 and 2025 based on laboratory requirements and committee decisions.

Proficiency tests are managed in collaboration with relevant chairs, and results are provided to participating laboratories. Accredited laboratories generally outperform voluntary participants. Warning letters are issued when overall results fall below certain thresholds to maintain standards and uniformity.

Information on Seed Health and GMO activities, which are not directly coordinated by this department, is incorporated based on updates from colleagues. Changes in the quality management system in 2024 included reverting to the standard logo and revising documents to align with updated rules and accreditation standards. Two directives related to laboratory accreditation with sampling entities have also been reviewed and updated.

Laboratories or sampling entities with sampling units are now included in updated standards detailed during a recent webinar and available on the ISTA website. The revised accreditation standard, version 8, will take effect from January 1, 2026, and translations in French, German, and Spanish are planned for release at the same time.

Several webinars and workshops covered topics including sample and analyst monitoring, quality assurance, eCertificates, and changes to standards and directives. Participation was high, with positive feedback from both accredited and non-accredited laboratories. Attendees are encouraged to propose future webinar topics to address ongoing needs and support uniformity within the sector. Three advanced-level quality assurance workshops were held—one in South Africa, two in Romania—and an online beginners' workshop is scheduled for December 2024.

New guidelines for computer vision and risk assessment have been published, with additional contributions from auditors. After a survey and collaboration with the Accreditation Working Group, revisions to the Accreditation Standard and Directive 06B were formulated and presented to the executive committee, addressing cross-border sampling challenges.

Ongoing projects include internal audits, certification initiatives, and technical committee support. Feedback processes for audited laboratories are being improved, with a management review webinar planned for October 2025. Efforts continue to recruit new contracted auditors and to support laboratories in adopting the latest accreditation standards.

ISTA Secretary General, Andreas Wais :

Andreas Wais presented an overview of recent Secretariat activities, emphasising teamwork in executing initiatives. Florina highlighted quality assurance trainings, while Andreas noted additional workshops held globally: purity (Cambridge), tetrazolium (Montevideo, in Spanish), seed health (Bangalore), and germination/tetrazolium (Lincoln), with participant numbers ranging from 21 to 32. Sixteen webinars were organised last year, some in collaboration with ISSS.

Regarding publications, "Seed Science and Technology" is now mostly open access, except for two back issues sold in 2024. There were 16 full-length papers published and four research notes, generating income alongside various handbook sales. The ISTA handbook was released this year and will be promoted via newsletter.

Certificate sales saw a surge at the end of 2023 before a price increase in 2024. Usage shifted towards older orange certificates, but is expected to normalise. Digital eCertificate adoption grew, with positive feedback from labs, and efforts continue to promote the E system to stakeholders and associations. Financially, 2024 closed with increased membership (from 247 to 253) and growth in accreditation subscriptions due to more laboratory audits. The previous year's centenary meeting in Cambridge resulted in higher income and costs, though this year's sponsorships fell short of expectations. Income from free participation of ECOM members and TCOM chairs is now reflected in the budget for clarity on subsidies.

In 2024, annual meetings, technical committees, and workshops saw increased income, with most technical workshops being self-funded. No advertisements ran in STI last year, but a small budget for 2025 is included. ISTA rules income and accreditation audits both exceeded expectations due to more audits conducted. Proficiency tests, including GMO, rely on voluntary participation, generally determined early each year.

QA workshops generated significantly higher revenue this year, partly due to a fully sponsored event in Francophone Africa. Income from seed science and technology publications rose, driven by full-length paper sales. Technical publications and calibration samples fluctuate annually, depending mainly on calibration sample transactions, which are offered as a membership benefit at cost.

On expenditures, costs for the annual meeting and Congress were higher in 2024, in line with the budget, with expected expenses around 193,000 Swiss francs. Executive Committee costs decreased slightly thanks to sponsorships but will rise this year with free ECOM member participation now reflected within the budget. Technical committee grants remain stable, with an increase projected for special projects next year.

Seed Testing International's publication costs average 35,000 Swiss francs, while ISTA rules expenditure is conservatively budgeted due to possible rule changes. Accreditation audit costs increased alongside the number of audits, and proficiency test expenses face additional pressures from import permit requirements and higher transport costs.

QA workshop expenditures match their income, and subsidies for the scientific journal have reduced over time despite stable editorial costs. eCertificate maintenance continues to draw from reserves until 2026, when it will shift to operational costs; reserves stand at 3.815 million Swiss francs. Personnel expenses rose 40.000 due to Secretariat restructuring, with modest further increases expected.

Operational expenses reflect recent IT system upgrades. Travel budgets remain variable based on meeting locations, averaging 50.000 Swiss francs. Marketing costs spiked last year due to centennial events, but website expenses should stabilize. Financial gains in 2023 were largely attributed to exchange rate fluctuations, benefiting project funding; however, current rates may adversely affect this year's outcome. Overall, income and expenses are largely in line with forecasts, with ongoing adjustments to accommodate changing needs and market conditions.

So that means we have approved the reports of the report to the Secretary General. Approval of year closing 2024 as edited by BDO. Approval of Budget 2025 and proposed Budget 2026. Approval of BDO as auditors for 2025 for the 2025 financial year.

Report of the ISTA Secretary General

Voting Result: 23 YES Votes

ISTA Financial Report, Budget for 2024 and provisional budget for 2025 approval

Voting Result: 23 YES Votes

ISTA Financial Report

Voting Result: 23 YES Votes

ISTA Budget 2025 and provisional Budget 2026

Voting Result: 23 YES Votes

BDO as ISTA External Financial Auditors for 2025

Voting Result: 23 YES Votes

7. ISTA Strategy 2025-2028

Presented by ISTA Vice President Ernest Allen (USA).

Founded in 1924, ISTA has historically focused on publishing standard procedures within the field of seed testing. Starting with just 26 member countries, the association now encompasses over 250 member laboratories across 81 countries and distinct economies. This remarkable growth reflects the guidance of our designated authorities, the commitment of our members, and steadfast support from industry partners, all unified under the vision that shapes ISTA's strategy—advancing uniformity and quality in seed evaluation worldwide.

The core of the ISTA strategy is the establishment and maintenance of global standards in seed testing and analysis, ensuring accuracy and reliability in seed quality assessments internationally. ISTA's mission centers on building confidence in the global seed trade through consistent and dependable data.

During the last triennium, thanks to the efforts of Keshavulu and ECOM, there has been substantial progress on strategic priorities, particularly in Latin America and Africa. As a result, significant changes to the upcoming triennium's strategy are not deemed necessary.

The 2025–2028 strategy builds upon ISTA's century-long legacy, with specific emphasis on advancements made over the past three years. Entering its second century, ISTA is dedicated to continued expansion both regionally and internationally. The strategy is organized around six principal goals; for this presentation, goals five and six have been consolidated. Each goal will be discussed individually, supported by relevant examples.

Goal 1: Develop scientifically robust rules and methodologies for sampling and testing. For instance, ongoing collaboration with technical committees (TCOMs) has enabled the inclusion of new tropical and subtropical species in the rules, supporting ISTA's expansion in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. This goal remains a foundational activity, with annual reviews and revisions.

Goal 2: contribute and develop collaborations to increase seed testing capacity and capability worldwide.

Goal 3: Strengthen the accreditation system to address stakeholder needs. Recent enhancements include updates to travel policies for auditors, two revisions of the accreditation standard (versions 7 and 8), and adjustments to the accreditation procedures for multi-site laboratories and sampling units.

Goal 4: Strengthen the Science and Technology underpinning ISTA to develop innovative research to make the link between scientific developments and applications in seed sampling and testing and to allow the requirements of the seed sector to be met

Goals 5 and 6: Maintain continuous stakeholder consultation to inform organizational management. Stakeholder input, gathered through Congress and Annual Meetings, is meticulously reviewed by ECOM to guide decision-making and ensure organizational success.

The current three-year strategy forms part of a broader nine-year roadmap spanning from 2016 to 2025. Foundational assumptions underpinning this approach include maintaining ISTA's leadership in setting and publishing internationally recognized methods for seed sampling and testing. The 2025 strategy, available on the ISTA website, ensures continuity in ISTA's mission and reinforces its pivotal role within the international seed sector.

Voting results on ISTA Strategy 2025-2028

Voting Result: 23 YES Votes

8. Election of Officers and Members-at-Large of the Executive Committee

I was going around finding three election officers for helping the Secretariat from the people down here. I would suggest Berta Killermann as outgoing member of the executive committee. I would like to have suggestion of Eddie Goldschagg as long-standing chair of the bulking and sampling committee. And finally the New Zealand DA who is not a voting delegate here, but our host, John Randall, to help us with as election officers for the Vice President and the members at large. If you agree, I would appreciate your applause. Election officers were approved.

So now, so moving forward, we have the two candidates for the ISTA Vice President 2025-2028, Ignacio Aranciaga from Argentina, Sergio Pasquini from Italy. I request Ignacio Aranciaga, Argentina, to make a presentation and introduce yourself.

Ignacio Aranciaga, Executive Committee Member (Argentina)

Good morning everyone. My name is Ignacio Aranciaga. I am an agricultural engineer with a master in Seed technology and I represent Argentina in ISTA. Argentina have been an ISTA member since 1924 and its laboratory had been accredited by ISTA since the years 2000. For 26 years I have been part of the Quality Evaluation department of the National Seed Institute which is the body responsible for the application of the Argentina Seed Law. I've been working in the lab as a seed sampler and a seed analyst and since the year 2009 I have been the Director of the Quality Evaluation Department and Head of the ISTA Accredited Lab. I have been a member of the germination TCOM since 2007, of the Tetrazolium TCOM since 2010 and of the Bulking and Sampling TCOM since 2016. I have led several validation studies. Currently, I am leading the validation study of *Glycine max* for tetrazolium testing and I am leading the translation of the ISTA Rules into the Spanish language that I developed together with other colleagues in Argentina.

In the year 2016, I had the honour of being elected to take part in the ECOM. In the ECOM, I am tasked with chairing the working group of marketing and publication and expansion of seed testing worldwide. Target that it is very important for the incoming ISTA president. Also, I am the liaison officer with the Rules TCOM. The years I have spent working in the TCOMs and in the ECOM have allowed me to learn a lot and have given me a deep knowledge and understanding about ISTA. There are several reasons why I am running for Vice President of ISTA that I would like to share with all of you, the seed is life, but not only as a symbol, but as a source of food for humanity. We must do our best to assess the quality of that seed. Speaking one language in seed testing around the world, I see many opportunities to grow and expand ISTA worldwide. Because ISTA has a very important role to play in the world.

It's very important to always consider that each region, each country, has its own reality. For this reason, I consider it very important to continue working with the region and country where ISTA is not represented or is underrepresented, so that ISTA can grow and develop there. All of this without neglecting to address the needs of region and countries where ISTA is already well developed and established. I wish to encourage the many seed specialists around the world to actively participate in ISTA. I also wish to encourage more laboratory to become members of ISTA to facilitate the seed trade. I strongly believe too that it is very important that the ECOM continue supporting this important role with the aim of facilitating it, providing support and solution to the several situations that may occur in the daily work of seed testing laboratories. To do this, the communication and synergy between the ECOM and the TCOM is fundamental.

The ECOM must find ways to increase support for the TCOMs whenever possible. Finally, I want to give more visibility to those people that develop the work every day with quick commitment, in a humble way and usually behind the scenes, solving our needs, our problem and allowing all of us to do our job. I am referring to the staff of the ISTA Secretariat. Their experience and contribution are also very important for all the ISTA community. My intention is to ask from the ECOM to each ISTA member, how can ISTA help you to make your daily work easier? I want to express in a humble way as possible that I have a strong commitment to ISTA and agree strongly with the proposals of the association as well as the Argentine government that support my nomination. It will be a great honour for me to continue serving ISTA as Vice President to help to achieve the ISTA vision, mission and objective together the other ECOM colleagues whom I have worked for years supporting. There is a lot to be done, and I look forward to your support. Thank you for your attention and for your vote.

Now we move on to the next the other candidate. We have the Sergio Pasquini, Italy. May I request Sergio to introduce yourself.

Sergio Pasquini, ISTA Executive Committee Member (Italy)

Thank you. Hello everyone. Dear delegates, I'm Sergio Pasquini. I am an agronomist and started work in the 90s in the plant Physiology laboratory dedicated into a study and localization on an enzyme in the plasma membrane of soybeans. Later I did my PhD in Agriculture Biotechnology on the conservation of recalcitrant. From 1996, I worked as the quality manager of a seed testing laboratory of agricultural seeds in a big national seed company, working with others to create new laboratories. Standardization of seed testing methods. Preparation of documents based on the ISO 7025 quality standards. Since 2003, I am the quality manager in the ISTA laboratory of the National Carabinieri Biodiversity center in Verona, the only one in Italy for forestry accredited to ISTA. Our laboratory underwent seven audits, six on sites, one due to the pandemic, as a virtual audit. So I know, like many of you, what it like to be audited by ISTA. So I have been working with ISTA for about 35 years and have been involved for many years in ISTA Technical committees and from 2022 as a member of the ISTA Executive Committee. Currently I am chair of the ISTA Tetrazolium Technical Committee, Member of the ISTA Moisture Technical Committee, Member of the ISTA Proficiency Test Technical Committee, Reviewer for method validation within ISTA, Reviewer of the ISTA International Journal Science and Technology.

During my nomination as a candidate to join the ECOM in 2022, I highlighted my experience on the native species and asked the DAs to vote for me to bring the wild side of seeds into the ECOM. I was successfully elected to serve on the ECOM as a member at large for you, the membership and I achieved some of the aim by hosting the ISTA Annual meeting in Verona in 2023, which included the seminar focused on biodiversity. During the years, I have attended as representative from Italy the OECD meetings for forest scheme. In 2019, as an international expert consultant, I was sent by FAO to help a country resolve the nonconformities for during the first ISTA audit of their country's governmental seed testing laboratories for crops. In the last 20 years, starting as a member of ISTA Technical Committees, I have become chair of a committee and then member of The Executive Committee. I know quite well the mechanisms that help both regulate, facilitate and support the work of the ISTA community. I believe the expansion of the ISTA community through the exchange between laboratory technicians and scientists from different countries is fundamental for continued growth together.

I am convinced that the harmonization of analytical methods also involves an important tool workshops. These allow everyone, experts and beginners of different languages, experiences and ages to come together to discuss and find the best method to better determine the seed quality. I believe in the young generation that can deal with this challenging period of our era. I also believe that safeguarding our environment will increasingly become a priority for our best survival in this alarming situation of ongoing and increasingly evident climate change changes. This ambitious objective can also be pursued by highlighting new technologies to be applied together with already known practices. I would like to put my knowledge, my technical skills and my enthusiasm at the service of the ISTA community as your Vice President, so that I could give my small contribution in the coming period. For this reason, I kindly ask you to vote for me as ISTA vice president for 2025- 2028 to then serve as your president in 2028. As vice president, I would like to support Ernest in his term and initiatives as ISTA President and to support and work with the ECOM Working Groups, Secretariat and ISTA membership.

For my part, I offer my time to ISTA and my Institute will support me to future ISTA meeting as Vice President from a lab through the labs across the world. Thank you very much for your attention.

Thank you, Sergio and thank you all. So, voting members have provided election cards for the Vice presidents, which is available, which is provided in envelopes. You can just verify. I request you to take your own time. Maybe 10 minutes from now. So now is the 12:17, maybe 12:27 and then you cast the vote. The voting box is provided here.

9. Fixation of annual subscriptions

Presented by ISTA Vice President Ernest Allen (USA).

So this presentation will be fairly quick, so you'll still have a chance to think about how you want to vote. So ISTA membership fees are primarily used to pay for the staffing facility at the Secretariat, the activities of the TCOMs, the documents that support analyst training, including the rules and the travel required to conduct ISTA business. The ECOM has determined that the current dues levels are appropriate to absorb these costs, and therefore no increase is recommended. In addition, if fees are paid by December 31st 2025, there will be a 10% discount applied. So on this slide, you can see what the current fees are and what they will be for the next year. I'll ask you to go ahead and get your green cards out and in a second we'll vote. Okay, so if everyone have their cards. Green cards for yes, if you agree.

Voting Result: 24 YES Votes

The results of the election of the ISTA Vice President 2025-2028 announced.

Sergio Pasquini from Italy will be Vice President for the next triennium 2025-2028.

Now we request to call upon, one by one the ECOM candidates for the next triennium 2025-2028.

Axel Goeritz (Germany)

I'm Axel. I did an apprenticeship two years on two different farms before I studied agriculture and seed science in Stuttgart Hohenheim by Professor Steiner. It was electrophoresis on grasses. And since then I've been the head of the ISTA lab in Hannover and now in Hamelin. 1995 in Copenhagen was my first Congress. And Norbert Leist, most of you know him. The former five year president.

Some years I've been a voting delegate of Germany. Many years. I've been member of the Purity TCOM since 2015, member of the Moisture committee. The last five years I'm the TCOM chair of the Moisture TCOM. I'm married, have two kids and I love singing. Why do I apply for this ECOM? I see huge problems worldwide. Climate exchange, hunger wars. They can't be solved by one nation or by nations itself. We have to do it together. And what is our part? We need a strong International Seed Testing Association. I like mingling with all of you, getting other views, ideas and finally getting the best solutions. I would like to be an important part of the goal to preserve and even strengthen the international character of our organization.

Claid Mujaju (Zimbabwe)

My name is Claid Mujaju. I will start from the bottom. The reason why I want to be in the committee is because Africa is the heartbeat of the world. I believe Africa is enough land to produce enough seed.

And that's the reason why I am in the Seed Expansion Working Group. The whole desire is to make sure that Africa, with all its countries become part of ISTA. And to that end, I'm also part of the advisory board that advises the African Union in terms of seed. And within that all the African countries are part of the African Union. So I take that as an opportunity to speak about ISTA and the whole essence of accreditation so that we can trade in seed internationally. If you want to know about me, I've got a PhD in agricultural sciences from University of Swedish that deals with agricultural sciences and specializing in product quality. And I have also a master's in systematics and biodiversity science. I'm a botanist by profession. I've been head of the seed testing lab in Zimbabwe for more than 15 years and I participated in almost all the seed harmonization initiatives in Africa. I participate in a number of conferences within Africa. So in terms of networking I think I'm an asset and through me ISTA can grow. Thank you.

Craig McGill (New Zealand)

Good afternoon everyone. My name is Craig McGill and I work for Massey University in Palmerston North which is on the north island of New Zealand where I undertake teaching and research in seed science and technology. I am also a personal member for the ISTA accredited Assure Quality Seed Laboratory in Palmerston north which is just a short 15 minute walk from Massey University. Assure Quality Seed Laboratory is the largest seed laboratory in the Southern Hemisphere and is also the independent verification agency for the Ministry for Primary Industries, the ISTA designated authority for New Zealand. My time in ISTA goes back. It doesn't seem that long, but it goes back to 2001 when I attended my first ISTA Congress in Angers where I presented some of the work. While at the Congress in Angers I joined the Moisture Committee, eventually becoming Chair of the moisture committee in 2007 and I remained chair until 2013. I was also Vice-Chair of the Rules Committee from 2010 to 2016. I joined the Executive Committee in 2010 and was elected Vice President in 2013 at the ISTA Congress in Tallinn, becoming President from 2016 to 2019 and immediate past President from 2019 to 2022. Since 2022 I have been a member at large of the Executive Committee and I am also an ISTA System Auditor looking to the coming triennium. I would like to continue as a member of the Executive Committee to bring my experience and knowledge I have of ISTA and seed testing to the new Committee and also to support Ernest Allen and Sergio Pasquini in their relative roles as President and Vice President of ISTA for the coming Triennium and obviously to help implement the recently approved ISTA strategy for 2025-2028. There are a number of exciting initiatives planned for the Triennium. These include the Seed Health Initiative to celebrate to accelerate the development of seed health methods and building capability and capacity in seed testing. The ongoing work to enable the use of new technologies to support the work of the ISTA Laboratories and the analysts within them and the new panel we've discussed for look towards the future. It will be an honour and a privilege for me to continue to work for the association as a member of the Executive Committee. Thank you.

Didier Demilly (France)

My name is Didier Demilly, I am from France and I have been working in GEVES for variety studying and seed testing for 35 years. In GEVES I coordinate a use of new technologies for seed and plant phenotyping. I manage equipment and metrology and I carry out experiments activities such as trainer, auditor and chair of the ISTA Proficiency Test Committee. I studied agronomy in Nancy Engineer School in France and my first job was a civil service worker not far from here developing agriculture horticulture fishery in Iceland and there I learned how to germinate coconuts. I am married and I have three sons born in Africa. Soon after joining GEVES, I wanted to be involved in ISTA because of its international importance. Since 1992 in Buenos Aires Congress I have been member of the several committees, the Purity, Moisture, Nomenclature, Bulking and Sampling and my main membership is the Proficiency Test Committee. Since its creation in 2001 I organized 13 proficiency tests within the committee and since 2017 I chaired the PTC and it is a great pleasure.

My time with ISTA has been very exciting and a great learning experience. This includes exchanges with many technical committees, ECOM working groups, PTC member, PT leaders, ISTA secretary staff, etc. I would like to thank my committee members and ISTA Secretariat for all the very good work we are doing in the PTC. I also contributed to Angers Congress in 2001 and to workshop or working groups. Work for ISTA has always been one of my priority and I have been able to commit time to this thanks to the support and I have seen the evolution of the association and I firmly believe that ISTA continue to have an important role to play in.

The changing of need of the seed sector, the introduction into rules of new technologies and of course the Proficiency test program to support the ISTA accreditation system. I also would like to mention that I have received the support for my application from the French Designated Authority and from the directors of GEVES and I thank my boss, Clotilde Polderman-Roussille, who strongly support my work at ISTA. Thank you very much for your attention.

Ignacio Aranciaga (Argentina)

I only want to say that first. I am the same person that talked with you a few minutes ago. My proposal and ideas didn't change. My life ideal didn't change neither. And I only want a possibility that is in your hand. To have a place in the new ECOM, to work together with Ernest and Sergio to achieve my ideas and I think the ideas of the majority to have one worldwide speaking one language in seed testing. Thank you.

Irena Gera (Poland)

Dear colleagues, ISTA members, My name is Irena Gera and I am very excited to present myself as a candidate for ISTA Executive Committee. I came from Poland where I work as head of the seed Reference Laboratory in governmental institution, the main inspectorate of Plant Health and seed inspection. After graduating in biology from University in Poland, I began my work as seed analyst in the laboratory, then continued as a technical manager, sampler, trainer, auditor and eventually became head of the laboratory. Since 2016 I've also been involved with ISTA as a technical auditor and since 2020 I am a member of the Proficiency Test committee. I have many years of experience working on national projects and expert's groups. It means including the establishment of national network of ISTA samplers in Poland, reviewing seed legislation, designing training programs for private seed laboratories, many of which I also personally delivered. I was also actively involved in the consolidation of official seed testing laboratories in Poland, helping to unify procedure and rise overall testing quality. I currently serve also as a technical consultant to the Institute of Plant Breeding and Acclimatization in Poland regarding the ISTA rules and I've also supported the Polish Seed Chamber for many years as trainer and advisor for seed samplers and seed analysts in Poland.

If elected to the Executive Committee, I would aim to strengthen effective and transparent communication with each member, continue the ECOM Working Group's work, develop new training projects for building strong educational foundations, improving access to training materials and promoting knowledge sharing between experienced experts and emerging professionals and support ECOM in these efforts. Support is the Secretariat particular accreditation department. Promote ISTA globally and with special focus on Eastern Europe to highlight the critical role of membership and accreditation in ensuring uniformity of seed testing. I believe that collaboration and investment in human potential are key to strengthening ISTA role in the global seed sector. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Ruel Gesmundo (Philippines)

My name is Ruel Gesmundo. I'm from the Philippines.

I'm designated as Assistant Director for Regulatory Services and currently head the National Seed Quality Control Services in the Philippines.

I earned my degree in BA's in Agriculture Major in Plant Pathology from the University of the Philippines and also I'm holding the Postgraduate Diploma on Seed Pathology from Danish Government's Institute of Seed Pathology in Denmark. Later I pursued my Master Studies in Crop Production from Hebrew University Israel and I'm also holding Master of Degree in Development Economics from the University of the Philippines. Further, I started my career as seed pathologist in 1998 until I became the head of the 25 National Seed Quality Control Services across the country. I have received various awards and recognition for exemplary performance to our stakeholders.

Moreover, I have been an ISTA personal member and ISTA designated member as voting delegates from the Philippines since 2010. Also have been ECOM member at large for two consecutive term from 2019 to up to 2025 serving as ECOM Liaison Officer for Germination Committee, a member of several working group under ISTA.

Recently the Philippines was able to support successfully the 2025 ISTA ECOM meeting last February held at Manila which enable participation and engagement of various local and international local institutions including our Department of Agriculture. If given the chance to become ECOM Member at large again, I will be continuously supporting the initiative of ISTA especially in the seed expansion to widen the coverage and presence of ISTA especially in the Asian region as well as the inclusion of more tropical and subtropical species into ISTA rules so as many crops of tropical and subtropical region can be covered.

In addition, I will encourage the engagement of young scientists and professional through Young at ISTA so younger generation can participate more to ISTA activity.

Looking forward for my term as member of ISTA Executive Committee and I humbly ask for your support in order to realize my intentional initiative for ISTA.

Ruojing Wang (Canada)

Good afternoon dear colleagues, my name is Ruojing Wang, I work for Canadian Seed Inspection Agency, Science and Technology Section. Our Lab is only national lab in in Canada and we develop a method, we manage the Canadian testing official method and support private testing laboratory. Canada is a founding Member for ISTA. We have been with ISTA for over 100 years. Over the years Canada have contributed to ISTA in various technical committees and as well as a president and hosted many workshops and congress in the past. I just want to continue to Canadian contribution to ISTA community. We have been work with ISTA recently we helped the first ISTA accredited lab in Africa Senegal have a first ISTA accredited lab with technical support and training from Canada. We also hosted the first ISTA Young ISTA lady from Bangladesh to who visited our lab and their lab got ISTA accreditation. Since 2009 I have been served for different technical committee such as GMO, Proficiency Test, Wild Species and Purity committee. I have been vice chair for Purity committee for six years then became a chair for last six years.

And during this period I have led working groups for revision of chapter 14 with a different kind of committee, and I have worked with ATC, developed the computer vision first guide for practical use. I have been worked with different working groups such as the Statistic Committee and Bulking and Sampling committee. I'm a firm believer of innovation and new technology. I would like to bring the strength to ISTA to have science-based testing rules and innovation on testing methodologies. And because I firm believe the collaboration, I would like to open my experience and expertise and collaborate with different regions and different expertise to make a better science-based testing rule. I have a good working relation with ISTA community. Outside of ISTA, I worked with Ernest Allen for other initiatives. Under Ernest leadership I think I can provide best support to Executive committee to achieve to reach out to ISTA members and stakeholders to achieve ISTA strategy. I would like to contribute. I need your support. Vote for me then I will contribute my best to ISTA community. Thank you all.

Vanessa Sosa (Uruguay).

She cannot be here with us today on personal things and we have a short video from her for her application.

Hello everyone, My name is Vanessa Sosa. I'm from Uruguay, a country in South America with a strong commitment to the development of agriculture sector. I am a biochemist with a Master's and PhD in Biological Science and I have a specialism in seed science and technology. Since 2014 I have been working at the National Seed Institute of Uruguay, an integrator laboratory where I am the manager. Throughout the years we have activity promote training activities in close cooperation with ISTA. For example, in 2015 we host the ISTA annual meeting. We brought together 129 participants from 39 countries along with two associated workshops. In 2018 we organized the ISTA Quality Assurance workshop for advanced laboratory which welcomed participants from Latin America and Africa. In 2024 we organized a ISTA workshop on tetrazolium testing. And this year we organizing another ISTA workshop focused on seed identification and purity testing. We have continued to focus on training. One of our proudest achievements was the first meeting of seed analysts with 159 participants from 29 countries. Since then we have continued to organize this meeting year after year. Uruguay is a country with significant seed trade, both import and exports.

And for us international standards and cooperation are crucial. I believe this global perspective is one of the contributions I bring to the ECOM. It has been a pleasure to serve as a member at large of the ECOM during this last period. I would be honoured to continue contribution to the committee's work and the ISTA's mission. Especially by breeding the perspective of countries that are developing countries. Thank you for very much for your attention.

Thank you very much also to that presentation. We would come now to the election part that we can count the votes over lunch. I will kindly ask you to fill the green cards which are with you. You can vote for up to eight candidates out of the nine.

Andreas asked the Berta Killermann, Eddie Goldshagg and John Randall to join to count the votes.

Thank you all so now I hand over it to Andreas for the announcement of election of the ISTA member at large for 2025-28. Andreas.

ISTA Executive Committee 2025 – 2028

Claid Mujaju	Zimbabwe
Vanessa Sosa	Uruguay
Didier Demilly	France
Irena Gera	Poland
Ruel C. Gesmundo	Philippines
Ignacio Aranciaga	Argentina
Keshavulu Kunusoth	India
Craig McGill	New Zealand
Ruojing Wang	Canada

10. Consideration and adoption of the proposed Rules Changes 2025

Presenter Jodi Keelling, Chair of ISTA Rules Committee.

This year we have one new species, the 8th edition of the stabilized plants name list, 8 editorial changes and 13 rule changes to vote on. These were posted to the ISTA website two months before the OGM to give everyone a chance to prepare for this meeting. In addition, we had an open rules committee meeting online on the 9th of April to allow for comments and questions. So we'll start with the editorial changes, then we'll do the new species, then the stabilized list, and then the rule changes.

PART A. INTRODUCTION OF EDITORIAL CHANGES

A 1. Editorial corrections

Voting Result: 23 YES, 0 Abs votes: Approved

PART B. NEW SPECIES AND CHANGES TO SPECIES NAMES

B 2.1 *Diplotaxis tenuifolia* (L.) DC. is a species belonging to the *Brassicaceae* family.

Voting Result: 23 YES, 0 Abs votes: Approved

B 2.2 Nomenclature changes

Voting Result: 24 YES, 0 Abs votes: Approved

PART C. RULES CHANGES AND NEW METHODS REQUIRING A VOTE

C.1.1 Revision of subplot allowance for *Solanum lycopersicum* L. and other fleshy vegetable species.

Voting Result: 24 YES, 0 Abs votes: Approved

C 1.2 Maximum seed lot size for tomato reset to 10 000kg

Voting Result: 24 YES, 0 Abs votes: Approved

C 5.1 Revised wording to clarify the first count may be postponed or omitted

Voting Result: 24 YES, 0 Abs votes: Approved

C.5.2. Change in percentage of Potassium nitrate solution permitted

Voting Result: 23 YES, 1 NO, 0 Abs votes: Approved

C.6.1. Change minimum number of seeds required for tetrazolium test

Voting Result: 24 YES, 0 Abs votes: Approved

C.6.2. Rounding tetrazolium results

Voting Result: 24 YES, 0 Abs votes: Approved

C.7.1 Detection of *Fusarium oxysporum* f.sp. *lycopersici* in *Solanum lycopersicum* (tomato) seed (7-034)

Voting Result: 24 YES, 0 Abs votes: Approved

C.9.1 Adaption of Table 9A to Table 2C

Voting Result: 24 YES, 0 Abs votes: Approved

C.9.2 Period allowed between sampling and moisture testing

Voting Result: 22 YES, 0 Abs votes: Approved

C.15.1 Addition of a new species for the Radicle emergence test

Voting Result: 22 YES, 1 NO, 0 Abs votes: Approved

C.15.2 Precision of temperature for Accelerating Ageing chambers

Voting Result: 24 YES, 0 Abs votes: Approved

C.16.1 Revision of entire Chapter 16; rename chapter

Voting Result: 24 YES, 0 Abs votes: Approved

C.19.1 Clarification of when an Orange or Blue International certificate can be issued for GMO test results

Voting Result: 24 YES, 0 Abs votes: Approved

11. Consideration and adoption of the Reports

The Technical Committee reports have been presented in the past two days, so we now need to approve these Technical Committee reports and also the activity reports of the ISTA Technical Committees that were communicated two months prior to this OGM. Can we approve the reports of the Technical Committees. ISTA President Keshavulu Kunusoth invited the designated members to vote on the Technical Committees Reports

Voting Result: 24 YES Votes

12. Announcement of the place and date for the next Ordinary General Meetings

❖ ISTA Annual Meeting 2026

Ruojing Wang (Designated voting member, Canada)

Please mark your calendars for the annual meeting, which will be held in Calgary, Canada, from June 22 to 25, 2026. Calgary is located in Western Canada, adjacent to a national park and surrounded by mountain scenery. The event is scheduled just before the peak of the summer travel season. We encourage attendees to book their travel arrangements early, as demand may increase during this time. To welcome everyone, we will share a video introduction to Calgary. We look forward to seeing you there.

On behalf of the local organizing committee, I am pleased to announce that preliminary plans are underway for a variety of workshops and activities. The venue, situated in downtown Calgary, has been selected so that both accommodation and meeting spaces are within the same location—eliminating the need for additional transportation. Attendees can easily explore the downtown area using the complimentary train service.

Inspired by the high standards set by previous meetings, particularly New Zealand, we are committed to delivering an exceptional experience this year. Currently, we are considering two parallel pre-meeting workshops: a three-day purity workshop and a seed health workshop, tailored for different participant interests but sharing the same venue and activities to optimize costs.

Calgary is approximately six hours by car from the National Seed Laboratory, where I work. Together with Florina, we are planning an advanced QA workshop as a post-meeting event. Our goal is to announce the workshop schedules as soon as possible to facilitate early planning.

If you have suggestions or would like to propose additional activities, please feel free to contact me or Janek, another member of the local organizing committee. Our team represents a collaboration between government and private industry, including SGS and 20/20 Lab.

We warmly welcome you to Calgary, Canada, from June 22 to 25, and look forward to a successful and engaging annual meeting.

❖ ISTA Annual Meeting 2027

Sylvie Ducournau (Executive Committee member, France)

Good afternoon, colleagues. On behalf of GEVES and with support from the French Ministry of Agriculture, I am delighted to invite you all to Angers in 2027 for the ISTA Annual Meeting. The seed sector plays a vital role in French agriculture—France leads as Europe's top seed producer and is the world's largest exporter of agricultural crops. Over half (55%) of our seeds are exported, resulting in a trade surplus of 1.2 billion euros.

This slide shows the location of Angers, in western France, within the Loire Valley UNESCO Heritage site. Angers is about one and a half hours from Paris by train, and two hours directly from Paris airport. Known as the French plant capital, Angers boasts a strong focus on seeds and horticulture. The area hosts many national and international seed companies, research institutes, technical centers, high schools, and universities specializing in science and technology. Both the headquarters of GEVES and the national seed testing station—where my colleagues and I work—are located near Angers, supported by a team of 100 engineers and technicians dedicated to seed testing and research.

The entire GEVES staff is excited to organize this event, including workshops. I will now present a short video. Thank you for your attention, and we look forward to welcoming many of you to Angers in 2027.

❖ ISTA Congress 2028

Innocent Namuhoranye (ISTA Designated Members, Rwanda)

My name is Innocent Namuhoranye, chairperson of the National Seed Association of Rwanda and a designated member of ISTA. Let me share some important travel highlights about our country. Citizens from African nations receive a visa upon arrival, and travellers from other countries can also obtain visas free of charge at entry. No online application is necessary as visas are granted upon arrival. Rwanda boasts a safe and secure environment, ranking ninth among top destinations globally. It is the second-best place in Africa for business, and holds the same ranking for International Conference Congress preferences. Among the world's top 15 green destinations, Kigali stands out as Africa's cleanest city and ranks second worldwide.

Getting here is straightforward thanks to excellent air connectivity. There are many direct flights from Europe and Asia to Rwanda, and from the US you'll need just one layover before arriving in Kigali. The airport is conveniently located less than 10 kilometres from the city center, which typically means a 10–20 minute drive without traffic—and rest assured, Rwanda is known for its smooth-flowing roads.

Our country offers superb conference infrastructure. We have a range of facilities, including five-star, four-star, and three-star hotels, as well as various convention centers. Rwanda has hosted major events such as the seventh session of the Governing Body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, the Africa Food System Forum 2024 Annual Summit, the Africa Green Revolution conference in 2022, and upcoming events like the Africa Seed Trade Association Congress 2025 and the ISTA Congress in 2028. We hope everyone, even those unable to attend this time, will experience Rwandan hospitality in the future.

There are more than 10,000 hotel rooms available in five-star accommodations, 1,533 in four-star hotels, 3,500 mid-range rooms in three-star properties, and 4,967 in two-star options. For tourism, Rwanda offers a wide array of attractions and activities, including national parks and gorilla trekking.

When it comes to entertainment, visitors can enjoy golf courses and leisure where you can walk freely without cars or animals, simply soaking up the pleasant climate.

13. Any other Business raised by a Member

No business had been raised by a Member under this Agenda point

14. Any other Business raised by consent of the Executive Committee

ISTA Vice President Ernest Allen (USA)

Document OGM25-08 Article changes 2025

The ISTA article changes are evolving. Yesterday during our DA's meeting, one of the members suggested we handle article change proposals similarly to how we treat rule change proposals. Previously, we would simply present the proposed article changes for you to review and vote on. However, it was recommended that we provide more detailed explanations about these changes. That's my goal at the beginning of this presentation. The proposed 2025 article changes mainly aim to clarify several points within the articles. Here's what is being changed:

Firstly, ISTA's main objective is to promote consistent seed testing methods worldwide. Many countries use ISTA as the foundation for their own national seed testing standards, which is important for international trade. To reflect this, we've added the word "national" to acknowledge that many countries base their national rules on ISTA standards, and also use them for international trade. Our strategy, which has been approved for about six years, includes promoting ISTA both nationally and internationally, so we did not see this as controversial. We wanted to clarify that using ISTA at the national level is acceptable, although there's no requirement for countries to use ISTA rules for their national seed sampling, testing, or certification. The option is available if they choose to do so.

The second proposed change is to introduce a new membership category: organizational member. This will allow organizations aligned with ISTA's goals to join ISTA, in addition to current categories like associate, personal, laboratory, or sampling entity memberships. The details are explained in the text you'll see at the end of this presentation.

Organizations, businesses, and NGOs aligned with ISTA's mission can join under the member organization category, provided they support ISTA's objectives and are accepted by the association. The recent changes clarify that Honorary Life memberships are awarded, not elected, and this power rests with the Executive Committee.

Voting on OGM25-08 Article change proposal

Voting Result: 23 YES, 0 NO, 1 Abs Votes

Before moving to the next agenda item, I would like to highlight an important topic for us all: the ISTA Honorary Life Membership awards. These awards recognize individuals who have made exceptional and long-term contributions to ISTA. Since 2007, seven members have received this honour, selected for their significant roles in the Executive Committee, various committees, and their longstanding association with ISTA.

It is my pleasure to announce that Steve Jones, current ECOM member and immediate past president, as well as Berta Killerman, member of the Executive Committee, will receive Honorary Life Membership.

So as we move forward, it is a time to formally recognize and also thank the outgoing ECOM for their dedicated support and contributions.

15. Discharge of the Executive Committee

Now the current ECOM is officially relieved of its duties responsibilities. Now I call upon the Executive Committee current executive committee for 2022-2025. So I kindly request you to come forward on the stage. So of course, thank you very much and thanks for extending your great support to the ISTA and I appreciate your all contributions to the association. May I request you all the current ECOM members.

16. Installation of the Executive Committee 2025-2028

Now I request for the next agenda item and then which is the agenda item for the 2025-2028 the installation of Executive Committees. This is the executive committee for the 2025-2028 and then call upon the all new executive committee members, including the Vice president for the 2025-2028.

ISTA Vice President: Sergio Pasquini, Italy

Executive Committee Members:

Claid Mujaju	Zimbabwe
Vanessa Sosa	Uruguay
Didier Demilly	France
Irena Gera	Poland
Ruel C. Gesmundo	Philippines
Ignacio Aranciaga	Argentina
Keshavulu Kunusoth	India
Craig McGill	New Zealand
Ruojing Wang	Canada

Voting on changes at the Commercial Register

Andreas Wais, ISTA Secretary General

My job is not only to thank you and to say what Ernest said is very true. But I also have one formality to do and get the approval by the membership. You voted on a new executive committee and that means that we have changes to the commercial register of the Canton Zurich, where ISTA is registered as an association.

I'll now announce the changes for the commercial register following the recent election; I'll read only the English version, though we have a German version as required by law. After electing the executive committee for the 2025-2028 term, these updates will be recorded in the International Seed Testing Association's commercial register under our registration number:

1. Ernest Allen, American citizen, is now the president with whole signing authority ("Einzelunterschrift" mutation).
2. Dr. Keshavulu Kunusoth, Indian citizen, is now immediate past president/member at large without signing authority.
3. Sergio Pasquini, Italian citizen, becomes vice president with whole signing authority.
4. Didier Demilit, French citizen, joins as member at large without signing authority.
5. Irina Gera, Polish citizen, joins as member at large without signing authority.
6. Wang Rojing, Canadian citizen, is added as member at large without signing authority.

We have two removals:

- Sylvie Ducournau, French, former member at large.
- Berta Killermann, German citizen, former member at large.

All other individuals, including the auditing firm, remain unchanged.

Now, I ask for your vote of approval on these changes. Are there any objections? No? Thank you. That concludes the formal requirements for the commercial register.

Voting on changes to the Commercial Register

Voting Result: 23 YES, 0 NO, 0 Abs Votes

17. Speech of the incoming President

ISTA President 2025-2028, Ernest Allen, (USA)

First and foremost, I would like to extend my congratulations once again to Berta and Steve. Berta, your achievements are commendable, and I appreciate the camaraderie we have shared throughout this process. It is truly an honour and a significant responsibility to assume the role of President of ISTA for the upcoming triennium.

I wish to begin by expressing my sincere gratitude to the outgoing President, Dr. Keshavulu Kunusoth, for his visionary leadership over the past three years. Under his guidance, ISTA has made remarkable progress, particularly in broadening our presence across Asia, attracting new generations of scientists, and reinforcing partnerships with organizations such as OECD, FAO, and stakeholders in the seed trade. His commitment to expanding outreach activities has played a pivotal role in advancing global seed testing methods.

Building on this robust foundation, I am dedicated to furthering ISTA's progress while pursuing new avenues for growth and collaboration. One of our primary objectives for the next three years will be to expand ISTA's reach into Africa and Latin America, maintaining the momentum achieved in Asia. These regions present significant opportunities for enhancing seed quality, food security, and agricultural innovation.

To accomplish this, we will partner with regional stakeholders who will serve as ISTA advocates. These ambassadors will assist ISTA in understanding the distinct challenges and opportunities within their areas. Together, we will engage governments, seed businesses, and scientists to promote the adoption of ISTA rules and testing methodologies, moving closer to our vision of global uniformity and ensuring that quality seeds are accessible to farmers and all seed industry stakeholders.

Collaboration remains central to ISTA's success. Over the coming years, we will strengthen our engagement with key partners, notably long-standing supporters such as the Association of Official Seed Analysts (AOSA) and the Society of Commercial Seed Technologists (SCST), whose standards also facilitate international seed trade. By fostering cooperation between organizations like AOSA and ISTA, while maintaining distinct seed

testing rule documents, we can work towards a more harmonized approach that benefits all stakeholders. Additionally, we aim to deepen our relationships with the International Seed Federation and regional trade associations.

We will achieve these goals by ensuring that ISTA's outreach and rulemaking processes are developed in consultation with, and mindful of, our end users' needs. This collaborative approach will enable us to be more responsive to those involved in seed trade and to increase ISTA's value within the agricultural community at large.

ISTA acknowledges the urgent global challenge posed by plant pests and their effects on food security and trade. As a governmental organization guided by input from designated authorities and supported by an extensive laboratory network, ISTA has the capacity to play a vital role in supporting global plant health initiatives. Under the direction of our Executive Committee, we have initiated partnerships with entities such as the FAO's International Plant Protection Convention. Moving forward, we will explore how ISTA's expertise and facilities can contribute to emergency plant pathology testing, thereby helping to safeguard global agriculture from emerging threats.

As we commence this journey together, I am confident that by promoting collaboration, innovation, inclusivity, and mutual support, ISTA will maintain its position as a global leader in seed testing excellence. I look forward to working with all members, partners, and stakeholders to drive meaningful advancements in seed quality, trade facilitation, and food security worldwide.

Thank you for your trust and support. Let us strive to ensure that the next triennium is a period marked by growth, impact, and shared success. I am eager to collaborate with all of you to continue ISTA's achievements in the years ahead.

18. President`s closing address

ISTA President 2022-2025, Keshavulu Kunusoth (India):

We now move to the President's closing address, followed by adjournment. Dear colleagues, representatives, designated members, ISTA participants, and guests, I am honoured to close the 34th ISTA Congress and recognize all who contributed to this meaningful event and the upcoming OGM 2025, held in Christchurch, New Zealand. Our third congress in this region, this gathering has benefitted from active participation and valuable insights, strengthening our global network.

ISTA remains committed to hosting congresses in diverse regions to engage more members through meetings, workshops, and activities. This Congress facilitated connections among attendees with varied experience levels and highlighted prospects for future gatherings, including a return to Africa in 2028. Over recent days, we have shared knowledge, discussed key issues like seed quality assurance and food security, and made decisions shaping ISTA's future. Technical reports and side meetings enriched our dialogue, supporting innovation and collaboration across borders.

My heartfelt appreciation goes to New Zealand MPI, the Secretariat, National Organizing Committee, and all contributors for ensuring the success of this Congress. Special thanks to Ernest Allen for his support as our incoming President, as well as the executive committee, technical teams, and my family and colleagues in India for their unwavering backing during my presidency.

ISTA membership has grown significantly since 2016, with an increasing number of accredited labs. As my term ends, I am proud of our achievements and look forward to supporting ISTA as immediate past President. I wish continued success to the new executive team and encourage ongoing collaboration, growth, and innovation. With that, I formally conclude the 34th ISTA Congress in Christchurch and wish everyone a safe journey home, looking forward to seeing you in Calgary in 2026.