

Aims and Objectives of the SSAG

1. **To provide a link between fundamental research and the use of that research to meet the needs of ISTA members.** This will include identifying research results that have applicability to ISTA, and facilitating collaboration between the researcher and the end user.

Members of the SSAG will use their reading of research papers and attendance at conferences to identify ideas that have potential for development and application as seed quality tests. Clearly we do not cover all areas of expertise and therefore we hope to be assisted by a few other individuals who have this expertise.

Once we have identified interesting work we shall discuss the potential of the work with the appropriate TCOM and whether they might be interested in assisting in its development. We would then contact the scientist(s) involved and discuss if they would like to progress the work towards application and how best this might be done ([SSAG Procedures in Documents file](#)). This might be through providing guidance to the scientists about the nature of information that is needed for development of a seed quality test, or the involvement of a TCOM in its development.

ISTA members are also encouraged to draw the attention of members of the SSAG to published data that they think has potential for development.

2. **Appraisal of evidence for techniques/equipment available for use in seed testing laboratories**

a) Identification and evaluation of novel developments for evaluation

New equipment and techniques are frequently developed for which there is limited independent evaluation of their efficacy. The TCOMs and ISTA members who wish to have a new development / piece of equipment evaluated can submit a request to the SSAG to evaluate whether it is fit for purpose. The SSAG will also make themselves aware of novel developments.

A procedure for the evaluation of procedures /equipment has been outlined ([SSAG Procedures](#)) and includes gathering together evidence and proof of effectiveness of these developments. The evidence will come from both published papers and formal requests to developers for supplementary evidence and proof of effectiveness. This evidence will be evaluated and a report produced for the ECOM, and then published in Seed Testing International.

b) Development of guidelines to assess equipment and assist in appropriate development of seed quality tests

Guidelines will be developed for the use of ISTA members to assist them in the evaluation of equipment and quality tests in the absence of a report from the SSAG and any ISTA validation. Members will be informed when these are available and they will be published on the SSAG page of the ISTA website

3. **Respond to requests from ECOM and TCOM Chairs for advice related to scientific issues**

The ECOM and TCOMs can consult the SSAG on any scientific issues that concern them. Where we lack the expertise on a topic we shall identify someone appropriate to respond.

Communication will be a key aspect of the SSAG work, not just within the group, but also with TCOMs and ISTA members.

ISTA members are encouraged to contact the SSAG to draw our attention to either:

- Research data that appears to have potential for development in seed quality evaluation
- Equipment that is commercially available and is claimed to achieve the objectives of any of the chapters of the ISTA Rules e.g. to predict germination or vigour, identify varieties, test purity

Interaction with all ISTA members should be a significant part of our work. The SSAG cannot see all potential ideas, so your help is important to us.