



ISTA
Seed Quality Assurance

ISTA Secretariat

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Document OGM24-02

Minutes of the Ordinary General Meeting 2023

This document contains the Minutes of the Ordinary General Meeting 2023, published on the ISTA web site within two months following the Ordinary General Meeting as defined in the ISTA Articles.

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

Any comments about these minutes will be considered at the Ordinary General Meeting 2024, to be held on Thursday, July 04, 2024, Cambridge, UK.

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The Ordinary General Meeting of the Association

1. Call to Order

ISTA Secretary General, Dr. 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 2023 Ordinary General Meeting of ISTA.

Good morning again. Invited guests, dignitaries, representatives of different countries, distinct economies and ISTA designated authorities ISTA members, ladies and gentlemen, it gives me immense pleasure to welcome you all to the 2023 Ordinary General Meeting of International Seed Testing Association. I will start by offering congratulations for all your efforts to join this Ordinary General meeting as part of the annual meeting in Verona, Italy. After the COVID enforced cancelation of Verona as the venue for 2020 annual meeting, it is very pleasing to be here in 2023. Today is the last day of the official program of 2023 Annual Meeting from feedback received I think everyone had a great and informative time at the seminar and technical meetings and other meetings that have occurred over past couple of days in Verona, a wonderful and historic city in Italy. The annual meeting began with a seminar entitled From Biodiversity to Diversification Resources, Tools and Technologies to meet the challenges. The central idea of the seminar was shaped by the current importance of conserving, preserving and protecting the plant genetic resources and to protect the genetic variability and diversity needed to tackle future challenges of the agriculture and also the food production.

The seminar day began with an address from Director General of FAO, Dr. QU Dongyu who graciously accepted our invitation and to talk to us on the first day of the Annual Meeting virtually. The seminar brought together scientists and technologists from around the world to present and discuss research on plant diversity, evaluation, conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources in crop improvement programs, new breeding techniques and testing plant genetic resources to meet the new challenges of food security. There were 178 participants from 45 countries. The seminar provided a global platform to encourage discussions and deliberations and effective conservation and sustainable utilization of plant genetic resources in which seed plays a critical role to address the food security challenges in the face of changing climate. The Technical Committee (TCOM) reports and side meeting discussions have also discussed the development of need based new methods and approaches to seed quality assessment and development of capabilities and capacities in seed testing. Both of which help ISTA to better achieve and communicate its vision of uniformity seed quality, evaluation worldwide, as well as the mission for facilitating seed trade nationally and internationally, thereby contributing to food security. Now we have come to the final formal part of the Annual Meeting the Ordinary General Meeting 2023.

The overview of the day will appear on the screen as it does in the Agenda 23-01 of the Ordinary General Meeting of 2023. On agenda point 3 there is a roll call of designated members entitled to vote, on the agenda point 8 there is a proposed rule changes to be discussed and voted on by designated voting members present as required by the Article of the association. The relevant documents were distributed, are posted on the website and to be available at least two months prior to the ISTA Ordinary General Meeting 2023. The link was sent to the ISTA designated authorities and all stakeholders. The voting will be done by counting the green and red cards. I would like to remind you that the meeting details will be recorded to provide an easy record to create the minutes.

I now ask the Secretary General to call the roll of designated members entitled to vote.

3. Roll Call of Designated Members entitled to vote

In total, we have 58 designated authorities who nominated designated members. Out of these 58, 40 nominated voting members, according to the articles of ISTA, the quorate would be 40%. Of these 40 nominated voting delegates, which would be 16. I will read now the countries, and I would like the country representative voting member to lift the green card out of your envelopes and raise it when I call the country's name, and we will record that.

Argentina
Austria
Belgium
Brazil
Canada
Croatia
Czech Republic
Denmark
Estonia
Finland
France
Germany
Hungary
India
Ireland
Israel
Italy
Japan
Latvia
Luxembourg
Malawi
Netherlands
New Zealand
Norway
Philippines
Poland
Republic of Korea
S.C.T. of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu
Serbia
Slovak Republic
Spain
Switzerland
Turkey
United Kingdom
United States of America
Uruguay
Zimbabwe

Thank you very much. That makes it 37 voting delegates being present. We have 58 designated authorities.

We would come now to the acceptance of the minutes. They were distributed as well. Do you have as voting delegates any comments to the minutes which were presented? I don't see anything here that means the minutes are accepted. No comments to the minutes. I would now like to call the report of the Executive Committee to be held, and I invite the President again to start with that report.

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

No comments were received on the Minutes of the 2022 Ordinary General Meeting. As defined in the ISTA Articles the Minutes of the 2022 Ordinary General Meeting are approved.

5. Report of the Executive Committee

ISTA President, Keshavulu Kunusoth (India):

I would like to present the report of the Executive Committee (ECOM) 2022. I will also touch on activities and events of the first half of 2023. This report I am giving on behalf of the ISTA Executive committee. Now I would like to give the activities. I would like to remind you this morning who are on the Executive Committee members for 2022 to 2025. The Executive Committee (ECOM) operates essentially through working groups and then we have the working groups, 11 working groups and 2 special project working groups. Here the working groups we organize will have every monthly meetings whenever it is required, the need based working group meetings and then that's how this report covers mainly the working group reports of the ECOM. I will also summarize the progress that has been made for the 2022 and first half of the 2023. Just to remind you, the Executive Committee members for 2022 to 2025:

Ernest Allen (USA), Vice President,
Steve Jones, (Canada), ISTA Immediate Past President,
Vanessa Sosa, (Uruguay)
Ignacio Aranciaga, (Argentina)
Berta Killermann, (Germany)
Sylvie Ducournau, (France)
Sergio Pasquini, (Italy)
Claid Mujaju, (Zimbabwe)
Keshavulu Kunusoth, myself from India.
Ruel Gesmundo, (Philippines)
Craig McGill, (New Zealand).

This report is mainly executive report, which I am going to present now. ISTA it enters the second century and then we completed 100 years, the preceding hundred years of ISTA was great, it was a great work.

When we look here the milestones are history of the ISTA and the main motto of the ISTA is since its foundation it has been uniformity in seed testing. ISTA was founded with 27 countries founded in Cambridge. The 27 country delegates were participated in the meeting. Among the 27 countries, 24 countries are European countries. Then three were from other continents. Among the 24 countries the UK represented the three delegates England and Wales, Northern Ireland and also the Scotland. So they were represented by three. Then the other continents, Argentina and Canada are the founder members. And besides this, then one more is the African country. Egypt is also a founder member. Of course, at that time the United States sent the delegates, but however, could not participated in the meeting. And there were other two countries, Brazil and Chile, they also sent to the delegates. But so due to various reasons, the delegates could not participate in 1924. Then coming to the milestones from 1924 to 1931, the ISTA adopted the first International Rules of Seed testing as well as the establishment of the ISTA Certificates by the International Seed Federation. In 1950 the first time ISTA Congress was held in Washington, DC. Of course, it is the first time outside the Europe. In 1995 during the ISTA Congress held in Copenhagen ISTA membership was open to private laboratories and also the private seed companies as well. In 1996, quality assurance programs to accredited seed testing laboratories were initiated. The first ISTA laboratory was audited under the new setup in this year in 1996. During the 2004, during the ISTA Congress held in the Budapest, it was agreed to consider the accreditation as a purely technical task and the responsibility to give the authorization to issue the International Seed Analysis Certificate was given to the ISTA Executive Committee.

When we look at the ISTA Strategy Implementation for May 2022 June 2023 the Strategy were approved in the 33 ISTA Congress which was held in Cairo, Egypt in 2022. The framework for this triennium is with the

six initiatives along with the action points. Of course, the strategy is very important for ISTA, for that matter, for any organization.

These are the ISTA strategies to develop scientifically sound rules and to meet the needs of the seed sector, contribute towards the collaborations to increase the capacity and capabilities worldwide and also to strengthen the accreditation system. And then besides this, strengthen the science and technology underpinning the ISTA to develop innovative research, to meet the needs of the seed industry and then finally seek the needs of the members and stakeholders. And the final strategy was to manage the ISTA affairs this year.

We had the 2022 and 2023 meetings of the Executive Committee. After the Cairo May 2022 we had the Executive Committee meeting immediately after the Congress. Another meeting was held online in October 2022 and these are the main topics discussed in the Executive Committee meetings. Formation of Executive Committee Working Groups so, as I mentioned, the eleven working groups and two special project working groups were formed and the method validation and accreditation. So nonconformities, the substantial and non-substantial were discussed and then the 100K special projects review and future funding how it would be and then finance working group was established to set the priorities.

Another discussion was a discussion on strategy and priorities for 2025. We also discussed in Seed Symposium which was held in Athens in 2023 November. The policy around the new technologies documents we discussed and then provided to the accreditation working group and TCOM members for their inputs for discussion. There was another discussion on the Tropical and Subtropical project budget support. Then recently we had a great meeting in February 2023 in Washington. We made a study visit to the laboratories to know the new technologies by some of the ECOM members Ernest, Steve, Craig, Florina and me and then to know how the seed industry is operating, especially in case of the new technologies and what are the new technologies can be introduced in the ISTA. Then coming to the next was we discussed about the introduction of the E certificate updates and actions of course which we are going to present. This and then membership free proposal for 2024, introduction of tropical and subtropical species, in addition, the ECOM discussed an expansion of seed testing worldwide and also the financial support to expand the seed testing activities.

Then thereafter the prioritizing the Seed Health strategy and then which includes the funding and then established strong collaborations with the international organizations were also discussed. Then the ECOM decided to establish the ECOM Working Group on Seed Health chaired by the Craig. Another important one was so we had a great meeting with the affiliated seed organizations on 15 February, half a day meeting, we discussed around how we can move forward in harmonization of AOSA and SCST.

Coming to the meetings of the ECOM Working groups and then prior to during the pandemic we faced challenges but however we recovered back resumed after a long pause due to this Pandemic travel restriction and also we used to have the very limited working group meetings during the pandemic time. But however, after the Cairo meeting, we have been conducting the regular working group meetings based on the need and then the ECOM Working Group meetings regularly every month. As I said then, ECOM has taken important initiatives as per the ISTA Strategy 2025 to facilitate the seed trade nationally and internationally.

Here is the Technical Committee Working Group chaired by the Craig McGill. The focus of the WG is to identify ways in which the technical committees can operate more efficiently. What are the policies required for the technical committee to faster or to enhance their capability, and then how the ISTA can facilitate them.

Expansion of the seed testing. We discussed the tropical species which were we prioritized the last year. And now these tropical species are one of the important areas to areas for the validation studies. And these tropical species can go into the ISTA rules.

The Accreditation working group, the main objective of the working group is around the accreditation system. And then I think this accreditation is to know that to clarify and then so how the individual is competent to test the seeds according to the international seed testing rules. These are the main areas the working group worked on. So accreditation, accredited lab evaluation, revision of the ISTA accreditation standards. The outcome of this working group, the contributions are performed 40 audits and then three accreditation, new accreditation of the laboratories, then regional distribution and contracted auditors. So the survey, if you see the KPIs, the performance is the more than 90% excellent and very good, which is really very good. And then more than 90% of the auditor's performance. The WG is led by Sylvie Ducournau from France.

The Events Working Group, they works on the policies on the different events, the planning of annual meeting, congresses and supports to the local organizers and also the secretariat. This events group was worked on 2022 ISTA Congress and also the Symposium. Both were the successful meeting in 2022 and then coming to the 2023 Annual Meeting in Verona, Italy. I think you witnessed this meeting. So the group is also planning 2024 Annual Meeting and centenary celebrations to be held Cambridge, UK.

Thereafter 2025 Congress in New Zealand, Seed Symposium and Congress program and then proposed the structure and content of the meetings. Of course, it is on the way to it is underway to discuss and planning. It may take maybe another couple of months to finalize the congress program in addition. So I would

like to just remind you the ISTA Seed Symposium was a successful seed symposium was held from November 2 to 4, Athens, Greece. Due to pandemic the symposium was separated from the seed congress in 2022. So that's how the seed congress was held in Egypt and then seed symposium was held in the Athens.

Then coming to the next working group is a Seed Health Working Group. Seed health is one of the key determinants, important key determinants of the seed quality. And the committee always refers and then refers about the biosecurity. It's also a biosecurity issue. The seed is a pathway, potential pathway of these pests and they can move from one region to other region, one nation. And then again, because of this, I think the ECOM decided to have a seed health strategy and then it was started in the Cairo meeting, and we took some initiatives in Washington meeting.

The International Relations Working Group. Of course, it's an important working group. So mainly the main focus of this group is to strengthen the interaction between the designated authorities and ISTA and also to improve the communication between the ISTA and international organizations.

We had three meetings with the designated authorities to update the ISTA activities and then ISTA progress for the past one year. We talked about the updates and attraction of younger generation to ISTA, eCertificate initiatives and strengthen of capacity and then capabilities building in the seed health testing and then finally this group contributed strengthening cooperation and support among the key organizations.

As I mentioned we had a good meeting with the North American seed organizations on 15 February in Washington DC. And then the outcomes of the meetings were the ISTA seed rules proposal should be include a statement of how the ISTA proposals would affect any rules harmonizations. ISTA and AOSA to consider creating a joint AOSA and ISTA Working Group to review and provide recommendations to allow joint recognition for each association's method validation reports.

The working group expansion of seed testing worldwide. The main goal is to facilitate the expansion of seed testing worldwide, encouraging participation from new regions and countries.

ISTA has been making renewed efforts to expand its presence into new regions and countries. So there are focused activities based on the ECOM, regional representative members, seed associations and possible actions for the different regions to expand this area. And then besides another, the important one is that we made a priority list for the tropical and subtropical species that go into the rules. And then so this working group is working on identification of priority tropical subtropical species for the validation. The work is going on in Moringa as it was presented in one of the TCOM meetings.

The Publication and Marketing working group of course the focus is publication and marketing to define the policies and then to support the action plan for the secretary approved by the executive committee.

We have that diverse social media so, through which, again, the ISTA could take the has LinkedIn more than 10,000 followers twitter to more than 2000 followers YouTube. Marketing materials in Spanish and then format changes to the ISTA Rules, web website upgrade, identification of ISTA element events in Latin America, promotion of the availability rules in Spanish, promotion of single chapters of the rules. And then besides one more important thing is every week you will get the weekly newsletter, which gives all the activities and updates about ISTA.

The Young ISTA project was very well received by the anger generations and then young seed professionals to attract this project and it's a successful one and then we are looking forward to again supporting this project. Then coming to the non ISTA members we would like to reach the ISTA would like to reach the non ISTA members seed laboratory, seed companies, producers and universities, agriculture, schools, and countries that actually are not present through the seed association meetings and also through social media. So we have received the number of applications in 2022. As I said earlier. So 16 applications were approved for different purposes: ISTA events lab to lab training and scientific publications in 2023.

Three applications for attending the ISTA workshops and two for the annual meeting and then two for the lab to lab to training. And then this was appreciated through many seeds organizations and seed industry across the globe. And thanks to Bayer Crop Science who could support \$5,000 in 2022 for this project.

Then coming to the ISTA certificates. I think so the details of the eCertificate updates is going to talk by the Ernest Allen, vice president of ISTA.

The Finance Working Group. The budget highlights if you look at the here the financial the Financial Working Group is chaired by Ernest Allen so however, the Secretary General oversees the complete budget based on the annual budget framework.

In January 2023 when the ISTA accounts were audited by the financial auditors and then it was found very clear and then it is very well maintained. And then budget 2023, about 3 million CHF covering all the cost for the participation in projects and costs are kept stable overall positions and below the inflation rate due to cost

savings, especially in running the office except the personal costs. So the reserves will be at 3.5 million Swiss francs at the end of the 2023 and then should be kept stable. So financial losses on the reserves reflect mainly the drop in investments funds, the financial income is due to the changes in the exchange rates. So the 2024 when we look at the 2024 budgets and then it includes the projects covered by the cash flow, the projects carried forward are only the reference pest list, seed health initiatives and also the new initiatives support for the tropical and subtropical species into the rules. The higher budget is due to a still expected higher inflation than in the years before. The eCertificates are planned to be available by the end of the year of course. So then maybe we will be discussing this later, but however now today in the OGM the ECOM Motion will be moved from the ECOM the blank ISTA certificate cost and proposal to increase the cost with effect from January 1, 2023.

Secretary General will be giving more information in respect of the budget during his presentation about the Secretary General activity report. Then to sum up the highlights from the June 2022 to May 2023 regular ECOM Working Group meetings. ECOM Working Group meetings meets every month based on the priority. Then designated authority meetings regularly as I mentioned three times this year. Then policy development on new technologies equivalent to the human analyst. Then establishment of the Seed Health Working Group to facilitate expansion of the seed health testing accreditation initiatives and progress on the eCertificate initiatives. Younger at ISTA growing and also attracting the younger seed professionals into ISTA. And then of course, events, congresses, symposium, annual meeting and planning for future events, especially the centenary celebrations which will be held in Cambridge UK in 2024. Then again the publication and marketing initiatives and effective communication as I said, the social media and then effective communication through every week the updates in respect of all the activities of the ISTA. Then meeting with the North American Seed Organizations. Of course, this is the topic for future discussion and then the finances audited and stable.

Craig McGill (New Zealand)

presented detailed report on the Seed Health Working Group initiatives.

Good morning everyone. I hope everyone had a nice coffee break and ready to resume the next part of the ECOM Activity Report, for which I will be focusing down on the Seed Health Initiative. I want to do is just bring it together and give you perhaps a little bit more additional information on why the executive committee has initiated this Seed health initiative and where we see it going, recognizing that it's in its very early stages, as Keshavulu said. The working group was only established in Washington, DC. in February. But giving this presentation is a good indication to have feedback from you, the membership at the early stages, and we also had some good feedback already during the designated authorities meeting. And any additional feedback at the end of the presentation would also be okay. So why a Seed health initiative? As Keshavulu also said in his report, seed health is an important determinant of seed quality, and also it is an important determinant in terms of biosecurity. From ISTA's perspective, we are primarily concerned with seed health as its impacts on the movement of seed in terms of ultimately sowing in the field and storage transport of that seed.

The biosecurity risk aspect is clearly covered within the phytosanitary systems that primarily operate through FAO and IPPC. Having said that, as we know, we're an integrated world and nothing operates in isolation, so there is overlap between the two. But primarily ISTA is focused on seed health as a seed quality concern. So the drivers for the revised strategy are there is an increasing need for methods for an increasing range of pests in the context of the work that's currently going on, that's primarily a focus on pathogens. With that need for new methods, of course, comes the need for increased capability and capacity in seed testing, not only for the development of those methods, but also ultimately for the testing that will be required of the seed lots utilizing current existing methods and any new methods developed. Another key aspect of this initiative is the ISTA Reference Pest list, which from the executives perspective and I hope the membership we regard as a very valuable tool for the seed sector, for our stakeholders. The ISTA Reference Pest List was first initiated in 2019, if my memory is serving me correctly, and it's been through a number of two-year iterations.

And part of this strategy is to ensure that that set reference pest list is sustainable, continues to develop and continues to provide the information needed to the seed sector. As Keshavulu also said in his report at the meeting in February 2023 in Washington DC, the Executive committee approved a further two-year program for that pest list. And for those of you who were present at the Seed Health Committee presentation, you would have seen details from Ruud on what those entails. So if I was to summarize this seed health initiative in two words, I would say acceleration and collaboration. Accelerating the work that we're already doing primarily through the Seed Health Committee and looking for collaborations across national and international organizations to enable that acceleration to drive forward. In that context, as I said.

ISTA Executive has established a Seed Health Working Group to assess ISTA's current and future role in seed health and develop policy proposals, including resources needed. We all also know that without resources we can't get things done, whether that be financial or personnel, resources or other resources, and take those ideas back to the ISTA Executive for discussion and ultimately voting. The members of this Seed Health working group within the ECOM are me, Keshavulu, Ernest, Andreas, Florina and Valerie Cockerell. As some of you may be

aware, Valerie was here for two days of this meeting and we very much appreciate Valerie in her retirement giving her expertise, which is considerable to the Seed Health Working Group. So that's expertise as a former chair of the ISTA Seed Health Committee, ECOM liaison for the Seed Health Committee for the time she was on the executive committee, also Valerie was the chair of the working group between ISTA and ISF to look at seed health issues.

We are going to be focusing on facilitating capacity and capability building in seed health so that's accredited laboratories and within those laboratories and externally expertise, facilitating joint activities with stakeholders is another way that we intend to collaborate. And now we are discussing with the International Seed Federation the possibility of a Seed Health seminar and we'll discuss that with the Seed Health Committee as well. That's likely to be in the first quarter of next year and it will most likely be somewhere in Asia. And of course, as I've already said, what you want to facilitate the ongoing development of the ISTA, reference pest list as a valuable resource both not only within ISTA, but also for our external stakeholders. So with that, I hope that's a brief introduction, overview of where we want to go with the Seed Health initiative. I welcome any comments or feedback.

ISTA Vice President, Ernest Allen (USA)

gave the report on the eCertificates update.

Some of the points on the eCertificates Keshavulu brought up in his presentation, and then you will hear some more a little later in Andreas's presentation. So I'm not going to spend a tremendous amount of time on this. In this presentation, though, I will cover some of the advantages of the e certificates as well as how the e certificates will work kind of behind the scenes. And again, Andreas will follow up with that. Near the end of my presentation, we'll start with the advantages, and the primary advantage is the ability to kind of prevent fraud. Every year, the secretary receives a couple of cases where one of the ISTA oranges or ISTA blues have been altered by some entity. Generally, we try to do whatever we can to help the laboratory resolve the situation. But a lot of times, there's not a lot that we can do with the e certificates. It makes it a lot easier because the e certificates, the actual original certificate, is on the ISTA website. You have to go to the ISTA website, log in with your access code in order to view the certificate.

So it makes it a lot more difficult for fraud to take place. Another advantage is the ability of the e certificates to be sent directly via PDF from one lab, from the lab to the seat lot owner. This, obviously, is going to eliminate a lot of the postage. Companies spend a lot, especially if you have a lot of certificates that go out every year in postage costs. So now you can do that by email. If the person or entity, state or national government entity looking at the certificate needs to check it again, going back to zero one, you can go right to the ISTA website and see the original certificate there to see that it is a valid certificate. Provisional certificates is the next advantage. Provisional certificates moving forward will be updated automatically when the company updates their information on the orange certificate. It's one document that's on ISTA's website. So as soon as the lab updates some information on it, any provisional certificate that you issued will automatically update. Also, the beauty of this is that you only have one access code, so you don't have to give your seed owner multiple access codes every time the certificate changes.

That one access code will allow them to view all updates to the certificate. The laboratory can only access their own area of the e certificates platform, obviously for confidentiality. In order to receive certificates, they can either be ordered online or you could contact the secretary directly to make that order. Again, your clients can receive e certificates by email, by PDF, as soon as they're signed. So, again, no more really waiting for the mail to come through or to overnight those certificates. Duplicates are not required because, again, log on the website, you see the original every time. And the laboratory may also be able to go back and look at some of their other certificates that they've had signed off on at any time they want to. So it will all be stored on the ISTA website. I already went over the ISTA access codes. Again, any access codes are going to be the same, so you don't have to worry about continually emailing access codes to the seat lot owner. There may be an option, if people want to take advantage of it for an automated process to fill, change and sign the e certificates rather than doing it manually in an Excel table.

This may come at a cost. So you would decide if you the laboratory wants to try to link what we have built to your system, you will talk to the secretary, and the secretariat will let you know what it will take in order to make that happen for you. If you want a more automated process, as Keshavulu said in his presentation, we expect the eCertificates to be online by the end of 2023. We still have not decided within the ECOM what the cost of those eCertificates will be. I can tell you that they're going to be more than the paper certificates. Obviously, the secretariat did some calculations, and we estimate that between duplicates and all the other things that you have to do for each orange or ISTA blue certificate, it takes about three certificates, three or four, to make up the cost of one eCertificate. So we have to take that into consideration so that obviously we don't lose a lot of money with the implementation of these e certificates. Obviously, before we make this widely available, we're

going to make sure that everyone is trained. We'll have a lot of webinars and online training, so you can come in, ask questions, figure out how to use the system so that you feel comfortable with it.

6. Report of the Secretary General

ISTA Secretary General, Andreas Wais (Switzerland):

I would like to start to talk a little bit about what was going on in the Secretariat.

We have a System Auditor and Quality Management and Standard PT Coordinator, which is Branisalava Opra. New system auditor since one and a half, two years now, nearly Stella Marcu. Audit and Accreditation and Proficiency Test Administration are done by Neelam. TCOM manager is Nadine. TCOM Administration Andreea Pinar. Marketing and Communication Manager is Yoana Uzunova since some years and her assistant Karen de la Rosa. Both are for all marketing and communications. Sales, HR and finances internally are done by Agnes Hegedüs. IT Business Solutions Manager is Sejal. And last not least, Olga, who is over there as events and Membership manager and some temporary staff who are helping us out if needed.

Membership Development you find here quite a nice paragraph. At the end of the year it was 244. You find some less numbers now because there are some suspended and that's always going on. We have to always see a cut date. And my cut date, as I said, is end of the year development of associate members and personal members. We grew in both areas. Again, that is always a fluctuation on how people are in there. Also, end of the year we had 82 countries or distinct economies. 83 was joining in the beginning of the year, right at the beginning, with Ethiopia. The distribution is that we have main of our laboratory members in Europe 45%, followed by Asia Pacific with 23%. And the biggest countries in the areas are Germany and India. So they generate the most of the membership. Africa grew to 8%, Australia, Oceania 7%. That's a little bit less than before. Central North America 10% and South America 7%.

I would like to hand it over now to Florina to give her presentation on the accreditation which she prepared also with the Working Group chair, Sylvie Ducournau.

ISTA Head of Accreditation & Technical Department, Florina Palada (Switzerland):

I will present you the report for what it was already done in 2022 and also what we achieved until now in 2023. There are also some plans what will come for the next month in 2023. The topics that I will present you is about our staff audits we performed and the evolution of the contracted auditors as a number, quality assurance, some statistical aspects, also changes in the policy and crop groups and some other achievements. The personnel was presented by Andreas and also for our department. There are no changes. I put here a large presentation looking to the audit performance starting with 2020 till 2023. Because you see, we are a team of in total 25 auditors, 3 ISTA secretariat, including me, and we have 22 colleagues as contracted auditors.

And the audits you have seen here are performed with their effort and of course, always supported by the Accreditation Working Group when necessary, and also by Neelam as the audit administrator. 2022 was difficult. We had 48 in our plan, but we performed 26 only due to the pandemic time. And then we had to move in 2021 a good number. So we moved 21 reaccreditation audits on top of the 46 already in our normal plan for 2022. And we were able to perform four accreditation audits as well to have four new members in the team of the accredited laboratories. 2022 was a good year. We had 58 and we were able to perform all of them with the mention that one single audit was moved from 2021. So all are now today are closed. The process is closed for all 58. And as a detail, one audit, one single audit was performed as partially remote and eight completely remote. The other were performed with onsite assessment. What we have for 2023, the number is smaller, because we use the possibility to group better and to reduce the cost for auditing the audits from the same country in the same year.

So we did a little bit regrouping. We have 40 as reaccreditation audit. Initially 41, but one decided to step back. So then we will lose this year one accredited laboratory and we have 40 reaccreditation. We have already three accreditation audits with the dates fixed possible one more to come for 2023 the effort of 25 auditors. You see in the graph, you see how the evolution was. And at the end of 2022 we had 151 accredited laboratories. And you see the distribution. This is also the evolution of the contracted auditors. What you see in yellow, orange are the active and what you see in blue are the auditors in different steps of approval. And we have now I'm happy to say that we have a good distribution. We progress in having colleagues in different region of the world. 2023 is also coming with some new colleagues. We have approved at the beginning of the year one technical auditor in South America and fresh auditor just approved. Technical experts for GMO and Variety just approved

in May, and then it's coming very soon for another colleague. The last training and exam are in about three weeks. And we have two technical auditors in different stages of the training as well, but not so far to be approved.

We hope that the two technical auditors will be approved as well. If they are good, will be approved in 2023. Then I have some application receives. And also during this meeting I had discussions with new candidates interested to be contracted auditors for ISTA. For seed health I have one single application. In 2022 we had two, but it was Valerie Grimaut who left ISTA. And I have one seed health expert in plan. The training was not yet started. This is the evolution of the contracted auditors. As you see, we are quite constant in the last years, constant as a number. But the colleagues were changed. And I can say that to have approved a new contracted auditor, we spend as an average more than two years and could be we had a year ago the case that at the end the exam was not as we expected, and we had to reject the feedback received after the audits performed. In 2022, as you see, we closed the process for 58. We received feedback from 52 excellent and very good ratings for 96% of the answers. And we had 44%, meaning two laboratories rating the audit as satisfactory.

Our KPI is achieved. We set a limit not less than 90%. Excellent and very good. So this is the work of our team. I will not go into details. For the proficiency test there were a lot of information received from DNA, also from the technical committee chairs for seed health and for GMO. What I would like to point is that we already have almost at the end of the process, the first PT for the DNA methods. So it's something new. We had six candidates, six participants, and three of them are from the accredited laboratory. We don't have the results finalized.

We had in 2022 some warning letters and suspension. But they put in place good corrective actions, and they were reinstated. The decisions for warning letters and for suspension are always taken together with the Accreditation Working Group.

We had in 2022 a quality assurance workshop for beginners in November, organized together with APSA and quality assurance training in connection with a reaudit. Last year we had as well two re audits approved as well by the Accreditation Working Group what we expect to have in 2023, but we don't have yet a date. A fixed date is a quality assurance workshop in Senegal, in French, the second could be in South Africa.

We are waiting their proposal for a date and also a basic quality assurance workshop in Bangladesh in the second part of the year. Other activities of our department, we participated in ISTA FAO project, this manual that will come soon with the quality assurance part of the ECOM Working Group for vegetables. And you will see today the proposals of the common effort of this group participation to the eCertificates project, website project then is the Secretariat quality management system.

International representations were already detailed by Keshavulu. Other activities. We had to revise part of the directives mainly due to the changes in the policy for the non-substantial nonconformities. Then we have SharePoint to communicate with the Accreditation Working Group and now it's in our routine to use SharePoint for the accreditation uploading downloading data. So we reduce a lot the number of emails with huge attachments. We changed the design of the accreditation certificate and we change as well the design for the certificates of appointments for the contracted auditors. Yesterday I informed you during the purity open meeting that the ISTA Accreditation Standard is revised. So we worked about two years to have the final format, which was approved few days ago by the Executive Committee. There are changes, but the main are the new technologies. There are three new requirements related to the obligation of the laboratories taken from the directives to make them stronger in the accreditation standard. We use the term accredited members instead of sampling units, testing laboratories, sampling and testing laboratories. We simplify a little bit this area and we have risk assessment introduced in the standard. There were a few amendments to align the content of the rules with the content of the accreditation standard.

And of course we have the electronic certificate definition already included. The revision of the ISTA accreditation standard will be valid starting with 1 January 2024. But there will be a year of transition to help the laboratories and to help the auditors as well to fully understand the requirements and to start to apply and also to evaluate them is why we have some follow up actions. We will have an auditor's workshop in Poland in December this year where we will discuss the details of the standard. We already agreed to have, together with the other committees, a guideline on how to approach the new technologies. And also, it will be a need based on the changes to amend or to have a revision of the quality management system of the documents of the Accreditation Department at least. And then we have to implement what we put in place. Just a small reminder about the non-substantial non-conformities. It was already mentioned by Keshavulu. For the non-conformities identified during an audit there will be maximum six months for the substantial and nine months for the non substantial non conformities. But as already said, the process is already really well received and it's implemented.

ISTA Secretary General, Andreas Wais (Switzerland):

I continue now with the training and education program. What happened last year? You got a few information also from Florina about it. We started to have in 2021, online trainings. And these online trainings were for the area of quality assurance mainly. And the SH Committee beginning of last year took the chance and did an online training. SH online training on two days to Fridays, using the same system as we introduced in the secretariat for such a purpose. We started to have real workshops, in person workshops again. The first one was in Bursa in Turkey in September. Sampling and quality assurance and sampling followed and you heard about that in Athens in November writing of scientific papers and publication in SST, also in November in Bangkok QA workshop for beginners. That was in cooperation with APSA. That's why you don't see an income or expenditure on that in the 2022 figures. But I tell you later about that. And Hyderabad in the same time assembling Purity and Germination workshop. Those were the first four in person workshops after the pandemic from our side.

During the pandemic we also started with Webinars together with ISSS joint Webinars international Society for Seed Science. We agreed to have two common webinars together every year. The next one will be next week.. We are looking for this year not only into having more workshops, you heard about that, you heard about the capacity building which we started in Bangladesh and we want to continue to help Bangladesh in a way with capacity building seminars. We have good contacts in the moment to Rwanda, to Cambodia, to Vietnam, the later two in conjunction with the Mekong US partnership and the Asia Pacific Seed Association. So we are working on that to grow the ISTA family.

We will have SH seminar together with ISF that was mentioned as well. That will be taking part in Asia. We are not sure if it's this year. It looks like more that it is the beginning of next year.

On the publication of products i tell you here more what was sold, where we generated income from. This is Seed Science and Technology, and you see a lot of zeros and when the last ones disappear, we probably take that out. You remember that in 2017 we started with Seed Science and Technology to have that as an open journal, open publication, open access. That means that we are not selling any printed papers anymore and things like that. It can be accessed fully. Normally we generate income with the open access fee either for full length papers or research notes, but we had volume 50 last year and it was decided to waive these for non ISTA members. We are doing more other things together with marketing and publication a little later over the year and we had a discussion to work more also on the LinkedIn, especially with SST, as you saw, we have more than 10,000 followers on LinkedIn.

That is a great group and we need to build more people into getting interested in this journal. We also have sales of other ISTA publications, mainly handbooks. You see seed sampling with a new edition that went up quite well in the sales. We also have a raise this year or last year, especially in various handbooks and publications. That is not only handbooks and publications, those are also the samples to calibrate. It's something which goes through the budget, but it makes up the statistic here quite a lot. Sales of ISTA Certificates. We are very happy that we are stable with that. Around 200,000 over the year, very low. And that is a stable income to commission these to be filled by the laboratories and we highly appreciate that. What did we achieve? What highlights did we have? Last year we had the back to normal, as I said, the Physical Congress in Cairo, the Physical Symposium in Athens. Keshavulu talked about that. For physical workshops. We started with a new website even before that. But we found that it is necessary to have a few tutorials, not only to show how the website works and where you can find things on the website, but also to attract people to the website more.

And because we published these in social media, so that people who subscribe to our social media channels made it to the website as well and had a look. We talked about electronic certificates in full beta testing webinars with stakeholders. We talked about remote trainings, that's what we mentioned as well. And we still have remote audits or we had remote audits as COVID-19 measures. We are back to normal mostly, but we have some countries where we have travel restrictions where people cannot travel or there are travel warnings by governments. And this experience which we made during the COVID time helps us now to do also online audits in areas where we cannot go due to security reasons. Very good and very helpful thing. We talked about SST Volume 50 special issue. Another nice highlight which I would like to thank all my colleagues in the Secretariat for, is that in 2022 and also this year we had both audits, the internal and external audits this year by now we passed that without any nonconformity.

I would like to focus now a little bit on our finances. There are a few things to be mentioned. What you see here is that the income by membership subscription is pretty stable. Over the years we have grown, but the income generated from that is quite stable. Annual meeting you saw for 2022, that was Cairo was a little income which we could generate there in conjunction with Athens actually. In the end, the ECOM and the budget did foresee a loss here and we were able to reduce this loss a little bit. You will see that in the next slide. When we come to expenditure this year we hope to have 127,000 here for Verona as an income and we are on a good way to achieve that. You may see. The last line is a proposed budget for 2024. That's an outlook and you will later be asked to approve the budget and the proposed budget because the next annual meeting will be in 2024 and we need to have at least a proposed budget to be able to work with technical committees had an income of 32,000. That was of course mainly the workshops we expect this year much more.

We will be probably up to eight workshops from four to eight is quite a good number, not including what you may have as an outlook as well. Another income we see always with the rules. We are in an area of around 60,000 to get as an income stream. Those are the rules which we sell to the outside. It looks like that more and more countries are also interested to buy a bulk of ISTA rules and distribute it to their national laboratories. We highly appreciate that. That is probably quite good. ISTA Audits we are around 600,000 depending also on the number of audits which we are having. And this year is a number which is not that high. I think it's only 42 which were scheduled with all the others we end up a little bit higher, but we need to see how that works. The proficiency test income is around 12,000 last year.

It will rise this year a little bit higher again. That is what we can see from the applications to participate which is sent out at the beginning of the year. Again, QA workshops. We hope that we get one done this year. We will see. The first one did not happen with the Francophone countries in Africa, but what we take as an income we have an expenditure as well, so that is not that critical. There was a workshop last year, as I mentioned on QA. You see no income here, but you will also see no expenditure because that was taken care of by APSA completely. They sponsored to 100% this workshop and we thank APSA that they did this. Last year we had no real income from Seed science and technology because we had no publication fees. We waived the publication fees and we hope to get up at around 10,000 as an income. Here again, technical publications and calibration samples. That's handbook and the calibration samples, you see a quite high income here. Now you ask me why you estimate only 30,000, around 20,000 here were calibration samples. It was a great year to sell and sell calibration samples from our side and buy it in.

In total we had around 2.8 million of income last year. We estimate a little bit below 2.3 million this year and for next year a little bit higher as well. More related to the accreditation audits and a few other points. I have to say you will have a motion later on for the increase in the paper certificate cost. This motion is not reflected in the proposed 2024 budget which I present to you because it's not voted on by the membership. And my proposed budget for you today cannot include it as it is not voted on just as a technical information because you will see a few things here which would make you surprised. You see that we did not increase the cost, the income of the eCertificates for 2024. That is not reflected in this proposed budget.

Just bear that in mind when I show you all the other figures. Expenditure wise, we had annual meeting cost in 2022 of 130,000. We expect 153 and for this year here, and I am happy to say that that would probably reflect on what we have and what we saw. So we probably can stay inside what we thought we would have at the beginning or end of last year. Executive Committee and president that's the ECOM meetings and other ways where the president and the executive committee are traveling and that is reflected here with an expenditure of about 40,000 that will be after the pandemic also be going up again technical committees and the 3000 Swiss francs which they get. This expenditure is of course also reflecting not only the 3000 this expenditure is reflecting all the projects which are run inside the technical committees. It's also the 100,000 project at least here in the real figure, the budget is only reflecting the workshops and the 3000 Swiss francs for each technical committee.

Seed Testing International (STI) we have quite stable cost here around 30,000. So that's our suggestion for the future as well. That is including the type setting and the shipment of the journal and the preparation of the electronic version which is available on the website.

The ISTA rules we will probably be around 14,000 as we are normally. That is for the publication of the rules. That is the type setting. That is all what we have to do to make it happen on time that you can get your copies on the 1 December. As an accredited or non-accredited laboratory member accreditation audits we have less this year. That is reflected here by a less expenditure. We have more next year which will be reflected by a higher expenditure. It will be roughly in the same area as we had in 2022. So we could take these numbers and take them over proficiency tests, including GMO. It's also a quite stable expenditure area. We expect it to rise a little bit because that's reflecting to the shipment cost. The normal shipment costs are taken by ISTA. We had a good business deal with Swiss post, but they saw that we are not really shipping that much as we thought we would ship. So we might have a little bit higher shipment cost in the year 2023 and 2024. But it will still be in a reasonable area.

The funds were worth less money at the end of the year, which can happen. We caught up a little bit with the because the reserves are mainly in US dollars. We caught up a little bit with the exchange rate, but there was still a financial loss which we want to recover during the next years. We plan provisions for fluctuations this year to take out of the reserves around 445,000. That would reduce the reserves at the end of the year to around 3.54 million Swiss francs. And the decision was made to try to keep that at a stable point, not to decrease it more. That is why we proposed for 2024 actually, that all the projects which you will see on the next slide, that all the projects should be paid out of the cash flow. We would like to try to do that. We'd like to achieve that in the moment we see that. For that reason, we would need to find a little bit about 100,000 Swiss francs to do that and that is only setting the scene for the afternoon. On the area of salaries, we had a quite stable area over the last years.

It went up at the beginning of the year a little bit. That has to do also with the inflation rate and the process which is behind the salary scheme in the HR handbook and the regulations of the association with this raise in following inflation, we estimated a similar inflation rate for next year, but we will see if that is really happening. Other personal expenses, including recruitment, that is also a pretty stable area and staff training will take up again with personal training after the COVID-19 pandemic, let's go to the last slide of the finances. Office Cost after the office movement we came back to a regular office cost of around 245,000 Swiss francs. That is very good because we expected to be a little bit higher at a little bit more expensive location, but it did not happen because we save on other sites in this area. Budget for next year for this year we put it up a little bit, which may mainly driven by energy costs, but we need to see what really comes up with that. We are not 100% sure what is happening. It's a little bit reading in the coffee pot travel costs again after the pandemic work in the area, we had them before, around 40.

We always budgeted for that amount and we keep on budgeting for that in future as well. Sponsoring Young ISTA we said we had 25,000 in the budget and 5000 from Bayer. I need to give a little explanation on that because you only see 21 here. The 5000 from Bayer were coming in as a positive and going out as a negative. So that's a zero game because we have no income stream out of that. So they go into here into expenditure positive and go out negative. And what is missing to around 30,000, those are projects which were approved last year, but like the visit of the colleague from Bangladesh to Canada which was postponed until beginning of this year or a publication in STI, we will see this in the next year under prior period cost mentioned. So that will go in here and we can say that we spent all the money we wanted to spend together with the nice grant we got from Bayer for this project. Marketing cost were around 3800 last year. We expect them to grow again. We need to see what we can do. And website cost. You see, we are coming back to a normal maintenance of the website that will be quite going lower again the last years.

On projects we are looking into a number of areas where we would like to have projects on for this year and that is mainly in the area of having a QA system on bringing Navision, a better QA system and bringing Navision, which is our finance system, into a totally cloud based system. That is the last thing which we have to do to be completely cloud based and we have to do it because the other system will not support it anymore. Sometime in 2024, 2025. The rest of the 100,000k projects, the projects which are still running the eCertificate projects for the last part website CMS the last things which need to be done the Seed Health Method Validation Project and the Subtropical Species, as well as a workshop for the ISTA auditors which was planned earlier and is now happening in Posan probably end of the year. So that was all reflected in this amount and it will be distributed later on in the areas where it belongs to. We do it this way because it's normally easier to have special things than to be reflected somewhere else to see if the budget is okay or not.

You see, on the area of financial cost, that was the losses we had together with a normal cost reflecting an income from currency exchange. A prior year income of about 100,000 made us with. About 5000 which we could take over for this year. We expect it to rise again. But we took a normal kind of a zero balance figure for the financial cost and financial income. I can tell you that we caught up with part of it which we lost, but not all of it yet. We have quite some way to go actually. So we will end up with a zero balance budget for the next year and a proposed budget for 2024. That's a summary of what I just mentioned before. I think I mentioned everything what I wanted to tell you in this area. Yes. So we can skip that and I would like our president to come and let you vote, or after you discussed it of course, that you may vote on the budget for 2023 and proposal for 2024 and BDO to stay as auditors.

ISTA President, Keshavulu Kunusoth invited the designated members to vote on:

Report of the ISTA Secretary General

Voting Result: 35 YES, 2 Abs Votes,

ISTA Financial Report, Budget for 2023 and provisional budget for 2024 approval

Voting Result: 35 YES, 2 Abs Votes

BDO as ISTA External Financial Auditors for 2023

Voting Result: 36 YES, 1 Abs Votes

7. Fixation of the Annual Subscription Fees

Presented by ISTA Vice President Ernest Allen (USA).

The Executive Committee of ISTA is proposing that:

- Membership Fees remain unchanged; no increase is proposed
- if the membership fees are paid on or before 31 December 2023 a discount of 10%, rounded up to the nearest whole Swiss Franc amount, will be applied to the fees listed in the table below.

ISTA President, Keshavulu Kunusoth invited the designated members to vote on the Fixation of Annual Subscription Fees.

Voting Result: 35 YES, 2 Abs Votes

8. Consideration and adoption of the proposed Rules Changes 2024

ISTA Rules Committee Chair Ernest Allen (USA) invited the designated members to vote on the proposed Rules Changes 2024.

PART A. INTRODUCTION OF EDITORIAL CHANGES

A 1. Editorial corrections

Voting Result: 36 YES, 1 Abs votes

PART B. New species and changes to species names

I.1. Revision of the process to add new species to Table 2C

Voting Result: 36 YES, 1 Abs votes

I.2. Revision of Form 1: Proposal for inclusion of new species in the ISTA Rules

Voting Result: 36 YES, 1 Abs votes

PART C. RULES CHANGES AND NEW METHODS REQUIRING A VOTE

Chapter 1: ISTA Certificates

C.1.1. Revision of maximum subplot size allowance for *Solanum lycopersicum* L.

Voting Result: 36 YES, 1 NO, 3 Abs votes

C.1.2. Reporting the subplot weight on an ISTA Certificate

Voting Result: 33 YES, 2 NO, 2 Abs votes

C.1.3. Reporting of uncertainty of measurement on ISTA certificates

Voting Result: 35 YES, 2 Abs votes

C.2.1. Revision of the method to add working and OSD weights to Table 2C

Voting Result: 36 YES, 1 Abs votes

C.2.2. Revision of maximum lot size allowance for *Solanum lycopersicum* L.

Voting Result: 26 YES, 9 NO, 2 Abs votes

C.3.1 Table 3B part 2: Numbered pure seed definitions: 33

Voting Result: 36 YES, 1 Abs votes

C.3.2 Table 3B part 2: Numbered pure seed definitions: 15

Voting Result: 35 YES, 1 NO, 1 Abs votes

C.3.3. Revision to clarify C.3.5.2.4 regarding the identification of indistinguishable species.

Voting Result: 36 YES, 1 Abs votes

C.4.1 Reporting Results

Voting Result: 36 YES, 1 Abs votes

C.5.1. Revision of retesting when fresh seed is present

Voting Result: 28 YES, 4 NO, 5 Abs votes

C.6.1 Adding a tetrazolium test method for *Ulmus* spp. L.

Voting Result: 35 YES, 2 Abs votes

C.9.1 Specifying oven temperatures and tolerances

Voting Result: 35 YES, 2 Abs votes

C.9.2 Reporting moisture content in seed mixtures

Voting Result: 36 YES, 1 Abs votes

C.9.3 Moisture test for coated seeds

Voting Result: 36 YES, 1 Abs votes

C.9.4 Merging Parts 1 and 2 of Table 9A

Voting Result: 36 YES, 1 Abs votes

C.9.5 Clarifying the wording "initial moisture content"

Voting Result: 35 YES, 2 Abs votes

C.11.1 Updates and clarifications

Voting Result: 34 YES, 3 Abs votes

C.11.2 Revision of Chapter 11 germination related sections

Voting Result: 35 YES, 2 Abs votes

C.13.1 Revision of Chapter 13 germination related sections

Voting Result: 36 YES, 1 Abs votes

C.14.1 Revise and update the chapter to improve clarity

Voting Result: 36 YES, 1 Abs votes

Ernest Allen (USA)

This ends the Rules Proposals discussion for 2024. Thank you very much everyone!

9. 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 move to the moving to approve the reports of the Technical Committees.

ISTA President Keshavulu Kunusoth invited the designated members to vote on the Technical Committees Reports

Voting Result: 35 YES Votes

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

❖ ISTA Annual Meeting 2024

Helen Appleyard (UK)

I'm the Chief Officer for the Official Seed Testing Stationary in Cambridge in the UK. And this is my first ISTA meeting and I found it very interesting and informative. So, 100 years ago, delegates met at the National Institute of Agricultural Botany for the inaugural meeting of ISTA. And now, 100 years later, I would very much like to invite you again to Cambridge to celebrate the centenary. Cambridge is a small city founded 900 years ago by academics who had an argument with their colleagues in Oxford. It is still very much a university city, so I do hope to see you in Cambridge 2024.

❖ ISTA Congress 2025

Craig McGill (New Zealand)

In terms of the Congress, we're making good progress. Te Pai, which is the new Convention center, is now open and fully operating. The Asia Pacific Seed Conference APSA Conference will be held at Te Pai in November 2023, so that will give a good run through for those of us from ISTA who will be attending that meeting for the Congress. The symposium program is now well underway. In terms of preparation, it's slightly earlier than usual, the reason being that there is an ISSS meeting in September and we want to be able to inform these scientists who will be attending that Congress.

Of the topics to also have the ISSS colleagues thinking about what they could or could not present for the Seed symposium which always accompanies the Congress. For the Technical Committees, there will be pre and post Congress workshops. We're still in the stage of thinking about what they will be, so if you have any thoughts or suggestions, please contact me as Chair of the National Organizing Committee with your suggestions. They're most welcome. But we have agreement from both the ISTA accredited laboratory, NZ01 in Palmerson North, to host a workshop, and also from the PGG Rights Lab, which is just out of Christchurch, to also host a workshop. Between the Seed symposium and the technical committee reports, Ordinary general meeting there will be something new for the Congress. Well, maybe going back to the future, something we used to have, which both the Executive Committee and the National Organizing Committee have agreed to reintroduce. And that will be a field day. So what we're planning for the field day will be a train journey which will go across Canterbury. This is the main seed production area for New Zealand. Probably 80, 90% of our seed is produced there.

Once we're across the plains, we will then go through the Southern Alps and onto the west coast of New Zealand, which is a rather unique area of New Zealand, and you'll be able to spend some time there. On the way through, you'll learn a bit about the seed industry in New Zealand. And then there'll be time to explore other aspects of New Zealand life on the West Coast or some relatively unique aspects in front and some relatively unique aspects of New Zealand life. This will combine both learning and experience. And it will also bring you together on what's considered to be one of the great rail journeys of the world. With that, I'd like to say we look forward to welcoming you to New Zealand in 2025. There's still a bit of planning to do and we look forward to any thoughts, comments as we move forward with planning.

11. Any other Business raised by a Member

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

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

ISTA Vice President Ernest Allen (USA)

Notice of the motion from the ISTA Executive Committee to be discussed at the OGM 2023. So I request you to the move the Motion OGM 23-07, proposal to increase the cost of blank ISTA certificate from 3.25 to 4.0 Swiss franc with effect from 1 January 2024.

So yesterday I spoke to this group. I think almost everyone here was here when I gave my presentation about the reason why we need to increase the price of the ISTA certificate. As I told everyone yesterday, inflation has affected everyone. It affected everyone in the world. And ECOM, through a lot of discussion, decided that the best way to combat inflation this year was not to increase membership costs, but to increase the cost of our certificates, our paper certificates. Just a reminder, the last increase wasn't the ISTA certificate fees hasn't been increased since 2013. Then it only increased by 0.25 Swiss francs. Prior to that, it was 2008. So ISTA has done a really good job at making sure that you don't have to deal with this on a yearly basis by making increases enough to where it sustains us for a while and being responsible enough with the funds that we get from these fees to make sure that that can happen. And you don't have to think about this on a yearly basis.

The current proposal for us is to increase the cost of the international certificates, both orange and blue, by 0.75 Swiss francs each. If approved, we expect this proposal. To generate us an additional 150,000 Swiss francs each year. And what that's going to do is take care of a lot of our operational cost related and a lot of our priorities that we all agreed to in 2022, such as our SH reference pest list, SH methods, tropical and subtropical species, Young ISTA, capacity building and a host of other activities that we do on your behalf to make sure that ISTA remains relevant in the world. One of the main points that I brought up during that presentation is this slide attention to this issue. Now, by raising these fees now, it puts us in a better position moving forward to make sure that we can continue to provide all the things that you've come to expect from. So, if approved today, the cost of the orange international certificates and the blue international certificates will be 4.0 Swiss francs effective January 1, 2024. So I'm going to go ahead and make a motion to go ahead and have this vote on the floor.

Voting on OGM23-07 Notice of Motion

Voting Result: 28 YES, 3 NO, 6 Abs Votes

13. President's closing address

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

Dear colleagues, representatives of different countries, distinct economies and ISTA designated authorities, ISTA members, participants, ladies and gentlemen, we are now come to the end of the 2023 ISTA Annual Meeting held here in Verona, Italy. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all of you for your contribution and participation in this 2023 Annual Meeting. As I mentioned earlier, it is important for the ISTA to hold its annual meetings in different regions. This brings ISTA to membership, providing an opportunity over time for as many as members as possible across the world to join in the meetings, associated activities, workshops and also to join in the technical committees. This meeting in Verona provided us an excellent opportunity to interact. I hope we have learnt a lot during these past few days and I look forward to acting on what we learned and follow up on actions and outcome from this meeting. During the year, as you saw in the activity reports, we have witnessed significant changes in the ISTA and in this meeting taken several decisions, including the rules change proposals, capacity building programs on seed health testing, introduction of new technologies into the rules, eCertificates updates, collaborations with the IPPC and agreed to the cost to increase for ISTA paper certificates.

The discussion and deliberations from the seminar emphasize the importance of plant genetic resources and conservation of biodiversity as a key global food security. The standard of the presentations in the seminar were very high and generated much discussion and some of the topics are eye opening topics for all of us. I hope that interest will continue beyond this meeting. The report of the technical committees provided an overview of range and depth of work being undertaken by the technical committees with the side meetings giving an opportunity for technical committees to technical committee members and nonmembers like to come together to discuss technical issues, needs of the members and around workshop and future method development. During this meeting I was very impressed by the work done by the TCOMs as well as the working groups in their specific field of technical reports. I hope we will continue our interaction and deepen our dialog to achieve the mission and objectives of ISTA in facilitating seed trade nationally and internationally to support the agriculture globally.

On behalf of the ISTA and all of us, I once again extend my sincere thanks and gratitude to the government of Republic of Italy and Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forest Policy for strong support and making this annual meeting possible and also for the rich hospitality received by all.

So, at the end, so I have the responsibility to adjourn now, my last official task as the President is to adjourn the annual meeting in Verona in Italy. Thank you very much. Thank you, one and all. Have a safe journey home and look forward to seeing you in UK in 2024.