

Strategic Testing Expert Advisory Group Virtual Meeting

Summary of Outcomes and Recommendations

24 May 2024

Dear Colleagues,

The World Anti-Doping Agency's (WADA's) [Strategic Testing Expert Advisory Group \(STEAG\)](#) met virtually on 10 and 11 April 2024 and focused its discussions on the following main topics:

- An update from the [2027 International Standard for Testing \(IST\) Drafting Team \(DT\)](#) on the feedback received by stakeholders on the proposed list of concepts that were part of the [2027 World Anti-Doping Code \(Code\) and International Standards Update Process](#) and other sections of the [2023 International Standard of Testing and Investigations \(ISTI\)](#). The [IST DT](#) also summarized the main proposed amendments to the first draft of the 2027 IST that was published on WADACONnect for stakeholder consultation on [21 May 2024](#);
- The proposed plan for the annual update of the [Technical Document for Sport Specific Analysis \(TDSSA\)](#) the revised version of which will come into effect on 1 January 2025;
- An update from WADA's Data Analytics Unit;
- Updates on the latest Athlete Biological Passport (ABP) and laboratory developments; and
- The involvement of the STEAG with the continuation of the Dried Blood Spot (DBS) project and coordination of their work with the newly established [DBS Technical Working Group](#).

The main outcomes of the meeting and recommendations are outlined below:

1. Update on the 2027 IST

The STEAG was informed on the progress of the [2027 IST DT](#) for the preparation of the first draft of the 2027 IST. The [ISTI](#) will be renamed the IST due to a new International Standard for Intelligence and Investigations being developed as part of the [2027 World Anti-Doping Code \(Code\) and International Standards Update Process](#) and will come into effect on 1 January 2027.

WADA received approx. 200 comments from stakeholders via [WADACONnect](#) on the proposed list of concepts and other sections of the [ISTI](#). The majority of stakeholders supported the list of concepts proposed by the [2027 IST DT](#). The STEAG discussed each concept and the proposed amendments to the first draft of the 2027 IST. Further updates to other sections of the [ISTI](#) were also discussed and were shared with all stakeholders on [21 May 2024](#). According to the [2027 World Anti-Doping](#)

[Code \(Code\) and International Standards Update Process](#) stakeholders will have the opportunity to provide their feedback until mid-October 2024.

➤ **Outcome/Recommendation No 1:**

ADOs are encouraged to provide their feedback and comments on the first draft of the 2027 IST during the upcoming 2027 Code and International Standards update process.

2. TDSSA v10

A plan for the annual review of the TDSSA was presented to the STEAG. The review will be completed by the end of summer 2024 and the revised TDSSA v10 will be submitted for approval at the WADA Executive Committee meeting on 12 September 2024. The amendments to the TDSSA will include (among others) changes made to the MLAs for erythropoietin receptor agonists (ERAs) for four sports/disciplines which will be increased from 15% to 30%. The four sports/disciplines are: Athletics – Combined Events, Canoe/Kayak – Ocean Racing, Orienteering and Para-Athletics, Running Middle Distance 800m - 1500m All Classes. These changes to the ERAs MLAs were approved in November 2023 and will come into force on 1 January 2025, allowing ADOs sufficient time to incorporate the applicable changes into their Test Distribution Plans.

WADA recently released a new [TDSSA Guidelines](#) document that replaces the TDSSA Supporting Document A - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs). The new [TDSSA Guidelines](#) will assist ADOs in implementing the TDSSA requirements by providing a number of various practical examples and suggestions.

ADOs can also find information on the [analysis capacity for each WADA-accredited laboratory for the Prohibited Substances within the scope of the TDSSA](#) on WADA's website. For the analysis capacity of Prohibited Substances which are outside the scope of the TDSSA, ADOs can also find the full list of [specific methods](#) (that are not included in the standard sample analysis menu for a urine sample) and that are available in WADA-accredited laboratories on WADA's website.

➤ **Outcome/Recommendation No 2:**

The STEAG will submit the revised TDSSA v10 to WADA's Executive Committee in September 2024 and upon approval it will come into effect on 1 January 2025.

3. Data Analytics Unit

WADA's Data Analytics Unit presented on how it is using data analytics to monitor and report on athlete and sample data from ADAMS. The use of data analytics can optimize various WADA's monitoring activities e.g., Code compliance, laboratory(ies) reporting, etc. but can also assist the STEAG with its review of ADOs' application of the TDSSA requirements. WADA's goal is to present future data reports such as the Anti-Doping Testing Figures Report in a more user-friendly and interactive way.

➤ **Outcome/Recommendation No 3:**

The STEAG will consider the testing data presented by the Data Analytics Unit to review the global implementation of the TDSSA as well as any other applicable testing requirements that ADOs are required to meet.

4. ABP and Laboratory updates

WADA's ABP team updated the STEAG on the implementation of the Endocrine Module and the blood markers of the Steroidal Module¹ of the ABP that were launched by WADA in [August 2023](#). Given the new modules have only been in operation for 8 months, more data is required for the STEAG to consider their possible inclusion within the TDSSA.

ADOs are reminded that the Endocrine Module of the ABP aims to improve human Growth Hormone (hGH) detection sensitivity through longitudinal profiling of hGH biomarkers over time. The new markers of Steroid Module of the ABP measured in venous blood samples (serum) are anticipated to be particularly valuable in detecting abuse of testosterone and related compounds in female athletes and other populations with low steroid levels in urine.

WADA's Science team presented to the STEAG the latest developments on the laboratories' capabilities for different types of analyses and also included an update on the latest version of the Technical Document for Erythropoietin ([TD2024EPO](#)) and the revised Technical Letters [TL23](#) and [TL24](#). The need for a user-friendly table with all analyses available by WADA- accredited laboratory for stakeholders to access was also discussed.

➤ **Outcomes/Recommendations No 4-6:**

- a. *ADOs are encouraged to apply the Endocrine Module and the blood markers of the Steroidal Module of the ABP on the same sports/disciplines that they would target for hGH testing and steroid detection respectively based on their risk assessment.*
- b. *The STEAG will consider the inclusion of the Endocrine Module and the blood markers of the Steroidal Module of the ABP in the TDSSA once these have been operational for at least one year and sufficient data is available to assess their benefits.*
- c. *The STEAG recommends that WADA considers the publication of a user-friendly table with all analyses available by each WADA- accredited laboratory on its website.*

5. DBS project

The STEAG expressed its interest in the progress of the DBS project. DBS collections are currently complementary to existing sample collections. WADA reported its intention to create a DBS roadmap that will include future steps towards a higher value analytical menu in comparison to the current analytical menu. WADA will also create a DBS specific section on its website and will update the existing DBS FAQ to provide further guidance on the appropriate DBS implementation by ADOs.

WADA's Science Department has put in place the [DBS Technical Working Group](#) that will assist with the wider and harmonized implementation of DBS testing in WADA-accredited laboratories, and the harmonization of DBS sample collection devices.

¹ ADOs are encouraged to contact WADA's ABP team at athletpassport@wada-ama.org with any questions and/or to request the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) documents for the Endocrine Module and the blood markers of the Steroidal Module of the ABP for further information on testing strategies.

WADA's Testing Department will also appoint, in the near future, a DBS Testing Working Group which will contain some members of the STEAG as well as external members from the anti-doping community that are actively involved in DBS sample collection. The DBS Testing Working Group will aim to provide guidance to ADOs on DBS testing strategies for test distribution planning, developing supporting resources for ADOs based on the current DBS analytical capacity and will keep the anti-doping community informed on the latest DBS developments. WADA will coordinate the work of both Working Groups to implement the DBS roadmap that will contain both short and long-term objectives.

Outcomes/Recommendations No 7/8:

- a. *The STEAG will assist the DBS Technical Working Group with the criteria for harmonization of collection devices.*
- b. *WADA's Testing Department will create the DBS Testing Working Group to provide ADOs with DBS testing guidance based on the existing analytical capacity and will keep the anti-doping community informed of the latest DBS developments.*

Should you have any comments or questions regarding the STEAG summary of outcomes, please contact WADA at testing@wada-ama.org.

Thank you for your continued commitment to clean sport.

Yours sincerely,

Tim Ricketts

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Ricketts', written over a light grey rectangular background.

Director, Testing

Matt Fedoruk

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matt Fedoruk', written over a light grey rectangular background.

Chair, Strategic Testing Expert Advisory Group