

8 October 2020

Summary of Outcomes and Recommendations

Strategic Testing Expert Group Meeting Day 1 - Implementation of the Technical Document for Sport Specific Analysis (TDSSA)

**16 September 2020
Virtual Meeting**

Dear Colleagues,

The World Anti-Doping Agency's (WADA's) [Strategic Testing Expert Group \(EG\)](#) met virtually on 16 September 2020 and discussed the following main topics of the [TDSSA](#):

- the testing data in ADAMS representing the five-year period from 2015 to 2019 with regards to the level of TDSSA implementation by Anti-Doping Organizations (ADOs);
- the results of WADA's monitoring of the level of TDSSA implementation by ADOs in this five-year period, as part of WADA's ongoing monitoring process and based on WADA's prioritization policy;
- the level of TDSSA analyses across ADOs in the first half of 2020;
- the implementation of the haematological module of the Athlete Biological Passport (ABP) by ADOs for the sports/disciplines with an Erythropoiesis Stimulating Agents (ESAs) Minimum Level of Analysis (MLA) of 30% or greater; and
- the proposed changes to the TDSSA to be consistent with the 2021 International Standard for Testing and Investigations (ISTI).

Implementation of and Compliance with the TDSSA for the period 1 January 2015 – 30 June 2020

The EG reviewed extensive TDSSA testing and monitoring data for the period 1 January 2015 – 30 June 2020 and identified trends of increasing ADO adoption and greater compliance with the TDSSA requirements since the introduction of WADA's compliance monitoring program. It was acknowledged that the majority of Tier 1 and Tier 2¹ National Anti-Doping Organizations (NADOs) and International Federations (IFs), where applicable, have already incorporated the TDSSA requirements into their Test Distribution Plans (TDPs).

Implementing the TDSSA is considered a Critical requirement under the International Standard for Code Compliance by Signatories (ISCCS). Out of 154 ADOs monitored for their activities, 54% were fully compliant with the TDSSA requirements in 2019 in comparison to 32% in 2016, and only 16% were not in line with the TDSSA requirements in 2019 in comparison to 63% in 2016. WADA is working closely with any ADOs with TDSSA implementation challenges; and, where necessary, corrective actions are raised with the ADO.

Preliminary ADAMS testing data from the first part of 2020 shows a reduction in overall testing numbers since March 2020 due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on ADOs and laboratories. However, the EG recognized the collaborative effort of ADOs to apply the TDSSA requirements whenever testing was conducted and/or resumed later in the year. The next

¹ Classification according to the ISCCS Prioritization Policy.

compliance monitoring exercise is planned for early 2021, where the implementation of the TDSSA in 2020 will be reviewed.

A summary of TDSSA figures are outlined below for the period 1 January 2015 - 30 June 2020.

Erythropoiesis Stimulating Agents (ESAs)

	# of samples	# of Sports	# of TAs	AAFs
2020 (1 Jan – 30 Jun)	12,155	81	157	17
2019	55,578	120	244	92
2018	51,643	118	229	77
2017	48,853	116	220	85
2016	46,710	108	212	66
2015	36,218	94	183	46

Growth Hormone (GH)

	# of samples	# of Sports	# of TAs	AAFs
2020 (1 Jan – 30 Jun)	4,347	71	89	1
2019	24,181	103	150	6
2018	24,242	99	137	2
2017	20,482	90	124	0
2016	17,538	68	111	6
2015	13,264	74	103	4

Growth Hormone Releasing Factors (GHRFs)

	# of samples	# of Sports	# of TAs	AAFs
2020 (1 Jan – 30 Jun)	13,141	85	160	3
2019	59,406	126	234	26
2018	60,964	124	231	21
2017	57,869	119	218	19
2016	42,730	111	207	15
2015	21,654	88	145	14

Implementation of the haematological module of the ABP

The implementation of the haematological module of the ABP for sports or disciplines with an ESAs MLA of 30% or greater has been a mandatory component of compliance with the TDSSA since 1 January 2019. The EG reviewed statistics concerning the implementation of the ABP program in 2019 with a trend of increasing ADO compliance with the TDSSA and the Technical Document for Athlete Passport Management Units ([TD2019APMU](#)).

More than 170 ADOs are running an ABP program (steroidal and haematological) with more than 35 new programs established in the last 12 months. All Tier 1 ADOs and two thirds of the Tier 2 ADOs are set up with an Athlete Passport Management Unit. More than 85% of Tier 1 ADOs and over 50% of Tier 2 ADOs are now implementing a haematological module of the ABP. WADA's ABP team is working closely with the remainder of Tier 1 and Tier 2 ADOs to assist them with the establishment and the management of the haematological module. Through WADA's compliance monitoring program, relevant corrective actions are raised, where necessary.

The main outcomes of the meeting and recommendations are summarized below.

1. The EG supports the Compliance Review Committee's (CRC) advice to WADA regarding its compliance monitoring activities.

The EG discussed the impact of the current COVID-19 pandemic on anti-doping programs worldwide and acknowledged the ongoing complexities affecting ADOs and laboratories in this unprecedented and unpredictable situation. The EG supports the CRC's advice to WADA to maintain its compliance monitoring activities in a robust but flexible manner in light of this global COVID-19 pandemic. Whilst the challenges are acknowledged, the EG encourages all ADOs to continue with the application of the respective MLA requirements for ESAs, GH and GHRFs in the ADOs' Test Distribution Plans (TDPs).

ADOs are reminded that they can apply for up to 50% flexibility in the implementation of the TDSSA MLAs on the basis of the implementation of a haematological module of an ABP and/or other non-ABP related criteria listed in Article 6.2 of the TDSSA if they can demonstrate that the implementation of alternative, intelligence-led testing strategies lead to the most effective and efficient use of their available testing resources. The process and the full list of criteria required to support an application for flexibility in implementing the MLAs can be found in WADA's [Code Compliance Center](#), and the [Application for Flexibility User Guide](#) on WADA's website.

As ADOs revise their Risk Assessments and TDPs to resume testing, the EG recommends focusing on urine and blood testing, and TDSSA analysis on athletes who have qualified or who may qualify for the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games to be held in 2021. This will further support the work of the pre-Games Testing Taskforce and the testing recommendations they will issue.

2. Applications for flexibility to be valid for two years and existing applications to be reviewed. TDSSA Supporting Document A to become obsolete and be replaced by TDSSA Supporting Document B.

With respect to the applications for flexibility, the EG agreed that the initial period of approval will now become two years. WADA will develop an easy and user-friendly process for renewal, should the ADO request an extension. ADOs with existing applications will be contacted by WADA to review if their applications are still applicable and if there is a need for extension.

Since the beginning of 2020, WADA has developed a user-friendly online system within the Code Compliance Center (CCC) platform through which an ADO can complete its self-

assessment and submit its application for flexibility electronically to WADA along with supporting documents such as its Risk Assessment, TDP and Registered Testing Pool. Since the creation of this online system, WADA has only received applications electronically and has not received an application for flexibility in a paper format (by using the TDSSA Supporting Document A of the 2020 TDSSA v.5). Therefore, the EG agreed to WADA's proposal to make the TDSSA Supporting Document A obsolete. From 1 January 2021, ADOs will only be able to apply for flexibility electronically, and the only TDSSA Supporting Document in the revised 2021 TDSSA v6 will be the frequently asked questions document.

3. Testing Guide for Gas Chromatography/Combustion/Isotope Ratio Mass Spectrometry (GC/C/IRMS) in urine samples.

GC/C/IRMS analysis data was presented to the EG by WADA with a focus on reviewing and developing better testing strategies for the application of this analysis in combination with the steroidal module. The EG considers GC/C/IRMS analysis as a very effective method to detect the exogenous administration of endogenous anabolic agents such as testosterone. Therefore, it is recommended that ADOs develop additional, risk-based strategies to apply this analysis to urine samples proactively and not only as a result of the implementation of the steroidal module. As a result, the EG agreed that a GC/C/IRMS Testing Guide would be a helpful resource to ADOs.

ADOs are also reminded that in order to further support the implementation of the TDSSA, WADA has developed Testing Guides for ESAs, GH and GHRFs. The Testing Guides provide information on each of these prohibited substances and testing strategies. ADOs are encouraged to consult these Guides to support their testing strategies when applying analysis for these categories of substances within the scope of the TDSSA. If an ADO is interested in receiving these Testing Guides, please contact WADA at tdssa@wada-ama.org as they are not publicly available.

4. The term 'ESAs' is replaced by the term 'EPOs' and other minor changes in the 2021 TDSSA v6.

In order to be in line with the terminology used in the 2021 Prohibited List, the term 'ESAs' will be replaced by the term 'EPOs' in the 2021 TDSSA v6. The acronym 'EPOs' is used to describe the substances included under the category S.2.1.1 (Erythropoietin-Receptor Agonists) of the 2021 Prohibited List and analyzed according to the WADA Technical Document TD2014EPO (which is also under review in order to be in line with the 2021 Prohibited List as well as the 2021 Code and revised International Standards).

Additionally, following a request from two International Federations, the description of their disciplines is updated in the 2021 TDSSA v6. The rest of the changes in the TDSSA focus on streamlining it with the 2021 ISTI.

5. TDSSA monitoring tool in ADAMS.

The EG encourages ADOs to monitor their implementation of the TDSSA MLAs through the new monitoring tool in ADAMS. This monitoring tool provides ADOs the opportunity to review their TDSSA data in real time, identify any shortfalls and adjust their testing program accordingly.

6. Prohibited Substances in the TDSSA in 2021.

No new categories of specific analysis are proposed to be added to the TDSSA in 2021; however, the EG continues to monitor laboratory capacity and methodology developments.

7. TDSSA v6 – next steps.

The revised TDSSA v6 with the proposed amendments will be submitted for approval at the next WADA Executive Committee meeting on 11 November 2020. Upon approval, the final TDSSA v6 will be circulated to all stakeholders and will come into effect on 1 January 2021.

8. Next EG meeting on the TDSSA.

In order to have sufficient testing TDSSA data in ADAMS and to be in a better position to monitor and review the implementation of the TDSSA v6, the next EG meeting will take place in the second half of 2021.

We hope you find this update useful. Should you have any comments or questions regarding the above or the implementation of the TDSSA, please contact WADA at tdssa@wada-ama.org.

Thank you for your continued commitment to clean sport.

Yours sincerely,



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