

Strategic Testing Expert Advisory Group Hybrid Meeting

Summary of Outcomes and Recommendations

16 December 2024

Dear Colleagues,

The World Anti-Doping Agency's (WADA's) [Strategic Testing Expert Advisory Group \(STEAG\)](#) met in a hybrid mode on 21 November 2024 and focused its discussions on the following main topics:

- The [outcomes and recommendations](#) from the previous STEAG meeting held on 10-11 April 2024;
- An update from the [2027 International Standard for Testing \(IST\) Drafting Team \(DT\)](#) on the feedback received from stakeholders on the first draft of the 2027 IST as part of the [2027 World Anti-Doping Code \(Code\) and International Standards Update Process](#). The [IST DT](#) also summarized the initial proposed amendments to the second draft of the 2027 IST following a detailed review of all comments received. The second draft of the 2027 IST will be published on WADACONnect for stakeholder consultation in late February 2025;
- Updates on the latest Athlete Biological Passport (ABP) and laboratory developments, including, but not limited to, the prohibited substances and methods included in the [Technical Document for Sport Specific Analysis \(TDSSA\)](#); and
- Updates on the Dried Blood Spot (DBS) project and coordination of the work of the newly established [DBS Testing Working Group](#) and the [DBS Technical Working Group](#).

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

1. Outcomes and recommendations from the previous STEAG virtual meeting

The STEAG reviewed the outcomes and recommendations from its previous virtual meeting to confirm that the majority of its recommendations were actioned. One matter still to be addressed is the potential publication (e.g., within ADAMS) of a comprehensive list of the available analyses offered by each WADA-accredited laboratory.. The following are currently available to ADOs on WADA's website:

- For Prohibited Substances within the scope of the TDSSA, information on the [analysis capacity per WADA-accredited laboratory](#)

- For Prohibited Substances outside the scope of the TDSSA, the full list of [specific methods](#) that are not included in the standard sample analysis menu, but are available in WADA-accredited laboratories on WADA's website

2. Update on the 2027 IST

The STEAG was informed on the progress of the [2027 IST DT](#) for the preparation of the second 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 approximately 250 comments from stakeholders via [WADACONNECT](#) on the list of changes proposed in the first draft of the 2027 IST. The [2027 IST DT](#) summarized its discussions and presented further proposals for the second draft of the 2027 IST based on stakeholder feedback. The second draft of the 2027 IST will be finalized in February 2025 and stakeholders will have the opportunity to provide their feedback in the period from late February 2025 to 30 May 2025.

3. 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](#). The STEAG supports the further implementation of blood collections by targeting athletes for the Endocrine and/or the Blood Steroidal Modules of the ABP and will monitor their development over the coming months. The STEAG also acknowledged the recent update of the [TDSSA](#), which stipulates that all samples analyzed as part of the Endocrine Module of the ABP will count towards the Growth Hormone (GH) MLAs² of the respective sport or discipline.

WADA's Science team presented to the STEAG an update on the 2024 ADAMS statistics for the analysis of the prohibited substances and methods included in the TDSSA. The high number in the Adverse Analytical Findings (AAFs) for erythropoietin receptor agonists (ERAs) is noted. The team presented the new 'Second Opinion' process for ERAs findings, which requires the participation of two [EPO Working Group](#) members and has been in place since 15 June 2024, in line with the [TD2024EPO](#). The STEAG is encouraging ADOs to enhance their testing strategies due to the continued risks of ERAs' use in sports. WADA's Science team also encouraged the STEAG to provide comments to the first draft of the International Standard for Laboratories (ISL) as part of the [2027 World Anti-Doping Code \(Code\) and International Standards Update Process](#).

➤ **Outcomes/Recommendations No 1-3:**

- 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 GH testing and steroid detection respectively based on their risk assessment. According to the latest version of the TDSSA (v10) that will come into effect on 1 January 2025, all samples analyzed as part*

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.

² The mandatory implementation of the GH MLAs for all sports or disciplines has been postponed and will be reassessed once the Endocrine Module of the ABP has been further implemented by ADOs.

of the Endocrine Module of the ABP will count towards the GH MLAs² of the respective sport or discipline.

- b. The STEAG will conduct a detailed evaluation of the ERAs AAFs in early 2025 to review the sports/disciplines and countries linked to the AAFs and discuss whether any changes to the TDSSA may be deemed necessary. ADOs are encouraged to continue their best efforts in testing for ERAs.
- c. The STEAG is to provide comments to the draft of the *International Standard for Laboratories (ISL)* as part of the 2027 World Anti-Doping Code (Code) and International Standards Update Process.

4. DBS project

WADA presented the latest developments on the DBS project roadmap and strategy for development of DBS testing and analyses. At present, more than 4,500 DBS samples are collected annually with 21 AAFs reported across different substance categories since 2021. WADA is currently focused on the following:

- harmonizing and further developing the DBS analytical menus (at present, laboratories may offer up to three different analytical menus for DBS analyses, and ADOs are advised to contact the laboratories in advance to confirm the available analytical menu and the preferred collection device);
- enhancing ADAMS reporting and tracking of DBS testing and analyses;
- ensuring the updates to the 2027 IST promote standards in DBS collection equipment, transport, analyses and storage; and
- informing stakeholders on DBS by updating the educational information on WADA's website.

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,



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