

Technical Working Party on Testing Methods and Techniques**TWM/4/23****Fourth Session****Cambridge, United Kingdom, June 2 to 5, 2026****Original:** English**Date:** May 12, 2026

UPDATE ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE ISTA VARIETY COMMITTEE (VARCOM)*Document prepared by an expert from the International Seed Testing Association (ISTA)**Disclaimer: this document does not represent UPOV policies or guidance*

1. During the meeting, we are going to present an update on the activities of the ISTA Variety Committee (VARCOM) in regards of the use of molecular markers for variety identification, single trait determination and the use of image analysis.
2. During the last year, ISTA VARCOM worked on a proposal for the inclusion of a new DNA-based method for *Hordeum* (barley) variety identification in the ISTA Rules. The proposal has been developed by a working group from ISTA VARCOM and approved by majority of votes from committee members. If accepted, this proposal will be the fifth DNA-based method to be included in the ISTA Rules since 2017.
3. During the last year, ISTA VARCOM also continued the work on the development and validation of a single trait test for the determination of adventitious presence of annual rye grass varieties (ARG) in perennial varieties (PRG) by means of digital PCR. Some results will be presented.
4. The use of advanced technologies to perform variety identifications is a topic of growing interest in recent years. The VAR and ATC committees are collaborating to explore the use of AI in variety identifications. Datasets were produced for wheat and barley. Some statistical analysis from the wheat dataset will be presented.

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