Report on the Hyderabad Workshop for TCOM Members

Nadine Ettel[1] and Bert van Duijn[2]

[1] TCOM Manager, ISTA Secretariat
[2] ISTA Advanced Technologies Committee Chair

A TECHNICAL COMMITTEE (TCOM) WORKSHOP was organised by the ECOM sub-working group on TCOM functioning during the last ISTA Congress in Hyderabad. Members from all TCOMs, the Editorial Board of *Seed Science and Technology*, the Seed Science Advisory Group and the Wild Species Working Group were invited. Around 50 people participated in the workshop and were randomly distributed into eight groups. One major goal was to make contact with each other and meet people from other TCOMs. In addition, the following topics were discussed in the groups with regards to TCOM (member) functioning and TCOM working efficiency:

1. What conditions are needed for better communication/workflow?

2. How can we get young people active in ISTA?

3. What are the possibilities for cross-TCOM cooperation projects?

Under the first discussion point, 'What conditions are needed for better communication/workflow?', the improvement of the ISTA website was highlighted as an important issue. Suggestions made included: to make the website more attractive and user-friendly and to put short profiles of TCOM members on the site. The idea to have more (sub) meetings of the TCOMs as video conferences or face to face, was mentioned several times. The wish to have additional IT tools to facilitate working together was also raised, and TCOMs are looking forward to the implementation of O365 which is currently underway. Furthermore, it is suggested to work on improvement and introduction of more shared responsibilities and tasks (defined work plans) within a Committee.

Under the topic, 'How can we get young people active in ISTA?', groups suggested to approach young people more directly. This could be done by establishing contacts with universities; introducing a reduced 'student' fee for participation at ISTA meetings; and organising poster presentations for students.

It was also mentioned that young people are already working for ISTA, but this is not always visible as they often lack funding to join meetings. Young people need better opportunities to be active in ISTA and this should be further encouraged by putting their names on reports, studies and on the website. Another suggestion was to limit the time for Chairs and members to stay in the same Committee.

Under the last discussion point, 'What are the possibilities for cross-TCOM cooperation projects?', a group suggested that new ideas and projects should be better communicated, especially plans for the introduction of new species. It was also suggested to appoint one person from each TCOM to establish a new working group to deal with common projects such as: improvement of the website, organisation of workshops, harmonisation of handbooks, and 'training the trainers'. It was suggested to organise a joint TCOM meeting every year during the ISTA Annual Meeting.

Within the ECOM sub-working group on TCOM functioning, these ideas are being discussed and further actions agreed. Some of the ideas and wishes can be implemented by a TCOM independently from any ECOM decision, like organising regular video meetings or assigning clear responsibilities within a TCOM.

We received the feedback that people greatly enjoyed the TCOM workshop. It strongly encouraged members to talk to people they had not talked to previously and to meet 'new' people. Interesting discussions took place outside of the official topics mentioned in this report. Generally, people were in favour of organising more of such joint TCOM meetings, not least because of the social and networking aspect. We thank all the participants for their active participation, enthusiasm and the pleasant, relaxed atmosphere.