

From Strong Activities to Lasting Outcomes

A planning guide for Technical Committee Chairs — helping each TC translate its activities into tangible and lasting outcomes for the field.

• Prepared by the Technical Advisory and Outcomes Committee

1. Background and Objective

ISSMGE Technical Committees make major contributions to the geotechnical community through conferences, workshops, technical sessions, publications, webinars, educational initiatives, international collaboration, and many other activities. These activities will remain an essential part of the work of the TCs during the 2026–2030 term.

Building on these strong foundations, the new ISSMGE leadership would like to place additional emphasis on the outcomes and longer-term impact generated through TC activities.

The objective is not to replace successful activities or to impose a common set of deliverables on all TCs. Rather, the intention is to encourage each TC to consider how its activities can lead to tangible, measurable, and lasting contributions to its technical field, ISSMGE, the wider geotechnical profession, and society.

The intention is not necessarily to increase the number of TC activities, but to enhance the lasting value generated by activities already undertaken.

The Technical Advisory and Outcome Committee (TAOC) will support this process by providing a common but flexible framework, facilitating collaboration, sharing successful practices, and helping TCs develop and communicate their outcomes. This reflects the evolution of the Committee from a primarily oversight-oriented role toward a more collaborative and strategic advisory function.

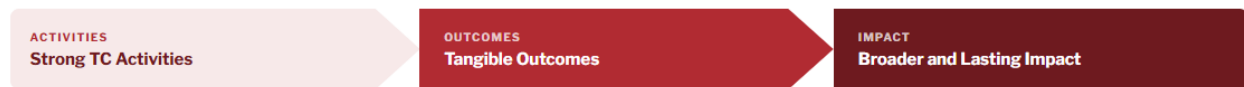
2. A Bottom-Up and Flexible Approach

The diversity of the Technical Committees is one of the major strengths of ISSMGE. TCs working in Fundamentals, Applications, and Impact on Society naturally have different missions, priorities, communities, and opportunities for impact. Consequently, there cannot and should not be a single definition of a successful outcome.

Each TC is therefore invited to reflect on its own technical field, current activities, priorities, and opportunities and identify areas where it believes it can make its greatest contribution. The TAOC will not prescribe these outcomes; its role will be to support TCs in identifying, developing, and communicating them.

3. From Activities to Outcomes and Impact

The proposed approach can be viewed as a natural progression:



For example, organizing a conference or workshop is an important activity in itself. An associated outcome could be a concise technical document capturing the principal developments, conclusions, emerging trends, knowledge gaps, and future challenges identified during the event. This would allow the knowledge generated through the activity to reach a broader audience and remain available after the event. This concept is also identified specifically in the TAOC Vision.

Other possible outcomes could include technical guidelines or recommendations, state-of-the-art or state-of-practice reports, benchmark exercises, testing protocols, educational resources, databases, international comparisons of standards and practices, research roadmaps, or joint initiatives involving several TCs.

These are examples only. Different TCs will naturally pursue different types of outcomes.

4. Proposed Framework

As an initial framework, each TC could consider the following five steps.

The five steps are intended as a practical guide for reflection and planning, not as an additional formal reporting procedure. TCs may wish to begin with one or two priority outcomes consistent with their interests, available resources, and ongoing activities.

Step 1 – Define the TC Mission and Priority Areas

Identify the principal challenges, opportunities, or areas in which the TC can contribute during the 2026–2030 term. These may include advancing scientific knowledge, improving engineering practice, supporting education and training, addressing sustainability and resilience, developing new technologies, or strengthening interaction between research and practice.

Step 2 – Identify Outcomes Across Different Time Horizons

TCs are encouraged to consider outcomes at different timescales:

- **Short-term / mid-term outcomes (1–2 years):** specific and achievable outcomes that can be developed during the first half of the term.
- **End-of-term outcomes (approximately 4 years):** more ambitious contributions requiring sustained effort during the term.
- **Longer-term or legacy outcomes:** strategic initiatives that may extend beyond the current four-year term and provide continuity for future TC leadership teams.

Not every meaningful outcome needs to be completed within a single term. Where a TC initiates a legacy outcome intended to extend beyond the current term, it is encouraged to document the initiative clearly, its scope, progress to date, and proposed next steps, so that incoming TC leadership can consider continuing or building on it

Step 3 – Consider the Nature of the Outcome

Recognizing the diversity of TCs, outcomes may take different forms:

- Knowledge Outcomes

- State-of-the-art reports
- White papers
- Technical summaries
- Practice Outcomes
 - Guidelines
 - Design recommendations
 - Testing protocols
- Education Outcomes
 - Training courses
 - Virtual University content
 - Educational modules
- Digital Outcomes
 - Databases
 - GIS platforms
 - Benchmark repositories
- Community Outcomes
 - Awards
 - Student competitions
 - Industry engagement initiatives
- Societal Outcomes
 - Sustainability frameworks
 - Risk and resilience guidance
 - Policy-oriented recommendations.

Step 4 – Identify Key Milestones

For each major outcome, TCs could identify a small number of milestones that allow progress to be followed during the term.

For example, for the development of an international technical recommendation:

- Year 1:
 - define scope
 - establish a working group
 - conduct survey or collect background information
- Year 2:
 - prepare an initial draft
- Year 3:
 - undertake consultation
 - revise document based on feedback
- Year 4:
 - complete and disseminate the document

This step is particularly important because it provides a practical mechanism for tracking progress and identifying challenges before the end of the term.

The purpose is not to introduce an additional administrative burden, but to provide a simple way for the TC itself and the TAOC to follow progress and identify where support may be useful.

Step 5 – Consider How Success and Impact Can Be Demonstrated

For each outcome, the TC should identify how success will be measured and what evidence will demonstrate achievement. Three categories of metrics are envisaged:

- **Deliverable Metric**
 - What was produced?
 - ✓ *Example: international guideline completed, databases launched*
- **Engagement Metric**
 - Who participated or benefited?
 - ✓ *Example: number of contributors, number of participating countries, industry participation, event attendance*
- **Impact Metric**
 - What evidence demonstrates influence or adoption?
 - ✓ *Example: downloads, citations, use by practitioners*

The appropriate indicators will depend strongly on the nature of the outcome and the TC. They may include participation, geographical reach, downloads, use by practitioners, citations, contributions from industry, incorporation into educational activities, or other evidence considered relevant by the TC. It is recognised that impact indicators, particularly those related to adoption and influence, may take time to materialise. For end-of-term reporting, TCs are encouraged to document the evidence available at that stage, with the understanding that fuller demonstration of impact may only be possible in the years following completion.

Not every initiative is expected to demonstrate all three types of metrics or immediate impact. TCs should select indicators appropriate to the nature and maturity of their work, recognizing that meaningful influence may emerge after the current term.

5. Role of the TAOC

The TAOC's role will be to facilitate and support this process rather than prescribe outcomes. TC Chairs are encouraged to contact the TAOC Vice-Chair, who coordinates the outcomes initiative, at any stage for guidance or support. In particular, the TAOC aims to:

- provide a common and flexible framework;
- support TCs in identifying meaningful and achievable outcomes;
- facilitate collaboration between TCs where common interests exist;
- help identify challenges and opportunities during implementation;
- share successful experiences and practices across TCs;
- support the communication and visibility of TC achievements; and

- help communicate the collective impact of the Technical Committees to the ISSMGE Board and the wider geotechnical community.

This is consistent with the proposed TAOC leadership structure, under which the Vice-Chair coordinates the outcomes initiative while the Chair provides overall leadership and coordination and maintains communication with the TCs and ISSMGE leadership.

6. Next Steps – Consultation with the TCs

This document is intended as a starting point for discussion, not as a finalized framework.

TC Chairs are invited to discuss these ideas with their leadership teams and consider:

- What meaningful outcomes could your TC aim to achieve during the 2026–2030 term?
- Which of these could realistically be achieved by the mid-term and by the end of the term?
- Are there longer-term initiatives that your TC would like to establish as a legacy beyond 2030?
- Are there outcomes that could benefit from collaboration with other TCs?
- What support from the TAOC could help your TC achieve these outcomes?

The initial feedback and ideas from the TCs will be discussed during the forthcoming Fall TC Chairs–TAOC meeting. Following that discussion, the framework can be refined collectively and used to guide the outcomes initiative during the 2026–2030 term.