



Draft Minutes of TCs Chairs - TOC meeting

A TCs Chairs - TOC meeting was held on 28/02/2023 over a virtual platform

The following representatives of the TCs attended the meeting.

1. Dr Marc Ballouz, President ISSMGE
2. Dr Marcelo Sanchez, TOC Chair
3. Dr Susmita Sharma, TOC Vice-Chair
4. Dr Matthew Coop, Chair 101.
5. Dr Jason DeJong, Chair 102.
6. Dr Ioannis Anastasopoulos, Chair 104.
7. Dr Ahmed Chraibi, Chair 107.
8. Dr Cor Zwanenburg, Chair 201.
9. Dr Jennifer Nicks, Secretary 202.
10. Dr Andy Take, Chair 208.
11. Dr Raffaele Di Laora, Secretary 212.
12. Dr Yoichi Watabe, Chair 214.
13. Dr Andrea Dominijanni, Chair 215.
14. Dr Jian Chu, Chair 217.
15. Dr Giulia Lugli, Chair 218.
16. Dr Andrew Ridley, Chair 220.
17. Dr Ramon Verdugo, Chair 221.
18. Dr Magnus Rømoen, Chair 222.
19. Dr Alessandro Flora, Chair 301.
20. Dr Michael Hicks, Chair 304.
21. Dr Askar Zhussupbekov, Chair 305.
22. Dr Marina Pantazidou, Chair 306.
23. Dr Zhongqiang Liu, Chair 309.

The meeting held on 01/03/2023 over virtual platform had the following attendees.

1. Dr Marcelo Sanchez, TOC- Chair
2. Dr Susmita Sharma, TOC- Vice- Chair
3. Dr Kenichi Soga, Chair 105.
4. Dr Enrique Romero, Chair 106.
5. Dr Misko Cubrinovski, Chair 203.
6. Dr Duncan Nicholson, Chair 206.
7. Dr Phil Watson, Chair 209.
8. Dr Shinji Sassa, Chair 213.
9. Dr Takashi Ono, Chair 216.
10. Dr Askar Zhussupbekov, Chair 305.
11. Dr Anand J. Puppala, Chair 307.
12. Dr Guillermo Narsilio, Chair 308.

The same agenda was addressed in both meetings, as follows,

Meeting Agenda

TOC Meeting – Feb. - Mar. 2023

1. Welcome & Introduction (Sanchez)

Guidelines Highlights

2. TCs activities (Sánchez - all).

- Administrative meetings;
- TC specific conferences and technical events;
- TC website.
- ISSMGE Honor Lectures and Bright Spark lectures.
- Others...

3. Monitoring of TCs Activities and Performance (Sanchez).

- Activity points and scores.
- Spreadsheet to monitor TCs performance.

4. Forthcoming ISSMGE Technical Committee Report (Sanchez).

5. [New Guidelines ISSMGE Technical Committees](#). Rev. Oct. 2022 (Sanchez).

6. International Interactive Technical Talks, IITT (Sanchez).

- [New ISSMGE IITT President's initiative; Available IITTs](#)

7. Organization of Pre-Conference TCs Workshops, Courses, and TCs Meetings (Sanchez).

- [XVIII ECSMGE 2024](#). European Conf. on Soil Mechanics and Geotechnical Engineering. Lisbon, Portugal, 08 / 26- 30th 2024
- [XVII PANAMGEO 2024](#). Pan-American Cong. on Soil Mechanics and Geotechnical Engineering La Serena, Chile. Nov. 2024.
- [21st ICSMGE 2026](#). International Conf. on Soil Mechanics and Geotechnical Engineering. Vienna, Austria. Jun 14th to 19th. 2026.

8. Heritage Time Capsule (HTC) Project (Sanchez).

- <https://www.issmge.org/the-society/time-capsule>

9. TCs and ATCs Report Activities 17ARC on Geotechnical Engineering, Astana, 14th to 18th Aug. 2023. (Prof. Zhussupbekov).

10. Other Business (all).

The items of the agenda meeting were taken up and discussed accordingly, as summarized below

1. Welcome & Introduction

At the outset, TOC-Chair (Marcelo Sanchez) welcomed all the members representing the ISSMGE TCs in the 1st meeting of the TC Chairs and the TOC.

ISSMGE President (Marc Ballouz) too addressed the august gathering of the members and introduced his new IITT initiative.

Guideline highlights

Before discussing the item 2 of the agenda, the TOC Chair briefly introduced the main aspects of the ‘Guidelines for ISSMGE Technical Committees and ISSMGE Honour Lecture’, as follows,

The TOC Chair quickly went through the following main aspects:

- *The topics and number of TCs are set to meet the perceived needs within the geotechnical community.*
- *A TC is responsible for discussing, advancing, and developing knowledge in its specialist subject area.*
- *TCs general objectives:*
 - *Develop and disseminate knowledge and practice within the topic of the TC to the ISSMGE membership.*
 - *Establish guidelines and technical recommendations within the topic of the TC.*
 - *Assist with technical programs of international and regional conferences organised by the ISSMGE.*
 - *Interact with industry and overlapping groups working in areas related to the specialist area of the TC.*
- *Efforts should be made to synthesise this information into a form that is of use to the geotechnical profession.*
- *Efforts should be made to disseminate it to the membership of the ISSMGE, as articulated in the TC Objectives.*
- *Balance between the advancement of academic research and the translation of appropriate research findings into practice*
- *TCs may use a variety of means for achieving their objectives. For example: specialist discussions, symposia, academic/practitioner forums, speciality conferences, surveys, etc.*
- *All the events organised under the auspices of the TC must adhere to the principles outlined in the ISSMGE conf. manual.*
- *The TC shall seek approval from the TOC, President, and Secretary General before it gives official endorsement to any conference or activity organised by bodies outside the ISSMGE.*
- *The Terms of Reference should include tangible deliverables (e.g., reports, seminars & proceedings, other demonstrable outputs).*
- *The TC Chair should make a firm commitment to organise the activities of the TC.*
- *The Chair nominates the Secretary for the TC. He/she may also nominate a TC Vice-Chair.*
- *To reflect the international nature of TCs, TC Chairs are strongly encouraged to select a Secretary and a Vice Chair from a different member society (MS) from that of the Chair.*

- *The Chair may nominate up to four members from various countries to reflect the international nature of the TC.*
- *These individuals should be important specialists seen as essential to ensure satisfactory progress in TC activities.*
- *Each MS may nominate up to two members to serve on each TC.*
- *The length of their term of appointment is 8 years.*
- *It can be renewed for 4 years, upon proposal of the TC Chair and approval by the TOC.*
- *Approval is based on evidence of active and essential participation.*
- *At any time, a MS may nominate new member(s) or replace its member(s) in a given TC.*
- *MS may add more members who are termed 'Corresponding Members'.*
- *The corresponding members may attend TC meetings but have no voting rights.*
- *Only nominations from MSs in good standing with the ISSMGE will be considered.*
- *Only individuals whose details have been entered onto the TC database by their MS are considered as members of a TC.*
- *The official TC membership is that appearing on the ISSMGE website.*
- *At the start of their term of office, the Chair should send an invitation to each TC member to confirm their availability and their willingness to participate in and advance the activities of the TC.*
- *The Chair may invite individuals to join the TC.*
- *The mechanism of joining is for the individual to contact their MS and ask that they be added to the TC database.*
- *TC members are obliged to respond when requested to do so and to carry out delegated activities as agreed.*
- *The TC Chair may suggest to the ISSMGE President and the TOC to remove or replace inactive members.*
- *An inactive TC member is one who fails to respond within a reasonable timeframe to requests from the TC Chair, giving due consideration to extenuating circumstances. Detailed procedure in the guidelines.*
- *It is expected that TC members report to their MS all appropriate information about the TC activities.*
- *The composition of TCs should ensure a mix of academics, researchers, and practitioners on the committee.*
- *As a guideline, practitioner involvement should exceed 25% on any TC. Details in the guidelines*

Questions and discussion about the 'TCs members':

Dr. Watson questioned if the number of nominated members can be increased for some TCs. **Dr. Sanchez** mentioned that the TC Chair nominated cannot exceed four (4), and that the members nominated by each Member Societies (MS) cannot exceed two (2).

Dr. Cubrinovski questioned if the Vice Chair and Secretary have the 'right to vote'. **Dr. Sanchez** mentioned that the TC Vice-Chair and Secretary should be nominated members (either by the TC Chair or by the MS), so in this case they have right to votes. However, the current Guidelines are not specific about the membership status of the TC Vice-Chair and Secretary. Sanchez suggested that this aspect may be considered in a future revision of the guidelines.

Dr. Soga reinforced the suggestion to revise the current guidelines. It would be convenient to clarify this matter and make clear that the TC vice-Chair and Secretary need to be nominated members to be selected for these positions and therefore with the 'right to vote'.

Dr. Ridley enquired about a nominated member from the Portuguese MS who has been relocated in Brazil and now wishes to represent the Brazilian MS as well. Ridley asked if he is allowed to do so. **Sanchez** informed that the Guidelines are not totally clear about this situation. However, the idea is that a nominated member represents and reports to the MS who nominated her/him. Therefore, it will be convenient to represent one MS only, in case that a conflict of interest emerges in a given occasion (e.g., when voting for a City/Country as the host of a TC Conference). The TOC-Chair also emphasised that the most important characteristics related to a nominated member is his/her active participation in the TC activities and a good representation of the pertinent MS, aspects that shouldn't be affected by the temporary geographical location of the nominated member.

Dr. DeJong enquired if the number of nominated members from Industry can be increased. **Dr. Sanchez** informed that based on the current guideline, the number of TC nominated members should not exceed four. He also mentioned that (ideally) the TC Chair nominated members should be 2 (two) from academia and 2(two) from industry.

The TOC Chair continued with the following main aspects:

- Though the lifetime of a TC is not linked to the period of a Presidency.
- The TC Chair is encouraged to develop task forces for specific activities and assign responsibility to TC members to lead them.
- The Leaders of the Task Forces of a TC, together with the Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary form the Executive of the TC.
- The ISSMGE President will consider TOC recommendations to maintain or dissolve existing TCs and to create new ones.
- The ISSMGE President, after consultation with the TOC, may elect to dissolve any TC whose mandate has been fulfilled or is perceived as being inactive or ineffective.

Questions and discussion about the 'Task Forces':

The TOC- Chair acknowledged those TCs that has already developed task forces for specific activities and assigned responsibility to their members to lead these activities. He also encouraged the new Chairs to contact all the nominated and corresponding members at the beginning of their mandate to check their willingness to actively participate in the TCs activities. The new TC Chair shall also work on the Terms of Reference and submit the revised version to the TOC-Chair.

Dr. Watson elaborated on checking the active member in TC through extensive surveys (for six months) and established five Task Forces (Executive Leadership Team) for disseminating the information on events related to the TC209. Follow-up meetings with Chair and Vice Chair and the four elected members (active members) monthly helped to maintain the TC's activities. **Dr. Sanchez** appreciated this approach and mentioned that it might help to develop the leadership within the Taskforce. He also requested Watson to share more information and his experience on the role of Task forces in a future TC Chairs – TOC meeting.

The TOC- Chair envisaged organizing at least two videoconference meetings annually to enhance the interactions amongst the TCs and between the TCs Chairs and the TOC Chair.

2. TCs Activities

2.1 Administrative meetings

The TOC-Chair emphasizes on the importance of organizing regular meetings, at least two meeting per year, inviting all the TC members.

2.2 TC specific conferences and technical events;

The TOC-Chair encouraged the TC leadership teams to organize their own international and/or regional thematic conferences. These are critical events to disseminate the state of the art and state of the practice in the TC subject areas.

If some TCs find challenging to organize a major conference, they are urged to assists with the technical programs of international and regional conferences organized/sponsored by the ISSMGE There are always several opportunities for the TCs to be involved and assist in this type of event (e.g., organizing preconference courses, workshops, technical sessions, and similar activities), as it is discussed later in point 7 of the agenda.

Sanchez also highlighted the possibility of organizing “One Day National Events’ in subject areas of the TC. There have been very successful experiences in the TC 308 organizing this type of event. For example, the Italian TC308 members organized the “GEOTECNICA ED ENERGIA - One Day Italian Event” convening +100 colleagues from the academy, industry and government. TCs interested in conducting such type of event may approach the TOC for more information.

Dr. Nicholson expressed that the collaboration between two or more TCs can be instrumental to organize successful events and put as an example the recent joint venture between the TC206 and the TC220

Dr. Lugli enquired if the ISSMGE provides financial support for conferences, technical events, or workshops organization. She seeks advice from the TCs who have already undertaken such events. **Dr. Sanchez** informed that with the current structure of the ISSMGE, no financial support can be provided to the TCs for conducting events. **Dr. Ridley** shared the experience of his TC getting support from the British MS to organize a conference. **Dr. Sanchez** expressed that he will be happy to connect new TCs with other experienced TCs in this regard.

2.3 TC website.

The website is a critical instrument to maintain the TC members (and colleagues in general) updated on the TC activities. The TCs need to be sure that the information provided in their ISSMGE TC website is correct, updated and informative. The TOC Chair mentioned that most of the TCs didn’t change yet the default picture included in the original TC webpage (see below).



The TOC Chair encourage to change this image for one that is more related to the TC activities. It is very simple to do so. Also, most of the TCs websites do not provide much information about the TC, apart from the terms of references and the membership list. These ISSMGE TC websites can be easily updated with the TC relevant information. A TC can develop its main TC website on another platform, i.e., external to the ISSMGE website. However, a link in the ISSMGE TC website needs to be include to guide interested colleagues from the ISSMGE TC website to the alternative place.

2.4 ISSMGE Honor Lectures and Bright Spark lectures.

The TOC- Chair briefly described the Criteria and process for creating a new ISSMGE Honour Lectures. This should be considered as an essential activity of the TC.

2.5 Others.

Dr. Cubrinovski expressed his concerns about the voting and scrutiny processes conducting online voting using ADoodle system(<https://adoodle.org/>) as recommended by the ISSMGE. There is a problem because the emails of the voting members are visible to all the members with the right to vote.

3. TOC monitoring: monitor TCs performance, activity points, and scores

The TOC- Chair commented that the monitoring of the TCs activities is made using a Table in which various activities are considered, such as, regular administrative TC meetings, TC website, honour lecture, Task force, IITT, TCs interaction, etc. Scores are associated with these activities, which are then used to elaborate a qualitative ranking of the TCs. **Dr. Soga** mentioned that this score is used to establish an indicative ranking, which allows distinguishing between very good TCs, good ones and underperforming TCs.

4. Forthcoming ISSMGE Technical Committee Report (Sanchez).

The TOC-Chair mentioned that within a Presidential period, each TC is required to submit 2 reports to the ISSMGE Board:

- i. interim report. in time for the mid-term Council meeting and
- ii. one administrative report 6 months prior to the International Conference for presentation at the Council meeting.

Both reports are to be submitted to the TOC and the Secretary General.

ISSMGE provides the format for the 2 reports.

The last report was in conjunction with the Sydney International Conference, May 2022.

Dr. Zhussupbekov stressed that if the intermediate report is requested in 2024, then the report will cover 2 years, but it will not be presented at the Midterm Council Meeting. If the report is requested now (i.e., for the Astana Midterm Council Meeting) the reporting period will be around 1 year only.

Dr. Sanchez mentioned that he will discuss this matter in the forthcoming board level meeting in Hurghada Egypt, to take place on March 6th 2023.

5. New Guidelines ISSMGE Technical Committees.

The TOC-Chair explained that the main changes in the guidelines are related to the election process.

- The term of office of a TC Chair is 4 years and can be renewed, normally, for just one additional term.
- At the end of the first term, the TC Chair has to call for a motion of confidence.
- The TC Chair needs to be supported by the simple majority of the votes to continue in office for a second term.
- At the end of the second 4 years term, the TC Chair needs to organize an election to select a new TC Chair.
- It shall be an open call among all the TC members interested in the TC Chair position.
- Before starting the election process, the TC Chair needs to contact to TOC Chair to coordinate it.
- Once the voting and scrutiny processes are completed, the list of the nominated candidates (in the order they were voted) is shared with the TOC chair for his/her consideration.
- Normally, the new TC Chair is the person who received the maximum number of votes.

- Once approved by the TOC chair, the selected personality asks for an official support to his/her member society, that should forward to the TOC Chair.
- Once this official support is received, the TOC chair proposes to the ISSMGE president the nomination of the selected personality.
- Based on the TOC Chair's suggestion, normally, the ISSMGE President officially appoints the new TC Chair.

TCs Chair Election Protocol Steps

- The TC Chair needs to contact the TOC Chair to inform that a process to select a new Chair will start.
- The process is started by an open call for candidates organized by the TC officers among all the TC members (nominated, chair nominated, corresponding, officers)
- Candidates interested in the position are invited to prepare, within a given deadline, a document that shall include the candidate's short bio (half a page) and a vision statement (half a page) to be shared.
- Organizing and overseeing the voting and scrutiny processes can be made either by the TC officers or by a devoted TC subcommittee
- A TC meeting (in person or virtual) can be set up to allow the candidates to present themselves and their vision
- The voting and scrutiny processes are conducted online* within a period of time defined by either the TC officers or the organizing subcommittee
- The process followed and the list of the nominated candidates (in the order they were voted) is shared with the TOC chair for his consideration.
- Once approved by the TOC chair, the selected personality asks for an official support to his/her member society, that he should forward to the TOC chair
- Once this official support is received, the TOC chair proposes to the ISSMGE president the nomination of the selected personality
- Based on the TOC chair's suggestion, normally, the ISSMGE president officially appoints the new TC chair

6. International Interactive Technical Talks (IITTs)

The TOC- Chair introduced the new ISSMGE President's initiative, International Interactive Technical Talks (IITT), which represents a series of technical talks to bring together young and renowned geo professionals from around the world, from both academia and the industry. Here, the president of ISSMGE is the moderator, and the main speaker would be a renowned geotechnical engineer, usually a leader from the corresponding TC. So far, three TCs have developed IITTs with the objective that each TC will organize at least one IITT in coordination with TOC- Chair in the coming months. Then the discussions on the process of selection of the speakers for the Talk were also done.

7. Organization of pre-conference technical committees' workshops and courses

The TOC- Chair informed about the opportunities to organize TC technical event in conjunction with the following upcoming conferences.

- XVIII European Conference on Soil Mechanics and Geotechnical Engineering 2024, ECSMGE Lisbon, Portugal, August 26th to August 30th 2024.
- XVII Pan-American Congress on Soil Mechanics and Geotechnical Engineering 2024, PANAMGEO Chile 2024, November 2024, La Serena, Chile.

8. Heritage Time Capsule (HTC) Project

The TOC- Chair requested all the TCs that have not contributed to the HTC Project yet to do so as soon as possible. The goal is to finish this project before the ISSMGE midterm council meeting in August 2023.

The TOC-Chair explained the different options to contribute to the project and mentioned that there are good examples to follow from other TCs on the HTC Project webpages.

The TOC-Chair presented the slides prepared by the HTC team.

Finally, it was mentioned that in case of doubts the TCs can contact:

- Dr Charles John MacRobert email: macrobert@sun.ac.za
- Dr. Sukumar Pathmanandavel: sukumar.pathmanandavel@gmail.com

9. TCs and ATCs Report Activities 17ARC on Geotechnical Engineering, Astana, 14th to 18th Aug. 2023

Dr Zhussupbekov shared a presentation highlighting that 17arc.org will act as a platform to disseminate the most recent research and field developments in the design and construction of geotechnical engineering through keynote lectures and technical presentations. Peer-reviewed conference papers will be fully citation indexed and will be published in a Springer proceedings book. The conference will also include special lectures, post-conference workshops, a technical exhibition, and technical tours. A range of packages is available for sponsorship and exhibition opportunities. He also informed that the brochure will be shared with the other TC chair for more networking amongst other regions

- *17th Asian Regional Geotechnical Engineering Conference (<https://17arc.org/>), at Hilton Astana Hotel, Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan, August 14th to August 18th, 2023.*

10. Other Business

There was not any other point to discuss and the meeting concluded with a vote of thanks from the TOC-Chair.