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### **Minutes of TC Chairs -TOC meeting**

On December 12<sup>th</sup> the second 2024 virtual meeting between the ISSMGE Technical Committee (TC) Chairs and the Technical Oversight Committee (TOC) took place. To accommodate different time zones, the meeting was scheduled at two different times.

Attendees of the TC Chairs – TOC Meeting (Option I: 3:00 – 4:30 AM GMT, December 12, 2024)

- Dr. Marcelo Sanchez, TOC Chair
- Dr. Susmita Sharma, TOC-Vice Chair
- Dr. Mabel Chedid, TOC-Secretary
- Dr. Helmut Schweiger- Chair Vienna Conference 2026 (Vice Chair TC103).
- Dr. Jason DeJong, Chair TC102.
- Dr. Akira Murakami, Chair TC103.
- Dr. Itai Einav, Chair TC105.
- Dr. Jonathan Bray, Chair TC203.
- Dr. Sebastiano Foti, Vice Chair TC203.
- Dr. Richard Bathurst, Chair TC 205.
- Dr. Limin Zhang, Chair TC210.
- Dr. Babak Hamidi, Chair TC211.
- Dr. Shinji Sassa, Chair TC213.
- Dr. Yoichi Watabe, Chair TC214.
- Dr. Takashi Ono, Chair TC216.
- Dr. Jian Chu, Chair TC217.
- Dr. Guillermo Narsilio, Chair TC 308.

Attendees of the TC Chairs – TOC Meeting (Option II: 3:00– 4:30 PM GMT, December 12, 2024)

- Dr. Marcelo Sanchez, TOC Chair.
- Dr. Andrew McNamara, Secretary General of ISSMGE,
- Dr. Susmita Sharma, TOC-Vice Chair,
- Dr. Mabel Chedid, TOC-Secretary.
- Dr. Helmut Schweiger- Vice Chair 103 (Chair Vienna Conference 2026).
- Dr. John McCartney, Publications Oversight Committee.
- Dr. Matthew Coop, Chair 101.

- Dr. Luc Thorel, Vice Chair 104.
- Dr. Enrique Romero, Chair 106.
- Dr. Marcos Futai, ViceChair 107.
- Dr. Cor Zwanenburg, Chair 201.
- Dr. Mike Winter, Vice Chair TC202.
- Dr. Andrea Franza, on behalf of TC204.
- Dr. Duncan Nicholson, Chair 206.
- Dr. Phil Watson, Chair 209.
- Dr. Alessandro Mandolini, Chair 212.
- Dr. Andrea Dominijanni, Chair 215.
- Dr. Giulia Lugli, Chair 218.
- Dr. Shahriar Mirmirani, Secretary 218.
- Dr. Andrew Ridley, Chair 220.
- Dr. Ramón Verdugo, TC 221.
- Dr. Magnus Rømoen, Chair 222.
- Dr. Carlo Viggiani, representing TC301.
- Dr. Guido Gottardi, representing TC 301.
- Dr. David Frost, Chair 302.
- Dr. Michael Hicks, Chair 304.
- Dr. Askar Zhussupbekov, Chair 305.
- Dr. Marina Pantazidou, Chair 306.
- Dr. Anand J. Puppala, Chair 307.
- Dr. Zhongqiang Liu, Chair 309.

At the outset, the TOC Chair, Dr. Sanchez, welcomed all the members representing the TCs of ISSMGE to the 2nd 2024 TC Chairs – TOC Meeting. A brief introduction of the TC representatives attending the meeting followed. Thirty-four of the thirty-six active TCs were represented in the meeting. The agenda items were addressed accordingly.

### **Updates on Recent Conferences**

Dr. Sanchez congratulated the organizers on the successful completion of the XVIII ECSMGE-2024 (European Conference on Soil Mechanics and Geotechnical Engineering), held in Lisbon, Portugal, in August 2024, and the XVII PANAMGEO-2024 (Pan-American Congress on Soil Mechanics and Geotechnical Engineering), held in La Serena, Chile, in November 2024. Dr. Winter and Dr. Puppala also expressed their appreciation to the organizers for the successful execution of these event.

### **Updates on Upcoming Conferences.**

The TOC Chair introduced Dr. Schweiger, who presented details on the planning and presentation of papers for the 21st ICSMGE (International Conference on Soil Mechanics and Geotechnical Engineering), scheduled to take place from June 14–19, 2026, in Vienna, Austria. Dr. Schweiger

explained that the allocation of papers will follow ISSMGE rules and will depend on contributions from the national societies. However, there will be flexibility in the paper quotas per country. The submitted papers must be approved by the national societies, and authors are required to provide the relevant TCs with their information, specifying a minimum of two and a maximum of three TCs related to the abstract topic. The best-reviewed papers will be selected for oral presentations at the conference, while others will be forwarded to the appropriate TC Chairs for consideration as poster presentations in the parallel afternoon sessions of the conference.

Dr. Schweiger also informed attendees that TC workshops, parallel sessions, and discussion sessions will be conducted simultaneously. To facilitate scheduling, TC Chairs must notify him in advance of the time and duration of their sessions so that appropriate time slots can be allocated. Dr. Schweiger added that TCs are welcome to hold a combined session at the conference if they so choose. However, the contact person for this session must ensure that authors submitting abstracts or papers to the joint session indicate the relevant TCs at the submission stage. In such cases, the TC should inform the corresponding authors that their papers will be included in the combined/joint sessions, while all accepted papers will still be included in the conference proceedings. Additionally, TCs shall be considered if they wish to hold workshops or discussion sessions-based papers that were not submitted to the conference, as was the case at the Lisbon conference. However, this aspect can only be verified in October 2025. Dr. Schweiger also noted that, following the strategy used during the ISRM Congress 2023, which took place in Salzburg from October 9 to 14, 2023, papers that were not selected for oral presentation would be presented in special poster sessions. While these papers will not be included in the conference proceedings, they will be printed in the conference program. Finally, he informed attendees that there will be no strict restrictions on the paper quota for national societies.

Regarding the possibility of delivering ISSMGE Honour Lectures (HL) at the 21st ICSMGE, Dr. Schweiger informed Dr. Hamidi that a total of five requests have been received to date. Initially, four HLs were planned; however, there is a possibility of incorporating additional HLs. This decision will be made by March 2025. He encouraged interested TCs to send an email stating their interest in conducting an HL, along with the presenter's name and topic. Dr. Schweiger also informed Dr. Sanchez that the lectures will be held in two parallel sessions across two or three rooms capable of seating 100 to 1,000 people during the morning session. However, this arrangement can only be confirmed in March 2025. He added that the deadline for abstract submission has been extended to January 15, 2025, and that 750 abstracts have been received so far from more than 59 nations.

In response to Dr. Einav's inquiry regarding the selection criteria for the Honour Lecture, Dr. Schweiger and Dr. Sanchez explained that the TC Honour Lecture considered for the Vienna Conference must be unique and must not have been presented at any previous technical conference.

Dr. Zhussupbekov and Dr. Winter discussed the indexing of the ICSMGE conference papers, and Dr. Schweiger clarified that all selected papers will be published in digital format only, with a DOI, and will be available in the ISSMGE online library immediately after the conference as open access.

Dr. Schweiger informed Dr. Hamidi that the number of Honour Lectures might be expanded and that additional workshops featuring papers on special topics not submitted to the conference would also be considered for the parallel afternoon sessions, should TCs anticipate a higher-than-expected volume of papers.

### **ISSMGE Bulletin**

Dr. Sanchez introduced the new look of the ISSMGE Bulletin. The updated bulletin highlights the latest advances, technological achievements, and member society activities from across the global geotechnical community. The bulletin is now presented in a flipbook e-magazine format, featuring zooming capability, pop-ups, hotlinks (which flash white), and embedded videos. The Editor-in-Chief, Prof. Badr, oversees the publication of this new edition

### **ISSMGE Technical Publications – New Journal**

Dr. Sanchez shared the President's initiative to launch a new journal in addition to the ISSMGE International Journal of Geoengineering Case Histories. He introduced Dr. McCartney, who will be leading this new journal. Dr. McCartney clarified that the concept for the new journal, which will be based on ISSMGE research, was proposed by President Dr. Ballouz. Given the abundance of existing journals in the field of geotechnical engineering, he discussed the potential of this new journal, the associated costs, and the challenges involved in establishing it

As an initial strategy, the finest papers submitted to ISSMGE conferences, showcasing the latest research in the form of special issues, will be considered for publication in this new journal, rather than adopting an open submission approach at the outset. In addition, he discussed the establishment of the editorial board, the need for editorial software, the indexing process, and the invitation of guest editors, all while adhering to ISSMGE guidelines and maintaining the journal's Open Access status. He also emphasized the importance of securing funding organizations to cover publication costs.

Dr. Bathurst and the majority of TC Chairs expressed concerns about the new journal's competitiveness with well-established and reputable journals in geotechnical engineering. Both Dr. Sanchez and Dr. McCartney assured attendees that more details regarding the journal's development and unique features would be provided in the coming months. Dr. McCartney also invited TCs to contribute suggestions for the journal's development. Dr. Sanchez further emphasized that this new journal will be distinct

from the ISSMGE International Journal of Geoengineering Case Histories, which has a specialized and targeted focus.

### **Guidelines ISSMGE Technical Committees**

Dr. Sanchez encouraged the TCs to review the ISSMGE Technical Committee Guidelines and provide suggestions for enhancing them. Dr. Ridley, Dr. Coop, and several other Chairs referred to the rules regarding the removal of inactive members from a society and discussed the importance of recognizing corresponding members who are more active than the officially nominated ones. Dr. Sanchez emphasized that the guidelines already outline each member's duties and responsibilities and clarified that if a TC member does not respond within a reasonable timeframe, the TC Chair has the authority to take appropriate action. He also urged member societies to increase the number of TC members.

The TOC Chair highlighted the necessity of updating the ISSMGE TC website (in addition to parallel websites/webpages maintained by some TCs) and emphasized the need for more than two administrative meetings per year. These meetings, whether in person or via video conference, should be properly documented with meeting minutes.

Additionally, he encouraged more activities such as workshops, technical presentations, and the development of technical documents to foster collaboration among various TCs and members, promoting recent research and field advancements.

### **TOC New Initiatives**

Dr. Sanchez presented new initiatives, including the Exciting Technical Committee Chairs Recognition and the Pilot Small Funding program, designed to support projects that enhance TC activities or foster collaboration among TCs. He added that outgoing TC Chairs should prepare a document outlining the start of their tenure, the activities undertaken to promote knowledge in their specialized field, and the challenges and experiences encountered during their leadership. A small amount of funding will soon be available to support initiatives aimed at expanding TC operations or strengthening TC relationships. Discussions on joint work among TCs are encouraged, and the TOC remains open to such collaborations. Dr. Pantazidou introduced an innovative idea of inviting a guest speaker from a different field to present at a technical event. Jennifer Case, from Virginia Tech's Department of Engineering Education, has been invited as a keynote speaker, and ISSMGE will provide funding to help cover some of the associated costs. Dr. Sanchez noted that this initiative has exhausted the available funding for this year.

Additionally, new ideas, such as awards for submitting photos of geotechnical projects, are being discussed. These initiatives could engage and promote new geotechnical ventures and may be submitted

to the TOC as formal proposals. If well-justified, such ideas may be considered for implementation after review."

### **International Interactive Technical Talks, IITT**

The ISSMGE Interactive Technical Talk (IITT), led by the ISSMGE President, is a series of technical presentations designed to bring together prominent and emerging geo-professionals from academia and industry worldwide. In these sessions, the ISSMGE President serves as the moderator, while the main speaker is typically a renowned geotechnical engineer, often a leader from the corresponding TC.

So far, 21 TCs have developed IITTs, with the goal of each TC organizing at least one IITT in coordination with the TOC Chair in the coming months. The TOC Chair commended various TCs for successfully conducting their IITTs and requested proposals from any TC interested in organizing more than one IITT. Currently, the TOC has two upcoming IITTs scheduled for next month.

Dr. Sanchez, while addressing Dr. Hamidi, emphasized that technical lectures aim to bring together prominent and emerging geo-professionals from academia and industry worldwide, fostering debate or consensus between the moderator and the speaker.

### **Monitoring of TCs Activities and Performance**

Dr. Sanchez emphasized that TC activity monitoring is conducted using a spreadsheet that tracks various key activities, including the Terms of Reference, Website, Honour Lecture, Consistent Administrative Meetings, Telecommunication, Virtual University, Time Capsule Project, IITT, TC Interactions, Proceedings, and more. An indicative rating/ranking is generated based on these scores, allowing for the differentiation of very good, good, and underperforming TCs. He further added that any TC interested in knowing its ranking may email the TOC Chair directly. Additionally, he stated that the TOC should be notified of any modifications made to the TCs.

### **Other Business**

Dr. Sanchez emphasized the importance of using the ISSMGE Manual to update information on TC websites, along with their respective standalone websites. Both Dr. Hamidi and Dr. Foti expressed concerns about the additional websites/webpages created within TCs. Dr. Sanchez assured Dr. Foti that this issue would be discussed at the next board meeting, scheduled for January 2025.

The meeting concluded with a presentation and invitation from Dr. Zhussupbekov, who welcomed all attendees to the 6th International Conference on GIS and Geoinformation Zoning for Disaster Mitigation (GIZ), to be held in Almaty, Kazakhstan, from August 28 to 30, 2025.

***The meeting ended with a vote of thanks from TOC Chair, Dr. Sanchez.***