
Rapport du Comité de Supervision Technique sur la période 2013 - 2017

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ABSTRACT: This report presents a synthesis if the main actions conducted by the Technical Oversight Committee over the term 2013 – 2017.

RÉSUMÉ : Ce rapport présente une synthèse des principales actions menées par le Comité de Supervision Technique au cours de la période 2013 -2017.


1 INTRODUCTION.

The Technical Oversight Committee (TOC) is in charge of supervising and coordinating the activities of the Technical Committees (TCs), that have a paramount role with respect to the technical and scientific activities of the ISSMGE. As stated in the “Guidelines for ISSMGE Technical Committees and ISSMGE Honour Lectures”, “The TCs are a forum for discussing, developing and applying specialist geotechnical knowledge related to the behaviour of geo-materials, geotechnical engineering and engineering for society”.

This report will successively address the new composition adopted for the TOC at the beginning of the term in 2013, the current situation of the TCs, the updating of the Guidelines, the TC websites, the issue of TCs with apparent low activity, the cooperation between the TOC and the Corporate Associates Presidential Group (CAPG) and some comments about the role of the TCs in the 19th Seoul ICSMGE.

2 NEW COMPOSITION OF THE TOC

In link with ISSMGE President Roger Frank and in an aim to get a closer feedback from the TCs of each region and to ensure direct liaison between the TOC and the Board, it was decided at the beginning of the period (2013) to change the composition of the TOC by inviting all the regional Vice-Presidents (VPs) to become TOC members, together with another delegate from their region, leading to the following composition (the number of TCs in each region is also indicated):

- Africa: Fatma Baligh, Samuel Ampadu (Ghana) 1 TC
- Asia: Jitao Towhata, Madhira Madhav (India) 11 TCs
- Australasia: Mark Jaksa, Mike Pender (New-Zealand) 1 TC
- North America: Paul Mayne, Gabriel Auvinet (Mexico) 8 TCs
- South America: Jarbas Milititsky, Luis Valenzuela (Chile) 1 TC
- Europe: Antonio Gens, Giulia Viggiani (Italy) 11 TCs
- Asia: Kenichi Soga accepted to remain the TOC secretary. Jennifer Nicks (Young Members Presidential Group) served as YMPG liaison and Giulia Viggiani serves as liaison with the Innovation and Development Committee (IDC).

The regional Vice-Presidents (VP) have been invited to follow more closely the activities of the TCs in their region and to participate to other TOC actions related to TCs, including discussing when needed on the Chairs of the TCs with low apparent activity, on the nomination of new Chairs and on any other issue. To the TOC Chair, this change in composition was beneficial and the involvement of regional VPs with respect to the TCs in their region is most welcome. The participation of the other TOC members has been rather marginal, probably because they have not been enough mobilised.

3 CURRENT SITUATION OF THE TCs

The current situation of the 32 TCs is as follows:

- 7 TC10i (Fundamental): Lab and in-situ testing, numerical and physical modelling, micro-macro, unsaturated and lateritic soils
- 17 TC2ij (Practical): Dykes, Transportation, Earthquakes, Underground, Safety-serviceability, Interactive design, Retaining walls, Slopes, Offshore, Dams, Ground improvement, Deep foundations, Scour – erosion, Soft soils, Geo-environment, Frost, Land reclamation*, Reinforced fill structures*
- 8 TC30i (Linked to Society): Historic, Forensic, Floods, Risk, Megacities, Education, Sustainability, Energy*

* New TCs

The new TCs created during the term according to the Guidelines resulted from suggestions from ISSMGE experts, were supported by the corresponding MS, and were discussed during Board meetings with the corresponding regional VP prior to being approved:

- TC 217 on “Land reclamation” (Chair Y. Watabe, Japan), resulted in the change in name of TC201 to “Dykes and Levees” (removing “and Land reclamation”)
- TC 2308 on Geo-Energy (Chair M. Sanchez, USA)
- TC 218 on Reinforced Fill Structures (Chair J. Sankey, USA)

Other potential changes in the list concern TCs with apparent little activity, a topic developed further on in the report.

4 MODIFICATIONS IN THE GUIDELINES

The “Guidelines for ISSMGE Technical Committees and ISSMGE Honour Lectures” were updated in link with the Board and with the help of Mark Jaksa. They were approved by the Board on 24 February 2015. The main modifications are explained in the following.
4.1 TC Chairs

The TC leadership is managed as follows:
- Maximum of two terms of 4 years for TC chairs
- TC functioning disconnected from Presidential term to ensure continuity
- Nomination procedure of new chairs further detailed
  - based on consultation and agreement among TC members
  - supported by the corresponding Member society (MS)

Following these recommendations, most TC chairs have been changed during the term, resulting in a turn over favourable to the dynamism of the TCs.

4.2 TC Membership

The TC membership is as follows:
- 2 members nominated by MSs, with voting right
- 4 members and the TC secretary nominated by the chair
- n corresponding members (no limitations in number) nominated by MSs, with no voting right
- no more TOC nominated members (liaison with Board and TOC by regional VPs)
- no more Core members

The changes above were communicated to TC officers and MSs through two letters sent by the TOC in April 2014.

As suggested by Neil Taylor, the management of TC members is now managed by MSs through a new database implemented thanks to the contribution of the Geo-Engineering team (K. Tsantilas and D. Zekkos) together with N. Taylor and P. Peers from ISSMGE. MSs are now responsible of inserting the names of their TC delegates through direct access to the database provided by ISSMGE. This new procedure appeared to be rather tedious and long and required a lot of efforts and understanding from P. Peers.

Based on the recent experience of the new TC on Reinforced Geotechnical Structures, it seems that the nomination of TC members by some MSs may sometimes be excessively long, with, in some cases, only one meeting a year dedicated to the nomination of TC members. The low reactivity of some MSs remains a problem that could require some intervention of ISSMGE officers (TOC officers, general secretary or president).

Some concern with respect to TC “sleeping” members also arose. It is suggested that MSs replace inactive TC members (who for instance never show up at TC meetings) by active TC corresponding members when necessary. This may some TOC/MS interactions, the efficiency of which depends on the MS reactivity.

Note finally that, following a requirement by the CAPG, an issue related to the nomination as TC members of people from Corporate Associates has been discussed and approved during the last Board meeting in Beirut in March 2017. The Guidelines will be amended accordingly.

5 TC WEBSITES

A survey on the TC websites has been conducted in November 2014 by K. Soga for the Wellington Board meeting in Summer 2015, with the following analysis.

5.1 Various websites

There are three websites:
- ISSMGE (issmge.org - main website): ISSMGE is an organisation of organisations (TCs), so it doesn't want to host networking and other user created contents on its website. As this would require lots of maintenance and letting through from the webmaster. No plans of hosting websites of other TCs.
- GeoWorld (mainly for networking): ISSMGE supported main goal is to support networking and host user created contents (like a forum). Has ~3500 members. Some TCs only update information here. Some TCs are active and some are not. In our view does an okayish job with regard to networking. More for member interaction than TC websites. Apparently not necessarily best adapted for TC websites, which is why most TCs end up creating one separate (this makes it difficult to have consistent website layout across committees).
- Whatissgeotech: This vulgarisation website allowed the publication of a paper on Geotechnical Engineering in Forbes, a major achievement for the promotion of Geotechnical Engineering. It also introduces some TCs based on the geotechnical structures that they deal with. It seems to be an attractive website to promote our profession outside the geotechnical world.

5.2 Major issues

- Since there are three different websites and many more for each TCs, they have different login details. This makes it difficult to use these services as you need to do multiple signups and remember passwords.
- Multiple websites results in some websites going out of date. Information is all over the place. Although ISSMGE has a view that it will show display the core information and GeoWorld deals with networking and member sign ups, some of the information are updated in GeoWorld and not in ISSMGE website. This shouldn't be the case. There is a confusion of which one being the core website.
- The TCs own websites:
  - (a) don't follow same style and layout
  - (b) have their own member login page
  - (c) some have their own forum. We may need to unify.

This analysis from 2014 is currently being updated by K. Soga prior to be presented at the Seoul ICSMGE Conference.

5.3 TC sub-website in the ISSMGE website

In the recent (2016) version of the ISSMGE website, TCs now have their own sub-website:
http://issmge.org/committees/technical-committees

In this sub-website, authorized representative can login and do various things including update their photo, upload files, handle the TC membership and post news. Any news posted on the TC sub-website is automatically posted on the main page of ISSMGE and then also disseminated through the GeoWorld group so that it can attract more attention.

As stated by D. Zekkos, having the TCs post on the ISSMGE website is one of the best ways to (a) demonstrate the impact of ISSMGE to the profession; (b) add content on the ISSMGE website; and (c) reflect the activity of the TC.

Using the website now provided by ISSMGE for the TCs would definitely help solving the major issues raised in section 5.2. It is hence suggested that TCs officers now use this new facility for their website, to simplify and optimise their networking and communication.

6 TCs WITH LOW APPARENT ACTIVITY

Following some comments made during the TOC presentation at the Board meeting in Phoenix in February 2016, the activity of TCs has been considered in more details so as to make some decisions with respect to TCs with little apparent activity before the end of this Presidential term (September 2017), in link with the Section of the Guidelines entitled “Creation, maintenance and dissolution of technical committees”.

A Table based on various indicators (workshops and meetings organised, including in Paris 2013 and Edinburgh 2015, Honour lecture, response to survey and poll, updated website, participation to TOC meeting and CAPG breakout session in the ECSMGE in Edinburgh in 2015) was elaborated by the TOC. The Table was not aimed at providing a ranking of the TCs, but very low rating indeed indicated apparent low activity that needed further investigating.

From this Table, it can be concluded that the TCs in the list below with rating between 0 and 2 do not have satisfactory activity. The comments in the Table were as follows:

- **TC107** Lateritic soils (Africa): “No apparent activity. Only TC in Africa. Planned workshop in Ghana. Limited membership. Task forces defined but no progress reported”.
- **TC201** Dykes and levees (Europe): “Former secretary appointed as new chair on 2/2/2016. Bad rating from the Table. Output seems to have reduced markedly. Needs investigating.”
- **TC210** Lateritic soils (Africa): “No apparent activity. Only TC in Africa. Planned workshop in Ghana. Limited membership. Task forces defined but no progress reported”.
- **TC210** Dams (Asia): “Complaints from French and Italian delegates about inactivity. Only a newsletter in 2011 but nothing since. No Terms of Reference. To keep within ISSMGE whereas specialists (Earthdams) are involved in the significant activity of the International Committee on Large Dams (ICOLD)? Some suggestion by an Italian member to keep activity whereas a French member said he was not convinced with respect to the ICOLD activity. Try to change Chair?”
- **TC210** Dams (Asia): “Complaints from French and Italian delegates about inactivity. Only a newsletter in 2011 but nothing since. No Terms of Reference. To keep within ISSMGE whereas specialists (Earthdams) are involved in the significant activity of the International Committee on Large Dams (ICOLD)? Some suggestion by an Italian member to keep activity whereas a French member said he was not convinced with respect to the ICOLD activity. Try to change Chair?”
- **Enhanced** Soft soils (North America): “Chair changed in 2013. No contact with other events held on Soft soils in Asia. One workshop (Extreme soils mechanics) in 2013 and one meeting with DFI and no TC212) in 2015, both in Mexico. Former French member thought it had closed. No Terms of Reference. Needs investigating.”
- **Enhanced** Soft soils (North America): “Chair changed in 2013. No contact with other events held on Soft soils in Asia. One workshop (Extreme soils mechanics) in 2013 and one meeting with DFI and no TC212) in 2015, both in Mexico. Former French member thought it had closed. No Terms of Reference. Needs investigating.”

### 8 INVOLVEMENT OF THE TCs IN THE SEOUL 2017 ICSMGE

As confirmed during the Conference Advisory Committee (CAC) of the Seoul 19th ICSMGE hold on 20-21 September 2016 in Seoul, the organisation of the Seoul Conference will be like that of the Paris 2013 Conference, with a significant participation and efforts from most TCs that will be in charge of managing two kinds of parallel sessions held during the 3rd and 4th day of the Conference: the Discussion Sessions and the TC Workshops.

#### 8.1 Discussion Sessions

The Discussion Sessions consist in parallel Sessions in which, after a General report, delivered by the Discussion Leader (nominated by the TC), the selected oral presentations (from the contributions sent to the Conference by the Member societies in charge of selecting them) will be delivered. The Discussion Sessions are managed by the TCs. This includes the inspection by the TC (under the responsibility of the TC Officers) of all the papers (reviewed and accepted by the Member Societies) sent by the Seoul Conference Organising Committee. The TC is in charge of selecting the most interesting papers for oral presentations, with a number of sessions depending on the number of papers received. The TC is also in charge of selecting, among its experts, the person in charge of delivering the General report (= Discussion Leader) and the Chair of the Session.

#### 8.2 TC Workshops

The TC Workshops are included in the parallel sessions and are full components of the Conference. Workshops are fully managed by TCs that volunteer to do so. Generally, TCs launch calls for proposals for workshop contributions among their members. TCs select the oral presentations (if there are too many responses to the call) together with the Chair of the Workshop (often the TC Chair). Only one Workshop is granted to a given TC.

#### 8.3 TC Honour Lectures

The applications of all the TCs who asked to have their Honour Lecture presented at the Seoul ICSMGE have been accepted (see Conference programme).

### 9 CONCLUDING REMARKS

This report presented a synthesis of the most significant actions conducted by the TOC in link with the TCs during the term
2013 - 2017. It will be completed, for the Seoul ICSMGE Conference, by a general feedback on the activities of the TCs based on the activity reports that the TCs have to provide to the TOC by 31 May 2017. Other on-going actions that will be also reported at the Seoul ICSMGE are the updating of the state of the TC websites and the general feedback from the CAPG survey on SOA - SOP issues. A special TOC Session in which TC officers are invited to participate is also planned at Seoul.

10 REFERENCES


http://www.issmge.org/committees/technical-committees