ISSMGE FOUNDATION
REPORT ON CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE

Your Name: Deepesh Bansal	***Your Organization:*** Shandong University, China	***Date of report:*** 01 Sept 2026
Conference Title: International Conference on Advances and Innovations in Soft Soil Engineering (Soft Soils 2026)	***Location of Conference:*** Delft, Netherlands	***Dates of Conference:*** 24-26 August 2026

What you learned:

Attending Soft Soils 2026 was a valuable opportunity to gain a broader understanding of current developments in soft-ground engineering. What I found particularly useful was the strong connection between fundamental soil behavior and practical engineering applications. The technical sessions covered topics including soft and sensitive soils, ground improvement, field monitoring, railway foundations, peat, offshore geotechnics, and sustainable construction. These discussions helped me better appreciate how laboratory testing, numerical analysis, field observations, and engineering experience work together in solving geotechnical problems.

A major takeaway from the conference was that sustainable ground-improvement technologies should be evaluated beyond laboratory strength alone. Constructability, fresh-state behavior, field applicability, long-term performance, and environmental impact are equally important. This was directly relevant to my research on low-carbon binders for Deep Soil Mixing (DSM). Presentations on low-carbon geotechnical solutions and the relationship between theory, field performance, and engineering judgment reinforced the importance of developing materials that are both technically effective and practical for site implementation.

During Session 3A on Ground Improvement, I presented my paper, “Towards low-carbon deep soil mixing: alkali activation of fly ash and slags.” The study investigates the use of fly ash, GGBS, and calcium carbide slag as industrial by-product-based precursors for alkali-activated binders for wet DSM. The results showed that precursor composition has a significant effect on both slurry behavior and strength development, with GGBS- and calcium carbide slag-rich formulations showing potential to achieve a suitable balance of workability, stability, and mechanical performance.

The discussions with researchers and practitioners were particularly useful for identifying future research directions, particularly in durability, field-scale implementation, process control, and sustainability assessment. Presenting my work in an international setting also strengthened my confidence in communicating technical ideas and considering my research from a broader engineering perspective. Beyond the conference itself, visiting Delft provided an enjoyable opportunity to experience a different academic and cultural environment.

People you met:

Prof. Cristina Jommi, TU Delft, Netherlands
Prof. Yoichi Watabe, Hokkaido University, Japan

Dr. Wojciech Solowski, Aalto University, Finland
Dr. Arash Azizi, University of Glasgow, UK
Dr. Mirva Koskinen, Helsinki Urban Environment Division, Finland
Dr. Alan Duggan, Atlantic Technological University, Ireland

Main features of the conference:

A major feature of Soft Soils 2026 was its focused technical program covering key aspects of soft soil engineering, including laboratory and field testing, ground improvement, constitutive and numerical modeling, infrastructure performance, peat, and sustainable geotechnical solutions. The conference combined invited lectures with parallel technical sessions, creating a useful balance between fundamental research and practical applications.

A notable highlight was the Distinguished Lecture by Dr. Mirva Koskinen, titled “Halving the emissions in Malminkenttä via test structures and low-carbon geotechnical solutions.” The lecture demonstrated how low-carbon ground-improvement approaches can be evaluated through laboratory studies, full-scale test structures, field verification, and environmental monitoring before wider implementation. The emphasis on reducing emissions from conventional stabilization methods was particularly relevant to current research on sustainable binders.

Another important presentation was the featured lecture by Prof. Jelke Dijkstra on “Experimental pathways for clay micromechanics.” The lecture highlighted the importance of understanding clay behavior at the microstructural and particle scales, and of linking these mechanisms to engineering-scale response through advanced experimental methods and modeling.

The program also included two keynote lectures and two featured lectures, together with numerous specialized technical sessions, providing a strong platform for technical exchange and discussion among researchers and practitioners.

Your comments on the conference:

I want to express my sincere appreciation to the organizing committee of the Soft Soils 2026 for their efforts in organizing such a successful event. The conference was of excellent technical quality, and the overall organization and management were highly commendable.

I particularly appreciated the focused nature of the event. Rather than covering geotechnical engineering in general, the program focused on problems associated with soft soils, enabling more detailed technical discussions and meaningful exchanges among researchers and practitioners working on closely related topics. The balance among fundamental soil behavior, advanced testing and modeling, ground-improvement technologies, and practical case histories was particularly valuable. I also found the increasing emphasis on sustainability and low-carbon ground improvement encouraging, as this closely aligns with my current research. I had the privilege of interacting with numerous pioneer personalities, delegates, and researchers from various parts of the world, enriching my own knowledge and fostering potential collaborations.

Please attach a short report (maximum 400 words) suitable for publication in the ISSMGE Bulletin:

The International Conference on Advances and Innovations in Soft Soil Engineering was held at the TU Delft Aula Conference Center, Delft, the Netherlands, from 24 to 26 August 2026. Organized with the support of the ISSMGE Technical Committee TC214 on Foundation Engineering for Difficult Soft Soil Conditions and the Royal Netherlands Institute of Engineers (KIVI), the conference brought together researchers, practitioners, and industry professionals working on the analysis, improvement, and performance of soft soils. The conference proceedings comprised 89 full papers published in the E3S Web of Conferences, covering areas such as field and laboratory testing, ground improvement and low-carbon solutions, multiphysics behavior, infrastructure performance, and constitutive, numerical, and machine-learning models.

The conference activities commenced with Welcome Drinks on 23 August at the Hortus Botanicus in Delft. This informal gathering served as an excellent icebreaker, allowing participants to interact and establish professional connections before the technical program began.

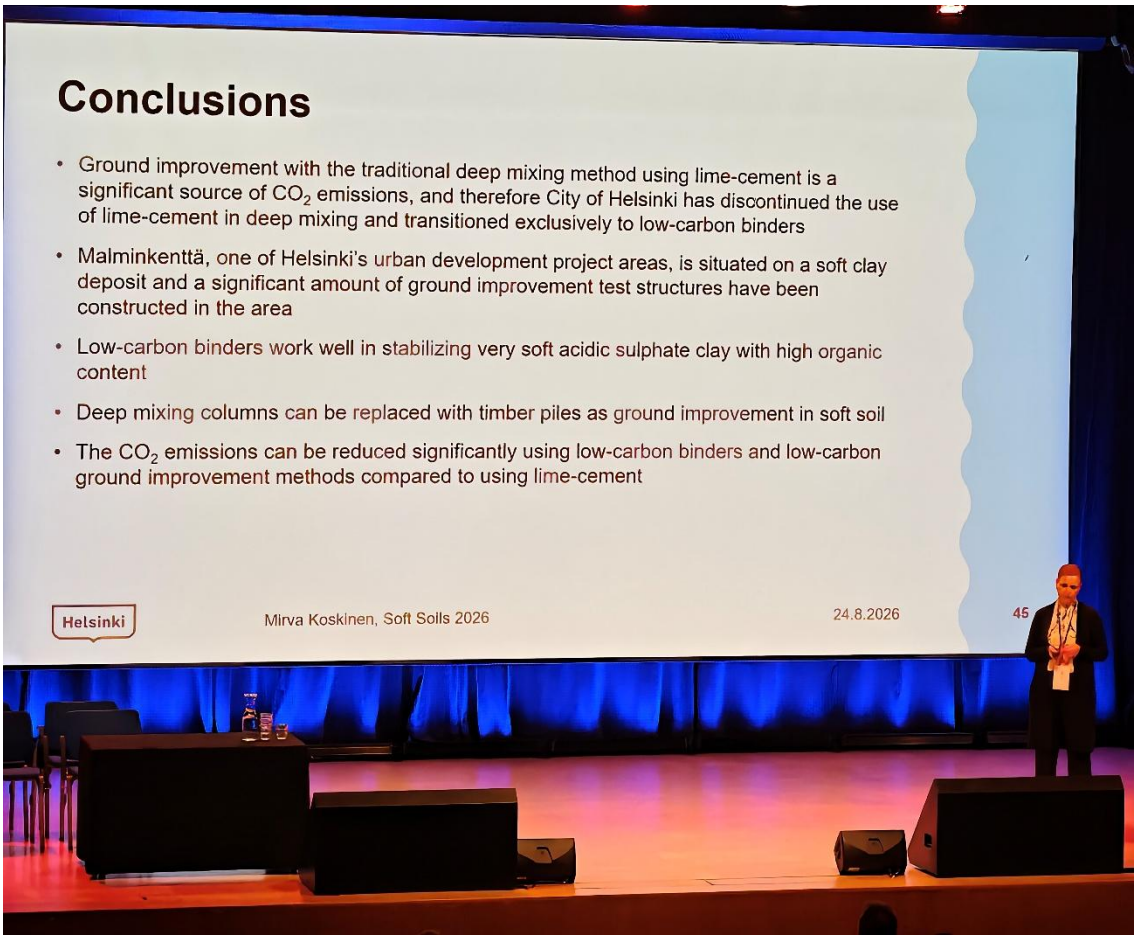
The technical program opened on 24 August with a Distinguished Lecture by Dr. Mirva Koskinen, “Halving the emissions in Malminkenttä via test structures and low-carbon geotechnical solutions.” The day also included parallel technical sessions followed by a laboratory tour, which provided useful exposure to experimental facilities and ongoing geotechnical research at TU Delft.

On 25 August, two keynote lectures were delivered by Dr. Jubert Pineda on the legacy of the Ballina soft-soil Field Testing Facility and by Joost van der Schrier on the relationship between soft-soil theory, practical applicability, and engineering judgment. On 26 August, featured lectures by Prof. Jelke Dijkstra on experimental pathways for clay micromechanics and by Fintan Buggy on the deformation performance and stability control of embankments on peat provided further valuable perspectives on fundamental and applied soft-soil engineering. Each day of the event featured a range of activities to keep researchers actively engaged and enhance their knowledge. These sessions fostered valuable exchanges of ideas and facilitated in-depth discussions on important topics.

The conference venue also featured exhibition stands from geotechnical companies, providing opportunities to learn about recent developments in laboratory and in-situ testing equipment, instrumentation, and related technologies.

Overall, Soft Soils 2026 provided an excellent platform for technical learning, research exchange, networking, and industry interaction. I am sincerely thankful to the ISSMGE Foundation for providing financial support for my participation, which enabled me to present my research internationally, broaden my technical knowledge, and strengthen my professional network.

Photographs from Conference:



Distinguished Lecture by Dr. Mirva Koskinen



With Prof. Yoichi Watabe (left) and Dr. Arash Azizi (right)





With Dr. Wojciech Solowski (left) and during my presentation (right)