

TECHNICAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (TOC)

GUIDELINES FOR TECHNICAL COMMITTEES

The guidelines provide a framework for the functioning of technical committees within the ISSMGE. They should be read in conjunction with ISSMGE statutes and by-laws, extracts from which are given at the end of this document. The ISSMGE has between twenty and thirty technical committees, which deal with specific subject areas in the field of geotechnical engineering.

The mission of the technical committees is to provide a forum for active participation by the individual members of ISSMGE, and to promote the objectives, activities and results of the technical committees throughout the ISSMGE membership. The committees are a meeting arena for discussing, developing and applying specialist geotechnical knowledge related to the behavior of geo-materials, geo-engineering and engineering for society.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of a technical committee is to:

Objective 1

Disseminate knowledge and practice within the TC's subject area to the membership of the ISSMGE.

Objective 2

Establish guidelines and technical recommendations within the TC's subject area.

Objective 3

Assist with technical programs of international and regional conferences organized by the ISSMGE.

Objective 4

Interact with industry and overlapping groups working in areas related to the TC's specialist area.

FORMATION, DISSOLUTION AND TERM OF OFFICE

Technical committees are created at the behest of the President of the ISSMGE. At the commencement of the Presidential term, the President, with the assistance of the Technical Oversight Committee (TOC), compiles a list of technical committees for the ensuing four years. This list is generally based on review of TC activities for the preceding term, discussions with hosting Member Societies and perceived needs within the geotechnical community. ISSMGE members may also request the President to consider the formation of a specific technical committee. Such requests should normally be submitted to the Secretary General six months before the President takes office.

Technical Committees normally operate for a four-year period that coincides with the Presidential term. The period of operation may be extended for a further four year period at the discretion of the new President. Any TC whose term of office is not so extended is deemed to be dissolved and shall cease operation. The President may also elect to dissolve any technical committee whose mandate has been fulfilled or one that is seen to be inactive.

MEMBERSHIP

All office bearers and members of TCs must be members of the ISSMGE and must remain in good standing throughout their term of service. Exceptions can be made in cases where particular expertise outside of soil mechanics and geotechnical engineering is required for the proper functioning of a committee. Such exceptions must be approved by the TOC.

Chairperson and Secretary

When creating a TC, the President invites a Member Society to take responsibility for the specific committee and will normally suggest who should chair the committee. The TOC suggests to the President the host country and the chair for each committee. The Member Society takes responsibility for providing the Chairperson and the necessary administration to ensure efficient operation of the committee.

The President will consider regional representation in the choice of the host country.

The choice of a suitable Chairperson is crucial to the operation of the committee. The chairperson should have sufficient knowledge of the subject area, should be well respected in the geotechnical community and have a firm commitment and the necessary capacity to organize the activities of the TC.

The term of a chair is 4 years, and can be renewed. Normally, the number of terms is limited to two or three. After a four-year term, the Member Society hosting the TC can propose to the President a new chair from its country.

The Chair selects the Secretary for the TC. The Secretary of the TC need not necessarily come from the hosting Member Society. The Chairperson can nominate a Secretary and/or a Vice-Chairperson from another Member Society if he or she deems fit.

In some instances, it may become necessary to appoint a new Chairperson partway through the four year term. The President should be advised of such circumstances as soon as they become apparent.

The TOC may suggest to the President to replace a Chair who is “not active”. Only the President can replace a TC Chair. The Host Member Society may also be changed by the President. The term “not active” means one not responding to queries by the ISSMGE President, Vice-Presidents, Secretary General or the TOC, not showing satisfactory progress, not following the guidelines for the TC’s or not responding within agreed deadlines.

General membership

The Chairperson can nominate up to four members of the TC, and the TOC can also nominate up to four members. The Chairperson and the TOC submit the nominations to the President for approval. The Secretary General then invites each Member Society to nominate up to two (2) members to serve on the TCs. Nominations should be sent to the Secretary General accompanied by a brief (maximum one (1) page) CV and confirmation by the Member Society that the nominee is a member of the ISSMGE. Only those Member Societies in good standing with the ISSMGE may submit nominations.

The Chairperson of the TC reviews the list of nominees and invites individual members to join the TC. Reasonable effort should be made to include a nominee from each Member Society unless the Chairperson regards the nominee as unsuitable.

The Chairperson submits the list of TC members to the Secretary and President of the ISSMGE. The President may intervene if he regards the selection of members to be inappropriate. The Chairperson then sends a letter of invitation to each TC member to confirm their availability and their willingness to join the TC. Thereafter, the Chairperson advises the Secretary General of the final composition of the TC. The process of forming the TC should generally be completed within three months of the appointment of the Chairperson.

The Secretary General advises all Member Societies of the composition of each of the TCs.

The TC members have a duty to respond when asked to do so and to carry out delegated activities as agreed. The TC Chair may suggest to the President to remove or replace TC members who are not

“active”. Only the President can remove or replace a TC member. The term ”not active” refers to non-responsive members within the time frame set by the Chair unless good reason exist for the lack of response.

Involvement of Industry

The ISSMGE caters for the needs of all members of the geotechnical community. The composition of TCs should ensure a mix of academics, researchers and practitioners on the committee appropriate to the subject area of the TC. As a guideline, practitioner involvement should preferably exceed 25% on any TC increasing to 50% or more in the case of TC of a mainly practical nature.

The Chairperson of the TC should likewise be drawn from a sector of the profession appropriate to the subject area of the committee.

ACTIVITIES OF TECHNICAL COMMITTEES

Terms of Reference and Program

At the commencement of the TC’s term, the Chairperson submits the terms of reference (work plan and proposed deliverables) to the TOC for approval. The TOC consults with the President on the proposed scope of work and reverts to the Chair with comments. Once approved, the terms of reference are circulated to the TC membership by the Chair. The Secretary General will advise Member Societies of the terms of reference of all TCs and update the ISSMGE website as they become available.

The term of reference should include activities contributing to achieving the following aims:

Objective 1

Disseminate knowledge and practice within the TC’s subject area to the membership of the ISSMGE:

1. Organize specialty conferences, symposiums and workshops.
2. Encourage preparation of keynote lectures, state-of-the-art lectures including new technology, general reports for conferences organized by the International Society, regional conferences and conferences organized by Member societies.
3. Develop ideas for broad participation of ISSMGE individual members through, for example, prediction events, surveys, or other means.

Objective 2

To establish guidelines and technical recommendations within the TC’s subject area:

1. Collect available standards, codes, and guidelines, and translate non-English ones into English if necessary.
2. Prepare overview of the standards, codes, and guidelines.
3. Evaluate the similarities and the differences.
4. Make guidelines and recommendations for practice (can be methodological ones for new complex problems and/or technical ones for specific items).

Objective 3

Assist with technical programs of international and regional conferences organized by the ISSMGE:

1. Promote to present the findings of the TC in main sessions and discussion sessions.

Objective 4

Interact with industry and overlapping organizations working in areas related to the TC’s specialist area:

1. Identify overlapping organizations and decide how to interact with them.

The work of the TC commences as soon as possible after approval of the Terms of Reference by the Technical Overview Committee and the President.

The Chair is encouraged to develop task forces for specific activities and assign the responsibility to TC members to lead these activities. These TC members will be called “Leader” of the “titled” Task Forces of that TC. The Leaders of the Task Forces of a TC together with the Vice Chair and the Secretary form the Executive of the TC.

The Chair is to submit a list of proposed TC meetings to the TOC. Although these meetings may change, it is important to notify the general membership at an early stage of potential meetings to allow for appropriate planning and co-ordination of ISSMGE events.

Responsibilities

A TC is responsible for discussing, advancing and developing knowledge in its specialist subject area. Wherever possible, it should seek to synthesize this information into a form that is of use to the geotechnical profession and to disseminate it to the membership of the ISSMGE. There should be a balance between the advancement of academic research and the translation of appropriate research findings into practice. Technical Committees which are purely research orientated and contribute nothing to the state of practice have failed in their mandate.

Activities

Technical Committees may use a variety of means for achieving their objectives. Typically these would include specialist discussions, symposia, academic/practitioner forums, specialty conferences, surveys, etc. Active involvement by the TC in International and Regional Conferences organized by the ISSMGE is strongly encouraged.

All conferences, symposia, etc organized under the auspices of the TC must adhere to the principles set out in the ISSMGE conference manual. The TC shall seek approval from the President and Secretary General before it gives official endorsement to any conference or activity organized by bodies outside the ISSMGE.

Deliverables

The terms of reference of the TC should include tangible deliverables such as reports, seminars and proceedings or other visible output. Particular emphasis should be placed on co-ordination of research efforts and the translation of research findings into practice. Each TC is required to submit two reports: an interim report in time for the mid-term Council meeting, and one administrative report six months prior to the International Conference for presentation at the Council meeting. Both reports are to be submitted to the TOC and to the Secretary General. In addition, a short progress report is required once a year, as required for reporting to the ISSMGE Board. The format for the two administrative reports and the annual progress report will be provided by TOC.

FUNDING OF TECHNICAL COMMITTEES

In agreeing to host the TC, the host Member Society accepts the responsibility of providing the necessary administrative support for the operation of the TC. Members’ costs are borne by the members or their sponsoring organizations or Member Societies.

Under special circumstances, application for funding or other resources for specific activities may be made to the Member Societies.



OMBUDSMAN

The TOC is the first point of contact for matters related to the ISSMGE Technical Committees. If a Member Society disagrees with the decision of TOC and wishes to appeal the case, the President will serve as the ombudsman and will have final decision authority.

JOINT TECHNICAL COMMITTEES

Joint Technical Committees (JTCs) are sponsored by the ISSMGE, ISRM and/or the IAEG are formed where the subject area of the TC extends into the fields of interest of the Sister Societies. The rules governing the formation and the operation of Joint Technical Committees are agreed among the Sister Societies.

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