

President's Corner:

Relationship of the IGS with our International Sister Societies



Jorge Zornberg

Dear member of the IGS,

One of the important objectives we have agreed to pursue in the current council is to *“Increase the Connections to International Organizations”*. This objective was established keeping in mind specific requests from our corporate members. Some important steps have been recently taken in this direction, which will enhance the coordination and collaboration with four important International Sister Societies:

- the **International Society of Soil Mechanics and Geotechnical Engineering (ISSMGE)**,
- the **International Society of Rock Mechanics (ISRM)**,
- the **International Association for Engineering Geology and the Environment (IAEG)**, and
- the **International Commission for Irrigation and Drainage (ICID)**

The important development that will foster our interaction with ISSMGE, ISRM, and IAEG is that the IGS has accepted the invitation to join the **Federation of the International Geo-Engineering Societies (FedIGS)**. This Federation includes these three societies each of which is a FedIGS founding member, the IGS has the distinct privilege of being the very first non-founding member society to be invited to join.



As a precursor to the invitation to join FedIGS, I was invited to join the annual board meeting of FedIGS, which took place on May 15 2011. At the time, I made a presentation on the characteristics of the IGS and the FedIGS board presented the characteristics of FedIGS. I was then excused. Upon my re-entry into the meeting I was informed of the unanimous decision to invite the IGS to join FedIGS. In the words of FedIGS President, Prof. Nielen van der Merwe,

“The decision to invite the IGS to join was unanimous and I may add that the current three Members supported the decision enthusiastically. We look forward to a long and fruitful association under the broad umbrella of the global geo-engineering activity.”

Joining FedIGS is expected to go a long way toward achieving the IGS objective of increased connections to sister international organizations. Specifically, we will have a direct channel of communication with three of the most relevant International Geo-Societies. As indicated in the mission statement of FedIGS (see article in page 7 of this issue of IGSNews), FedIGS is a collaborative forum within which learned societies or associations that are involved in engineering with, on, or in geo-materials can meet and interact.

Table 1. Membership of the ISSMGE, ISRM, IAEG, and IGS **

	ISSMGE	ISRM	IAEG	IGS
Number of National Groups or Chapters	86	48	55	34
Number of Individual Members	18,323	5,992	2,900	2,927
Number of Corporate Members	21	125	0	141
Number of Technical Committees	24	9	10	3

** self-reported values as of May 2011

Table 1 provides a comparison of the membership of the IGS with that of the ISSMGE, ISRM and IAEG as self-reported by the various organizations in May 2012. The number of individual members of the IGS is an order of magnitude smaller than that of ISSMGE but on the same order of magnitude as the individual membership of the ISRM and IAEG. On the other hand, the IGS has a healthy corporate membership that exceeds the number of corporate members of our sister geo-societies. The presence of the IGS around the globe is increasing, and good evidence of such increase is the continuing creation of new IGS chapters. The IGS is now represented with chapters on all continents with the exception of Antarctica. In addition to its chapters, which have traditionally conducted most of our technical activities, the IGS has implemented of Technical Committees (TCs). While its number is currently small (TCs on Soil Reinforcement, Barrier Systems, and Filtration), they are expected to grow rapidly and to provide significant opportunities for collaboration with the ISSMGE and other sister societies.

It's worth noting that the IGS previously explored the possibility of joining FedIGS. However, in the initial investigation the Council decided to postpone making a decision until it achieved a better understanding of: (1) the level of involvement that the Federation would expect have in IGS autonomy, and (2) any financial obligations which might be involved in becoming a FedIGS member society. During the last year within FedIGS, the following decisions were made: (1) FedIGS will play a communication and cooperation role not that of a governing board, and (2) there will not be a membership fee. Since these two areas of concern were satisfactorily addressed, the IGS council took a vote and voted in favour of joining FedIGS. Accordingly, the IGS has become the very first non-founding Geo-Society to join FedIGS.

As a member of the FedIGS the IGS will work to foster productive technical relationships amongst the member societies, coordinate conference and educational activities specifically the IGS will work to achieve the aims of the Federation which include:

- raising the awareness within the geo-engineering profession of the inevitable and essential interaction between geo-engineering practitioners from the Member Societies;
- coordinating scientific and technical activities in areas with overlapping interest among the Member Societies;
- raising public awareness and profile of the geo-engineering profession.

In addition, as a member of the FedIGS the IGS will be included in helping to select future members of FedIGS.



ICID-CID

Another important development involving the relationship of the IGS with our International Sister Societies is that *the IGS and the International Commission for Irrigation and Drainage (ICID) have recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)* that establishes a communication channel between our societies to foster collaboration. The ICID was established in 1950 as a Scientific, Technical and Voluntary Not-for-profit Non-Governmental International Organization (NGO) with headquarters in New Delhi, India. The ICID is dedicated to “enhancing the worldwide supply of food and fibre for all people by improving water and land management and the productivity of irrigated and drained lands through appropriate management of water, environment and application of irrigation, drainage and flood management techniques.”

ICID has a consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). The mission of ICID is to stimulate and promote the development of new technologies worldwide for achieving sustainable irrigation and drainage technologies. Cooperation between the ICID and the IGS is expected to lead to the development of guidelines and policies acknowledging the benefits of geosynthetics in important hydraulic projects.

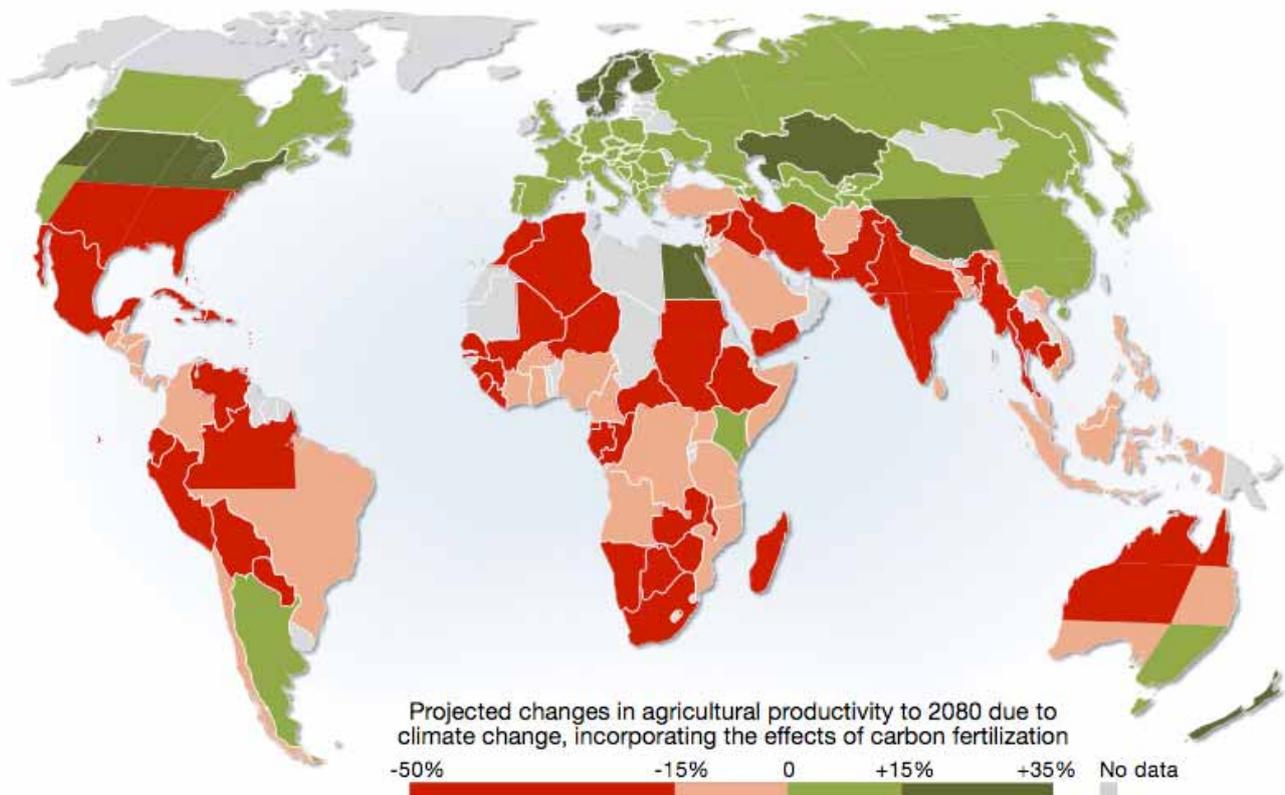


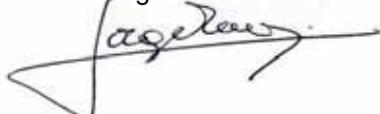
Figure 1: Projected changes in agricultural productivity (to 2080) due to climate change.

Figure 1 shows the projected changes in agricultural productivity to 2080 due to climate change, incorporating the effects of carbon fertilization (ICID 2010). As clearly shown in the figure we expect a significant decrease in agricultural productivity (red areas on the map). Geosynthetics can certainly play a significant role in reversing this somber trend by optimizing drainage technologies.

The IGS Officers met with the Board of ICID in November 2010, and set the base for a process that ended in October 2011 with the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding. Council member Eric Blond was tasked by the IGS Council to lead a Task Force that culminated with the invitation of the IGS to a signing ceremony that took place during ICID's 21st International congress on Irrigation and Drainage held in Tehran. Additional details on this important cooperation are reported by Council member Blond (see page 7 of this issue of IGSNews). The collaboration between the IGS and ICID is starting to render fruits. Indeed, Jean Pierre Giroud and Herve Plusquellec, former presidents of the IGS and ICID respectively, will offer a joint training lecture on "Geosynthetics in Irrigation and Drainage" in May 2012 on the occasion of GeoAmericas 2012 (Second Pan-American Congress on Geosynthetics, Lima, Peru). This is the first of what we anticipate will be a fruitful series of collaborative educational initiatives involving the IGS and the ICID.

We look forward to important outcomes that will promote the advancement of geosynthetic technologies in multiple areas of engineering through the collaboration of the IGS with our International Sister Societies.

All best regards



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General Information for IGS Members

Call for Candidates for IGS Council: Term 2012 to 2016



**Elizabeth
Peggs**

The IGS, in accordance with its bylaws, will hold mid-term elections in 2012. IGS Members will have the opportunity to elect eight Council Members. Each of the elected members will serve a four-year term, effective 1 October 2012.

The IGS encourages any IGS Member who is interested in furthering the IGS Mission and can attend all IGS Council meetings to consider standing for one of the Council positions. In a typical year, the IGS Council meets once for a two-day period preceding a geosynthetics event. It is the responsibility of the IGS Council member to travel to these meetings and participate in the plenary and committee meetings. The IGS council attempts to host the meetings in equal distribution around the world and based on the most suitable location in any given year.

The IGS Council Members whose term of office expires in 2012 are:

- D.T. Bergado (Thailand)
- A. Bouazza (Australia)
- P. Fantini (Italy)
- H.Y. Jeon (Korea)
- J. Kuwano (Japan)
- M. Sadlier (Australia)
- M. Ziegler (Germany)
- V. Pimentel (Brazil)

The IGS bylaws stipulate that a Council Member may only be elected to two consecutive terms; hence, A. Bouazza, P. Fantini, and M. Sadlier are not eligible for re-election. Each of the other incumbents may stand for re-election.

Nomination & Election Schedule

Under the bylaws of the IGS, only IGS Members are eligible for election to the Council. Candidates must be able to travel to and attend the IGS Council meetings, which are held once per year. Meetings of the IGS Council are generally held in conjunction with international and regional conferences.

- Call for Nominees: Now – 30 April 2012
A signed letter of application together with a biographical note (not exceeding 12 lines) and a photograph should reach the IGS Secretary no later than 30 April 2012. Biographical notes and photos will be published in the IGS News, Issue #2, 2012 (June 2012) and on the IGS website.