INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES COUNCIL

Strategic Recommendations

ASCE Geo-Institute

Strategic Planning Workshop, 15–16 January 2026

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Endorsed by the Geo-Institute Board of Governors at GeoCongress 2026

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Contents

Introduction

Geotechnical engineering is increasingly a global profession. Domestic experience alone no longer defines the boundaries of the profession. Students, practitioners, and researchers need international perspectives and cross-cultural capabilities, and they are actively seeking them. US engineering firms routinely work on projects worldwide. International geotechnical contractors bring innovative approaches to US projects. Young professionals increasingly pursue global experience as part of their career development. At the same time, climate change, natural hazards, and sustainable development, among the most important challenges of our time, transcend borders yet manifest differently across regions, creating natural laboratories for learning and innovation.

The Geo-Institute (GI) has as much to learn internationally as it has to offer. It brings substantial expertise: deep technical knowledge, academic leadership, robust design standards, decades of research, and lessons from major projects. But the knowledge flows in both directions, and a few examples illustrate the point. New Zealand's innovations in low-cost residential soil liquefaction mitigation. Japan's advanced geohazard design standards. The Netherlands' world-leading expertise in coastal resilience and managing subsidence. Europe's experience with sustainable infrastructure and circular economy solutions. These are practical innovations and policy initiatives with direct application to US practice.

For individual GI members, international engagement creates tangible professional value. Early-career engineers and students gain exposure to diverse approaches and the global perspective that employers increasingly expect. Mid-career professionals and academics expand their networks, find collaborators, and open new avenues for research. Senior practitioners share decades of expertise while gaining new perspectives from international colleagues. These benefits extend to the organization as well. GI's role as the primary geotechnical organization in the United States is strengthened through active partnership with ISSMGE and the international community. How the global geotechnical community sees and engages with GI shapes who we are as an organization, not just how we appear. This is, in essence, the insight the philosopher Hegel offered: that identity is formed through the recognition of others, not self-perception alone.

The GI has always supported international activities, hosting international speakers, sponsoring occasional workshops, and sustaining ties with ISSMGE. But activity alone does not create impact. The recommendations in this document propose a fundamental shift: from treating international engagement as an add-on to embedding it throughout GI's core operations. From hosting occasional international guests to creating sustained collaborative partnerships. From one-way knowledge transfer to genuine bidirectional exchange.

Three strategic values guided the development of these recommendations: (1) impact over activity, (2) concrete over vague, and (3) bidirectional value. The recommendations emerged from discussion during the January 2026 IAC Strategic Planning Workshop, guided by a comprehensive planning document and questionnaire prepared in advance.

The workshop brought together academics, government professionals, and industry practitioners with deep interest in and extensive experience with international engagement. We were joined by experts from outside the GI, including Rita Colwell, a distinguished US scientist with decades of experience in international scientific collaboration. These recommendations propose how GI can become a more globally engaged organization in ways that directly benefit US-based members. They are realistic and achievable, requiring modest investment while offering significant returns.

The sections that follow present five strategic recommendations, each developed with a core concept, specific action items, and a phased implementation timeline. Appendix A contains the full Strategic Planning Workshop agenda, including the guiding questions and pre-work that structured the two-day discussion. It is offered here not only as a record of the process that produced these recommendations, but as a resource for other Geo-Institute committees and affiliated organizations undertaking their own strategic planning.

The ideas, recommendations, and strategic direction in this report originate from the Strategic Planning Workshop participants. Joseph Wartman, Chair of the International Activities Council, synthesized the group's discussions and written feedback and prepared this document on their behalf.

IAC Strategic Planning Workshop participants. AGU Headquarters, Washington, D.C., 15–16 January 2026.

1

Internationalize all aspects of the Geo-Institute

CORE CONCEPT

Transform the GI from a US organization with international activities into a globally engaged organization recognized by the international geotechnical community for meaningful partnership, sustained collaboration, and mutual benefit, with ISSMGE partnership as a foundational element.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS BY CATEGORY

A. Organizational governance

- Ensure active IAC representation and participation on the Board of Governors (BOG) through the GI International Secretary, IAC liaison, and quarterly briefings by IAC leadership
- Automatically enroll all GI members in ISSMGE
- Establish ISSMGE liaisons within GI technical committees where corresponding ISSMGE technical committees exist
- Include international representation on the JGGE editorial board
- Acknowledge international and geographic diversity as a core organizational value of the GI

B. Communications and visibility

- Launch a quarterly or biannual “Global Geotechnics” column in Geostrata
- Feature international authors in Geostrata articles
- Expand Director’s Cut interviews to feature non-US based experts
- Utilize automated translation services to provide multilingual subtitles for all archived GI videos, including award lectures, recorded presentations, and webinars
- Publish regular email updates and social media posts highlighting international activities
- Prominently feature ISSMGE as a strategic partner across all communications

C. Technical activities and recognition

- Direct the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) to formally encourage all technical committees to identify and nominate international candidates for GI and ASCE awards
- Host joint webinars partnered with and co-presented by international members

D. Events and programs

- Consider holding GeoCongress in other North American locations (Canada, Mexico) periodically

- Reimagine the “Cross-USA” Program with international dimensions

2

Transform IAC workshops into high-impact engagements

CORE CONCEPT

Restructure IAC workshops from traditional presentation-based events with sometimes vague outcomes into high-impact working sessions that produce tangible, lasting outputs and serve as catalysts for sustained international collaboration. Each workshop should be the beginning of something significant, not an endpoint.

HIGH-IMPACT WORKSHOP MODEL

IAC workshops should embody the following characteristics:

- Working sessions that produce tangible outputs during the workshop
- Concrete, specific objectives (e.g., “produce draft guidance document”)
- Deliberate participant selection (working-level experts committed to implementation)
- Publication of a benchmark journal paper as a primary outcome, modeled on multi-author works in the field (e.g., Martinez et al., Géotechnique, 2022)
- Mechanisms for continued interaction beyond the initial workshop event (e.g., established communication channels, regular virtual meetings), with an expected outcome being a follow-up session, panel, or summary presentation at the next GeoCongress or a later ISSMGE meeting
- Sustainability plan that outlines how the engagement will continue and evolve beyond the workshop, including leadership succession, funding strategies, and long-term goals
- Clear follow-up plans and mechanisms to sustain momentum
- Alignment with strategic priority areas and global challenges (see section below)

SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL IAC WORKSHOPS

A. Planning and design

- **Open Call for Proposals:** Issue an annual competitive call seeking innovative workshop proposals from the entire GI membership, with selection based on merit, impact potential, and alignment with strategic priorities
- **Proposal Development Grants:** Provide a limited number of small grants ($3,000 to $5,000) to enable individuals to collaborate with international partners on proposal development, including support for overseas travel to work with co-organizers and build relationships
- **Concrete Objective:** Define a specific, measurable deliverable before announcing the workshop (e.g., multi-author white paper, guidance document, protocol, database)

- **Strategic Alignment:** Focus on high-priority global topics within the priority areas (detailed below)
- **One-on-One Support:** IAC provides mentorship and guidance to proposal developers to strengthen submissions

B. Participant selection

- Prioritize working-level experts who will actively contribute and implement outcomes
- Ensure inclusive participation that reflects the diversity of the global geotechnical community across geographic regions, career stages, gender, and professional contexts
- Select participants based on technical expertise, time availability, implementation capacity, and track record of follow-through
- Include key stakeholders and potential co-sponsors in associated receptions

C. Workshop format

- **Working Sessions:** Structure around collaborative discussion and exchange, not presentations
- **Tangible Outputs:** Produce a substantially complete deliverable by the end of the workshop (e.g., draft document, database framework, training materials)
- **Longer-Term Vision:** Design the workshop as the launch of sustained collaboration, not a one-time event

D. Follow-up and implementation support

- Immediate (30 to 60 days): Assign specific tasks to named individuals with clear deadlines
- Short-Term (3 to 6 months): Schedule regular check-ins to maintain momentum
- Medium-Term (within 1 year): Present outcomes at a subsequent GeoCongress or other major conference. For example, workshop participants could organize a special session or panel presentation showcasing workshop findings, publications, and implementation progress
- **Implementation Support:** Provide small follow-on grants ($3,000 to $5,000) to support completion and dissemination of workshop outputs

E. Impact and legacy

- Define success metrics before the workshop and measure impact after
- Publish benchmark journal papers that advance the field and establish international collaboration as the foundation
- **Examples of high-impact outputs:** multi-author white papers (like the bio-geo paper model), guidance documents, protocols, databases, training curricula
- **Fill Strategic Gap:** Position workshops to fill the void left by the loss of specialty conferences, providing focused technical exchange on emerging topics

IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES

- Near-Term (within 1 year): Launch an open call for workshop proposals to the entire GI membership
- Medium-Term (2 to 3 years): Materials and findings from the Year 1 workshop presented at future GI meetings and conferences, showcasing ongoing progress and implementation

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREAS FOR WORKSHOP FOCUS

IAC workshops should prioritize key areas of global concern where geotechnical engineers can make meaningful contributions:

1. Climate change and environmental resilience

- **Climate Impacts:** Rising sea levels, increased frequency of severe weather events, and melting permafrost threatening buildings, roads, and pipelines
- **Coastal and Water Risks:** Coastal erosion, saltwater intrusion in coastal communities, and groundwater-induced flooding caused by urbanization
- **Resilience Framework:** Focus on resilience to natural and anthropogenic hazards as a practical strategy for addressing climate impacts

2. Natural hazard mitigation and disaster response

- **Growing Impact of Hazards:** Hurricanes, flooding, earthquakes, and wildfires
- **Disaster Lifecycle:** Disaster preparedness, proactive monitoring strategies, and improved recovery processes for cascading or compounding extreme events

3. Energy transition and resource management

- **Alternative Energy:** Geothermal power, wind and wave energy, and nuclear power plant safety
- **Energy Storage:** Underground storage solutions (heated geologic materials, pumped systems) as alternatives to battery technologies
- **Waste and Resource Management:** Carbon sequestration (CO_2 isolation), spent nuclear fuel storage, and construction sand scarcity addressed through circular-economy solutions

4. Infrastructure and urbanization

- **Urban Development:** Rapid urbanization and infrastructure development in the Global South
- **Aging Systems:** Funding gaps for aged infrastructure requiring sustainable and resilient solutions

3

Establish bidirectional international training programs

CORE CONCEPT

Develop international training programs that recognize geotechnical expertise exists globally and facilitate bidirectional knowledge exchange: GI members teaching internationally on topics where GI leads, while bringing international experts to the US to share approaches, innovations, and lessons learned from practice elsewhere, creating a generation of practitioners enriched by global perspectives.

PROGRAM ELEMENTS

A. Bring international experts to the United States

- **GeoCongress Training Sessions:** GI funds international experts to deliver training sessions at GeoCongress on innovative practices, regional approaches, and lessons learned from international projects
- **Target Audience:** Focus on students and young professionals who will benefit most from exposure to global perspectives early in their careers
- **Topics:** International design approaches, innovative construction methods, regional practices adapted to local conditions, and case studies from major international projects

B. GI members teaching internationally

- **Capacity Building Missions:** Support GI members to deliver training in regions where specific technical expertise is needed
- **Knowledge Transfer:** Share GI advances in areas of leadership while learning from local context and constraints
- **Sustainable Materials:** Develop and leave behind manuals of practice, training materials, and resources that enable continued learning after training concludes

C. Delivery formats

- **In-Person Training:** Prioritize face-to-face engagement for relationship building and hands-on learning (for example, short courses in advance of GeoCongress)
- **Hybrid and Online Components:** Supplement in-person training with online modules for broader reach and continued learning
- **Workshop Integration:** Coordinate with the IAC workshop program (Recommendation 2) where appropriate

D. Content and materials

- **Practical Focus:** Emphasize applicable knowledge and skills that practitioners can implement immediately

- **Manuals of Practice:** Create leave-behind documentation that serves as an ongoing reference and enables knowledge sharing beyond direct participants
- **Cultural Context:** Adapt materials to local conditions, constraints, and practices

FUNDING STRATEGY

Potential funding strategies:

- **GI Investment:** Direct funding for bringing international experts to GeoCongress and supporting training program development
- **Corporate Sponsorship:** Engage international engineering firms with an interest in global capacity building
- **Development Banks:** Partner with the World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, Asian Development Bank, and other multilateral institutions that prioritize capacity building
- **International Development NGOs:** Collaborate with organizations focused on infrastructure development and technical capacity building in developing regions

Funding model by activity

- **International experts at GeoCongress:** GI covers travel, accommodation, and honoraria
- **GI members teaching internationally:** Seek development bank and NGO funding, with potential cost-sharing with host institutions and ISSMGE
- **Online and hybrid delivery:** Low incremental cost after initial development

IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES

Year 1 (pilot phase)

- Invite 3 to 5 international experts to deliver training sessions at the next GeoCongress
- Survey GI members to identify priority topics and regions of interest
- Develop a partnership framework with development banks or international NGOs
- Create the first manual of practice template and pilot content

Years 2 to 3 (expansion)

- Launch 2 to 3 pilot programs with GI members teaching internationally
- Establish ongoing partnership agreements with funding organizations
- Develop a library of training materials and manuals of practice

Years 4 to 5 (maturation)

- Achieve a self-sustaining funding model through a diverse partnership portfolio
- Establish a regular cadence of bidirectional training programs
- Build an alumni network of training participants to sustain relationships and knowledge exchange

4

Enhance international presence of speakers and participants at GeoCongress

CORE CONCEPT

Significantly increase international speaker participation and create dedicated forums for international knowledge exchange at GeoCongress, ensuring that practitioners worldwide see GeoCongress as a premier venue for sharing cutting-edge international research and practice, while exposing US attendees to diverse global perspectives and innovations.

KEY ELEMENTS

A. Signature international lecture series

- **Rankine Lecture Exchange:** Invite the Rankine Lecturer to present at GeoCongress, and arrange for the Terzaghi Lecturer to present at international venues, creating reciprocal high-profile exchanges
- **GI Global Innovation Spotlight Lecture:** Establish a new annual lecture featuring non-traditional speakers and cutting-edge international innovations
- **IAC Session:** A dedicated session organized by IAC showcasing international research and practice
- **Online Access:** Make these named lectures available online to extend global reach

B. Enhanced international speaker participation

- Keynote Presentations from International Leaders: Feature speakers from organizations such as the US State Department, World Bank, development banks, and international agencies who bring global policy and institutional perspectives to geotechnical challenges
- **Panel Discussions:** Organize special sessions with international speakers exploring global perspectives on key topics
- **GeoPit International Track:** Feature international speakers in the GeoPit sessions
- **Regional Section Talks:** Support international speakers to present at ASCE regional section meetings beyond GeoCongress

C. Facilitate meaningful international connections

- **International Welcome and Networking Events:** Host a dedicated welcome reception and structured networking sessions at GeoCongress to facilitate meaningful connections between GI members and international practitioners
- **Streamlined Participation:** Make it easier to plan and participate, with shorter timelines and simplified processes that accommodate international travel and planning realities

D. Promotion and visibility

- **ISSMGE Partnership:** Collaborate with ISSMGE to promote GeoCongress to international audiences as a key global event
- **Marketing Strategy:** Position GeoCongress as a premier international venue, not just a US conference

IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES

Year 1 (immediate, next GeoCongress)

- Invite the Rankine Lecturer to present at GeoCongress
- Establish a welcome reception for international guests
- Create a dedicated IAC session featuring international speakers
- Simplify the abstract submission and review timeline for international participants

Years 2 to 3 (build momentum)

- Launch the GI Global Innovation Spotlight Lecture series
- Organize special panel sessions with international experts (3 to 4 panels)
- Establish a formal partnership with ISSMGE for mutual promotion
- Make named lectures available online

Years 4 to 5 (sustained growth)

- Achieve recognition of GeoCongress as a premier global geotechnical event
- Establish a reciprocal arrangement for the Terzaghi Lecturer at international venues
- Build a waiting list of international speakers seeking to present

5

Eliminate financial barriers for participants from developing countries

CORE CONCEPT

Eliminate financial barriers that prevent geotechnical students and professionals from low- and lower-middle-income countries from fully participating in GI activities, creating a truly global community where access is based on interest and professional engagement rather than ability to pay.

FEE WAIVER PROGRAM

A. Scope of waivers

- **GI Membership Fees:** Waive annual membership dues for qualifying individuals
- **Conference Registration:** Reduce GeoCongress and other GI conference registration fees
- **Publication Access:** Ensure free access to JGGE and other GI publications for qualifying members

B. Eligibility criteria

- **Geographic Basis:** Use World Bank classifications to define eligible countries:
  - Low-income economies
  - Lower-middle-income economies

FUNDING APPROACH

- **Corporate Sponsorship:** Engage international firms in supporting the program as part of CSR commitments
- **GI Budget Allocation:** Allocate a dedicated budget line for the fee waiver program
- **Philanthropic Support:** Seek foundation grants and donor support specifically for global access initiatives
- **Sustainable Model:** Design the program to be permanent, not pilot-dependent

ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

- **Online System:** Develop a simple web-based application and verification system
- **Minimal Staff Time:** Automate the approval process to minimize administrative burden
- **Communication:** Clearly publicize the program through all GI channels and ISSMGE networks

IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES

Year 1 (launch)

- Define eligible countries based on World Bank classifications
- Develop a simple online application system
- Allocate budget and establish funding sources
- Launch the program with a publicity campaign targeting eligible countries
- Waive fees for the next GeoCongress for qualifying applicants

Years 2 to 3 (expansion and refinement)

- Evaluate participation rates and barriers to access
- Refine the application process based on feedback
- Expand outreach through ISSMGE and regional partners
- Secure additional funding sources to ensure sustainability
- Track and report impact to demonstrate program value

Years 4 to 5 (sustainability)

- Establish the program as a permanent GI initiative with dedicated funding
- Build case studies demonstrating impact on careers and international collaboration
- Expand the program based on demonstrated success and available funding

Appendix A: Strategic Planning Workshop Agenda

American Geophysical Union (AGU) Headquarters, 2000 Florida Avenue NW, Washington, D.C. 20009 (near Dupont Circle).

15 January 2026, 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM; 16 January 2026, 9:00 AM to noon.

PARTICIPANTS

- Scott Anderson, BGC Engineers
- Matt Evans, Oregon State University
- Richard J. Fragaszy, National Science Foundation (retired)
- David Frost, Georgia Tech
- Ashley Loyola, Terra Geosynthetics
- Lucky Nagarajan, Geocomp
- Aspasia “Sissy” Nikolaou, NIST
- Ellen Rathje, University of Texas at Austin
- Alexandra Schueller, University of Applied Sciences Koblenz
- Joe Wartman, University of Washington (Workshop Organizer)
- Dimitrios Zekkos, University of California, Berkeley

WORKSHOP GOALS

Goal 1: Define IAC’s role connecting GI, ISSMGE, and the international geotechnical community

Articulate IAC’s unique position as the bridge between the Geo-Institute and the global geotechnical community, with particular emphasis on the relationship with ISSMGE (the International Society for Soil Mechanics and Geotechnical Engineering).

Key questions to consider and address

Leveraging GI’s strengths for international impact:

- What does GI do well that could benefit the international community?
- How can IAC mobilize GI’s technical committees and subject matter experts for international collaboration?
- What resources, knowledge products, and professional development approaches from GI could address current global challenges?

Distinguishing IAC’s unique contribution:

- What can IAC uniquely contribute that ISSMGE, regional societies, and academic institutions cannot accomplish independently?

Bringing international perspectives and opportunities to GI:

- How should IAC channel knowledge, best practices, and innovations from ISSMGE and international partners to GI members?
- How can IAC support professional development through international connections?

- How can GI's work be enriched with global perspectives and emerging international practices?

Enabling collaborative action on global challenges:

- How can IAC and ISSMGE work together to address challenges that transcend national boundaries?
- What does capacity building in underserved regions look like through this partnership?

Serving as GI's primary interface with ISSMGE:

- What does effective coordination of GI member participation in ISSMGE activities look like?
- How can IAC create pathways for GI expertise to contribute to ISSMGE initiatives?
- What does a strong working relationship between GI and ISSMGE entail?

Defining the GI-ISSMGE partnership:

- What opportunities exist for joint initiatives and coordinated action?
- How do we ensure complementary rather than duplicative efforts?

Goal 2: Identify five to seven strategic priorities and develop action plans

Identify a focused set of strategic priorities; for each priority, develop a detailed action framework defining goals, metrics, resources, timelines, leadership, and dependencies.

Goal 3: Establish an implementation framework for communication, accountability, and engagement

Define how IAC will communicate its work, ensure accountability for implementation, and build shared ownership of the strategic plan among all participants.

WORKSHOP OUTCOMES AND PRODUCTS

At the end of Day 2, participants should be able to:

- Clearly articulate IAC's distinctive role in two to three sentences
- Name the key global challenges being addressed and why they matter
- Name the top five to seven strategic priorities and explain why they matter
- Describe what success looks like in five years
- Identify a specific role in implementing the strategic plan
- Explain to a GI Board member why this plan deserves support and resources

Immediate products (by the end of the workshop)

- Statement of IAC's role connecting GI, ISSMGE, and the international community
- Identification of pressing global challenges where geotechnical engineering can make a difference
- Prioritized list of five to seven strategic initiatives with rationale
- Action frameworks for each priority (goals, metrics, resources, timelines, leads)
- Communication strategy outline

- Timeline to GeoCongress 2026

Near-term products (within about a month)

- Draft strategic plan document incorporating workshop outcomes
- Review and refinement by workshop participants
- Finalized strategic plan ready for Board presentation

SCHEDULE

Day 1: Context, vision, and priority identification

Thursday, 15 January 2026, 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM

9:00 to 9:20 · Welcome and framing

Joe Wartman, IAC Chair

- Workshop purpose, how we will work together, and desired outcomes
- Introductions
- Overview of the schedule

Key themes: impact over activity, concrete over vague, bidirectional value.

9:20 to 9:50 · IAC background

Joe Wartman, IAC Chair

- IAC history and evolution
- Current activities, structure, and resources

9:50 to 10:50 · External perspectives: framing the opportunity

Purpose: hear from key stakeholders before we begin our own planning.

GI representative, Susan Burns (25 min via Zoom, plus 5 min Q&A)

- What role do you envision for IAC in advancing GI's mission over the next five years?
- What would make IAC a strategic asset to GI?
- What opportunities do you see that IAC should pursue?

ISSMGE representative, Ellen Rathje (25 min, plus 5 min Q&A)

- History and role of ISSMGE
- Where do you see opportunities for ISSMGE and ASCE/GI to work more effectively together?
- What would meaningful partnership look like?

10:50 to 11:05 · Break

11:05 to 12:00 · Special guest: Dr. Rita Colwell, former NSF Director

- **What makes international collaboration work:** characteristics of genuinely productive partnerships, lessons from building international networks, ensuring mutual benefit, and equitable partnerships with developing countries where local ownership matters

- The unique role of professional societies: what professional societies can uniquely do that governments, universities, and NGOs cannot
- Strategic leadership, impact, and opportunities: what meaningful impact looks like in international scientific collaboration, lessons from NSF leadership on building consensus and securing resources, and the biggest opportunities for international engineering collaboration now

Facilitated Q&A.

12:00 to 1:15 · Lunch (catered on-site)

1:15 to 2:45 · Context and capabilities

Purpose: structured plenary discussion through key questions (addresses Goal 1).

What do we do well now? (30 min)

- Identify current strengths to build upon
- What should we preserve and amplify?
- What does GI excel at?

What can we learn or emulate from other organizations? (30 min)

- Drawing on pre-workshop responses and morning speakers
- Concrete examples of models that work
- How do other organizations create impact internationally?

What opportunities are we missing? (45 min)

- Based on everything we heard today
- Where are the gaps between what we could do and what we are doing?
- Where is IAC uniquely positioned to make a difference?

2:45 to 3:00 · Break

3:00 to 4:30 · Visioning

Purpose: deeper exploration of strategic questions, aspirational and energizing (continues Goal 1).

Identifying global challenges (15 min)

- The most pressing global challenges where geotechnical engineering can make a meaningful difference
- Which challenges are currently underserved or receiving inadequate attention
- Where the need is greatest (climate adaptation, natural hazards, infrastructure in developing regions, urbanization)

What could IAC uniquely contribute that no one else can? (25 min)

- Our competitive advantage given these global challenges
- Our positioning, networks, expertise, and ASCE/GI connection
- What makes IAC distinctive from ISSMGE, regional societies, and others

Where are the most exciting opportunities for impact? (40 min)

- Emphasis on impact, not just activity
- Where the leverage is, and what would create disproportionate value
- How the GI-ISSMGE partnership can address these global challenges

What would success look like in five years? (10 min)

- Get concrete about what we would point to
- What members and GI leadership would say
- What our international reputation would be

4:30 to 4:45 · Break

4:45 to 5:00 · Bridge to priorities

- Synthesize key themes from the day
- **Preview:** tomorrow we turn this into concrete priorities and action plans

Day 2: Priorities and action planning

Friday, 16 January 2026, 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM

9:00 to 9:10 · Day 2 opening

Joe Wartman

- Quick recap of Day 1 key insights
- **Today's goals:** identify strategic priorities, build action frameworks, and establish implementation (Goals 2 and 3)

9:10 to 10:30 · Priority setting (Goal 2, Part A)

Phase 1: brainstorm (25 min)

- Based on everything from yesterday, what should our strategic priorities be?
- Everyone contributes ideas, captured on a card on the wall
- No debate yet, just generate possibilities

Phase 2: cluster and refine (30 min)

- Group related ideas into themes
- Name each cluster
- Combine, clarify, and sharpen language

Phase 3: voting (25 min)

- Each person gets five to seven dots to vote
- Distribute or stack votes
- Identify the top five to seven priorities based on results
- Quick discussion of whether this feels right and any critical gaps
- Confirm the final priority list

10:30 to 10:45 · Break

10:45 to 11:35 · Top priorities (Goal 2, Part B)

Purpose: work through the top five to seven priorities systematically (about 10 minutes each). For each priority, rapidly discuss and capture:

- **What specifically:** a concrete description
- **Why impactful:** value and mission alignment, connection to Goal 1
- **Success metrics:** how we will measure progress (two to three key indicators)
- **Resources needed:** money, people, partnerships
- **Timeline:** Year 1, Year 2, and Year 3 milestones
- **Champion:** who leads this
- **Key dependencies:** what needs to happen first

11:35 to 11:50 · Implementation framework (Goal 3)

Quick focused discussion on three elements:

Communication strategy (5 min)

- **Audiences:** who needs to know about our work
- **Messages:** what we want them to know, understand, and do
- **Channels:** how we reach them
- **Ownership:** who manages communications

Accountability (5 min)

- Immediate actions (next 30 days): who does what
- **Writing team:** who drafts the strategic plan document
- **Follow-up timeline:** virtual review meetings
- **GeoCongress presentation:** format, date, and presenters
- IAC member engagement

11:50 to 12:00 · Final reflections and close

- Reminder of next steps and deadlines

PRE-WORKSHOP QUESTIONS

The following questions were assigned to all participants in advance of the workshop. Written responses were collected and provided to Joseph Wartman prior to the opening session.

1. What does GI do well that could benefit the international geotechnical community?
2. What successful international engagement approaches from other organizations have you observed that we might learn from or emulate?
3. What are the most pressing global challenges where geotechnical engineering can make a meaningful difference?
4. What could IAC accomplish that would create the greatest value for both GI members and the global geotechnical community?
5. Please share any other thoughts, questions, or suggestions as we prepare for the strategic planning workshop.