



# **Strategy Report 2022 - 2026**

## Building On Firm Foundations

# President's Statement

This year the IGS celebrates 40 years as a Society. We've come a long way since our foundation in Paris on November 10, 1983, from just a few Chapters in the early years to 45 Chapters today representing 50 countries.

We've worked hard to grow our impact and the adoption and understanding of geosynthetics. But our work is not over. This report sets out our ambitious agenda for the next four years and prioritizes a robust financial footing as the key to thrive.

A lot happens over four decades including market volatility, wars, pandemics, and the urgent need to protect our fragile environment. As life becomes ever more unpredictable, the Society must ensure it is sure-footed to meet diverse challenges, including:

- > We must remain relevant to our members, external stakeholders and the wider public.
- > We must continue to be the go-to resource for information and education for the geosynthetics industry, building on the rich experience and skills of our global community.
- > We must maintain our advocacy and campaigning roles to support the aims of our members, combat disinformation and strengthen ties with diverse partners.



In order to fulfil our ambitious agenda for all, we need to ensure the Society is on a firm financial footing going forward; it's untenable to continue as if we were still operating in 1983.

Our report shares our strategic objectives for the next four years, and the compelling need to future-proof our sources of funding.

There are many reasons to be optimistic. If we get this right we will set the IGS on track to springboard from the foundations we built over the last 40 years and secure a robust and thriving Society for future generations.

**Thank you for your support.**

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**Sam Allen**  
President

# Introduction

Established in 1983, the IGS is a unique community of members, run by its members, inspiring and learning from each other with an elected IGS Council that defines strategy and direction. It is a 501(c)(6) not for profit organization, spanning academia, research and the entire supply chain of geosynthetics.

**The IGS aims to be the professional peer-group leader for geotechnical engineers and others specializing in geosynthetics, developing and sharing knowledge, while working to maximize the contribution geosynthetics can make towards meeting the UN Sustainable Development Goals.**

The Society places a special value on authoritative evidence-based knowledge. Peer-reviewed research supported by a host of informative content is the foundation of all it does. Therefore, widening geosynthetics education is a priority to not only support experienced professionals but also better equip the next generation of engineers.

The Society is committed to securing its financial viability so it can continue to deliver high quality services and resources to its members and deliver on its ambitious new strategy.

## The IGS: In numbers

Cost of IGS annual program of activities: **\$200K**

Income from individual members in 2019: **\$82K**  
In 2020: **\$63K**

Income from corporate members in 2019: **\$166K**  
In 2020: **\$147K**



**2,538**

IGS Members



**204**

IGS South Africa is the IGS's largest Chapter with 204 members



**74%**

of IGS members based in Asia & Europe



**45**

Chapters and a presence in 50 countries



**8**

Chapters have more than 100 members



**165**

Corporate Members worldwide with Asia then Europe the biggest regions



**371**

Student Members



# Our Vision

## ▼ Purpose

To provide an understanding of and promote the appropriate use of geosynthetics and associated technology throughout the world.

## ▼ Vision

For geosynthetics to be recognized as fundamental to sustainable development by providing technological and engineering solutions to answer societal and environmental challenges.

## ▼ Aims

**Over the next four years, the IGS will set the foundations for future growth, increasing its influence and growing the responsible use of geosynthetics. It will:**

- > Create the first globally applicable Geosynthetics Handbook
- > Launch a Professional Certification program
- > Launch an accessible online Sustainability Calculator to quantify the benefits of using geosynthetics
- > Work more closely with sister organizations to increase influence and set the agenda on regulations, as well as connect with relevant non-geosynthetics organizations
- > Improve diversity and inclusivity
- > Convene a corporate and individual membership that is more representative of the most significant markets
- > Place our finances on a sound footing to allow us to offer a sustainable program of activities and initiatives
- > Create structures which are better adapted to our future needs

# Strategic Goals

To achieve our vision, the IGS has set out four strategic goals. It aims to be:

### > 01 Influential

Our voice will influence policies and practices to increase responsible use of geosynthetics.

### > 02 Representative

We will attract and retain a diverse body of members who reflect the industry and geosynthetics markets.

### > 03 Trusted

We will be trusted globally as the authority on geosynthetics and related matters, offering information, knowledge, guidance and training on characteristics, performance, applications and responsible use in practice.

### > 04 Sustainable

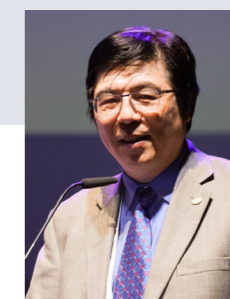
We will generate and manage the necessary funding to deliver our strategy and ensure the Society's long-term future, and cultivate highly engaged members who are actively involved in leading the Society.



**Edoardo Zannoni**  
IGS Vice President



**Laura Carbone**  
IGS Secretary General



**Jie Han**  
IGS Treasurer



**Chungsik Yoo**  
IGS Past President

1977 - 2022

# Our Journey So Far



**1977**

Dr. J.P. Giroud coins the terms 'geotextile' and 'geomembrane' at the first International Conference on the use of fabrics in Geotechnics in Paris

**1983**

International Geotextile Society established in Paris on November 10, the precursor of the IGS

**1985**

First IGS Chapter formed: IGS Japan

**1986**

First membership directory with 413 individual and 22 corporate members

First inventory of test methods and standards published

**1987**

First official journal - Geotextiles and Geomembranes

**1990**

IGS student membership initiated

First IGS Awards presented

**1991**

1,000+ individual members

**2010**

Establishment of IGS Technical Committees: soil reinforcement, barrier systems and filtration

IGS publishes first purpose statement "to provide an understanding and promote the appropriate use of geosynthetic technology"

**2009**

First African regional conference in Cape Town, South Africa

2,000+ individual members

**2008**

First pan-American geosynthetics conference in Cancun, Mexico

**2005**

100+ corporate members

**2000**

First Student Awards presented

**1998**

R.M. Koerner gives the first Giroud Lecture in Atlanta, USA

**1994**

Name changed to the International Geosynthetic Society

Geosynthetics International becomes second official IGS journal

**2011**

IGS granted liaison status to ISO committee TC 221

Memorandum of Understanding with International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage, ICID

IGS joins FedIGS as first non-founding member

**2013**

First Educate the Educators (EtE) event takes place in Argentina

**2018**

EtE participants exceed 500

**2019**

IGS Foundation launched



**2020**

150+ corporate members

Sustainability e-book published "Preparing the Ground for a Brighter Future"

**2021**

IGS publishes first sustainability statement

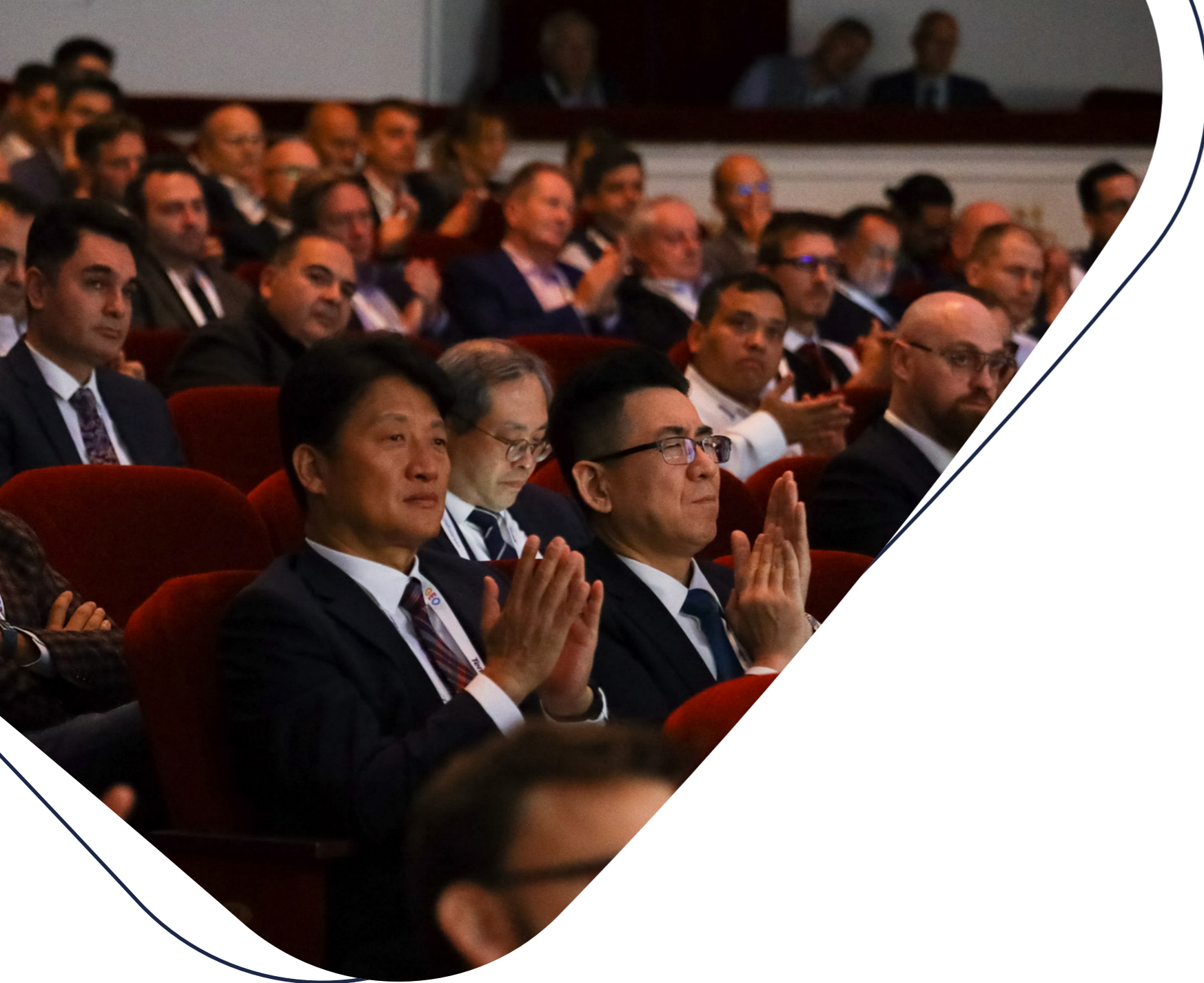


**2022**

IGS Job Shadowing Program launched

IGS logo and branding is refreshed





# 01

## Influential

“ Lack of understanding of geosynthetics presents a risk. We will continue to unlock the potential of geosynthetics by being the go-to authority on use and possibilities

### 01 Influential

## Aims:

- > Influence policies and practices to increase the use of geosynthetics
- > Create sharing platforms with non-engineering organizations (Environmental, social and governance (ESG), finance, risk)
- > Leverage existing relationships with sister societies
- > Increase the impact that Chapters have on regulators, standards and universities

## Measured by:

- > International regulators mandate the use of geosynthetics (UN, FAO, WB, ICMM)
- > Use of geosynthetics is unrestricted
- > Formal agreements with non-engineering organizations
- > Joint statements on specific issues
- > Engagement with regulators at local level (country-specific)
- > Number of sessions of non-geosynthetic topics included in IGS/Chapter conferences, workshops, etc
- > Number of sessions on geosynthetics included in non-geosynthetic conferences, workshops, etc
- > An Educate the Regulators program



# 02

## Representative

“ We are our members. We will help our current members and Chapters to flourish while increasing the number and diversity of the IGS family

### 02 Representative

#### Aims:

- > Grow numbers of individual members. We will focus on attracting young professionals and building a pipeline of student members
- > Grow numbers of Corporate Members. We will prioritize growth of Corporate Membership especially in those markets where we are under-represented
- > Successful Chapters. We will focus on supporting existing Chapters to thrive rather than aiming to grow numbers of Chapters. We will encourage more flexible Chapter models such as regional and partnership models, and take a lighter approach to governance

#### Measured by:

- > Total membership
- > Ratio of student and younger members to individual members in each region
- > Member retention rates
- > Member satisfaction
- > Total Corporate Members
- > More Corporate Members from the leading 100 companies
- > Higher growth in under-represented markets
- > Annual returns indicating healthy Chapters
- > More Chapters with 100+ members
- > Fewer Chapters with under 20 members
- > Fewer Chapters in arrears



### 03 Trusted Aims:

- > Introduce a Geosynthetics Handbook – a global practice handbook on the use of geosynthetics of all types, customizable for individual markets
- > Create a Sustainability Benefits Calculator to quantify the sustainability benefits of geosynthetics in specific circumstances
- > Develop a Professional Certification program to support responsible whole-life use of geosynthetics: correct specification, installation, maintenance and end-of life processing

### Measured by:

- > Geosynthetics Handbook published and adopted by prioritized market actors
- > Sustainability Benefits Calculator and supporting materials launched and adopted by prioritized market actors, with usage measured and monitored
- > Professional Certification program and supporting materials launched and adopted in specified markets. The program generates revenue to be self-financing

# 03

Trusted

“ We will remain the central source of geosynthetics education, knowledge and research by creating a range of essential resources for every stage of use and development



**George Koerner**  
IGS Geosynthetics  
Handbook Editor

#### **Geosynthetics Handbook**

The Geosynthetics Handbook is an easy-to-read reference document raising awareness, installation know-how and guidance on the range and quality of geosynthetics and potential applications. The Handbook will provide a basis for devising a curriculum spanning the main applications of geosynthetics for associated training courses to complement our existing short courses.





# 04

Sustainable

“ We will build stronger foundations in our finances, governance and structure so the IGS business model can better serve our members into the future

## 04 Sustainable Aims:

- › Reshape the current governance structure (Officers group and Council) to better respond to the needs of the Society with due consideration of regional and gender diversity
- › Introduce a sound operational structure to guarantee systematic and democratic operation of the Committees
- › Create a mechanism for better representation of Young Members in all sectors of the society including the Council
- › Ensure that we remain financially viable

## Measured by:

- › Leadership performance such as deliverables
- › Regional and gender representation of Officers group and Council
- › Membership structure
- › Voting member representation
- › Member satisfaction
- › Number of Young Members in various groups/committees
- › Young Member contribution to deliverables
- › Member dues reflecting the costs of maintaining the Society and its growing activities

### **The IGS Sustainability Benefits Calculator**

The IGS Sustainability Benefits Calculator is a single, readily accessible way to calculate the superior performance benefits of geosynthetics across a range of applications. This definitive, one-stop evidence-based tool will encourage procurers, designers and project managers to increasingly specify geosynthetics over other materials.

# A Growing Market For Geosynthetics

Global demand for geosynthetics is forecast to rise. Geotextiles are the largest segment, accounting for more than 50% of the market, followed by geomembranes and geogrids, with geonets making up a small proportion overall.

### Opportunities are there for the taking, including:

- > Sustained investment in public infrastructure projects, particularly in China and other developing countries
- > Higher-income construction markets' willingness to invest extra funds to create projects with greater longevity
- > Expanding paved road construction
- > Enactment of more local building codes and other regulations mandating the use of geosynthetics
- > Indian government legislation mandating geosynthetics in road building



- ▾ China is the world's largest market for geosynthetics followed by the US
- ▾ Further growth expected in India, Thailand and Indonesia
- ▾ North America is the second largest regional market for geosynthetics followed by Western Europe

### Growth Markets Include:

Transportation Infrastructure  
(especially paved road applications)

Building Construction

Landfill and Liquid Containment

# Leading The Way On Education



As the interest in and use of geosynthetics surges, it is vital the IGS continues to lead the way on improving education and combating disinformation around the use of these versatile materials.

**The IGS provides a host of resources for every stage of learning. These include our flagship Educate the Educators program, our well-stocked Digital Library packed with journals, proceedings, research papers, educational and society documents, eBooks, photos and videos, plus regular news updates via our website and newsletter.**

Our sister organization the IGS Foundation supports our educational efforts by financing key learning opportunities such as funding student places at geosynthetics conferences and the creation of educational materials.

The Society must continue to be the trusted source of information, knowledge, guidance and training on the responsible use of geosynthetics and to ensure professional standards in practice are maintained.

### Since 2013:

Educate the Educators has reached more than 700 educators through 25 events in 15 countries.

 **700+**  
Educators

 **25**  
Events

 **15**  
Countries

# Mitigating Risks To Growth

**While opportunities for growth and education in the geosynthetics market are many and varied, it is not without its challenges. These risks include:**

- › Lack of understanding about geosynthetics
- › Disinformation on the environmental impact of using geosynthetics
- › Missed opportunities due to lawmakers lacking the information to appreciate the green benefits of using geosynthetics
- › Wide variations in regulations specifying the use of geosynthetics in landfill
- › Operating in volatile markets

**Together we can reduce the impact of these risk factors by ensuring the IGS is well supported in its strategic goals. This must include a robust financial framework within which to operate, so we can supercharge our efforts.**

We want to ensure the IGS continues to generate sufficient funds to deliver services to our members and to deliver on our strategy as a whole. If we are to increase our impact and effectiveness, we must raise our intensity of effort, which requires new investment and additional income.

“ The IGS is its members and our members are ambitious. With the IGS Strategy 2022-2026 we will elevate the impact and reach of the Society to help our members achieve their aims and lead the way in a thriving geosynthetics industry





## Contact Us



For more information or questions about IGS Strategy 2022-2026, contact IGS Executive Director John Kraus

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The International Geosynthetic Society (IGS) is a learned society dedicated to the scientific and engineering development of geotextiles, geomembranes, related products and associated technologies.

To find out more visit [www.geosyntheticssociety.org](http://www.geosyntheticssociety.org)



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