



**POLICY DOCUMENT NO. 1
GUIDELINES FOR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE**

INTRODUCTION

As the peak body for geo-professionals concerned with soil mechanics and geotechnical engineering, ISSMGE has a responsibility to set out guidelines by which such geo-professionals should practice.

These guidelines are set out herein in two categories:

- (a) General professional ethics which apply to all engineering professionals
- (b) Specific issues for geotechnical professionals.

(a) GENERAL PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

Geotechnical professionals shall:

1. Place their responsibility for the welfare, health and safety of the community before their responsibility to sectional or private interests.
2. Act with honour, integrity and dignity to merit the trust of the community and the profession at large.
3. Act only within areas of their competence and in a diligent and careful manner.
4. Apply their skills and knowledge in the interest of their employer or client for whom they act, without compromising any other obligations they may have to act in an ethical manner.
5. Take reasonable steps to inform themselves, their clients and employers, of the technical, social, environmental and other possible consequences which may arise from their actions.
6. Express opinions, make statements, or give evidence, with fairness and honesty, and only on the basis of adequate knowledge.
7. Continue to develop relevant knowledge, skill and expertise throughout their careers, and shall actively encourage those with whom they are associated to do likewise.

(b) SPECIFIC ISSUES:

Geotechnical professionals:

1. Shall take steps to be aware of the context (the "larger picture") in which their work is carried out and endeavour to participate in the project from beginning to end.
2. Shall make themselves aware of the geological, hydrogeological and environmental context of the project in which they are involved.
3. Shall, when acting as designers, take all reasonable steps to visit the site during construction and satisfy themselves that the construction satisfies the design intent.
4. Shall avoid price competition at the expense of technical quality.
5. Shall endeavour to cooperate with professionals of other disciplines who are involved in the same project.
6. Shall endeavour to explain to their clients and to the community at large the significance of their work.
7. Shall, when asked to review or critique the work of fellow professionals, advise them accordingly.
8. Shall avoid unnecessarily definitive statements in relation to geotechnical, geological and environmental issues which are uncertain.

March 2004