

Editorial

Halfway through 2023, as Matthew approached the end of his tenure as editor and Lidija was shadowing the work of the *Géotechnique* Advisory Panel (GAP) as the incoming editor, the news broke out that the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) had sold its publishing branch ICE Publishing (ICEP) to Emerald Publishing. The ICE Publishing journal editors had no prior knowledge of this change.

The biggest concern became the uncertainty about the future operation of *Géotechnique* and GAP. The journal has maintained and treasured the importance of its in-person panel meetings and the use of ICE facilities, the existence of the physical print run, the link with the British Geotechnical Association (BGA) and with ICE prizes and awards, the publication of special lectures such as the Rankine and *Géotechnique* lectures, the symposia in print and themed issues. While the sale had envisaged the set-up of the Publication Advisory Board between ICEP and Emerald its role was obscure, as was the future of existing *Géotechnique*'s links and relationships following the sale. In consultation with our GAP colleagues and senior members of the geotechnical community, we held separate meetings with the senior management of ICE and Emerald between June and November 2023, to understand the reasons behind the sale and to advocate for minimal future changes of the boundary conditions under which *Géotechnique* had been operating.

Meeting with the ICE management we learnt that the decision to sell ICEP was driven by the board of Thomas Telford Limited (TTL), the ICE-owned parent company of ICEP. Apart from financial matters, one concern was the need to create a greater reach for the journals internationally, given the small size of ICEP compared to many of its large competitors. The match with Emerald was seen as a good fit

due to its medium size, academic origins and the complementing quality of journals.

The meeting with Emerald's management in November 2023 left us with optimism for the immediate future of *Géotechnique*, after several months of insecurity. We felt that the publisher shared the values that we believed had made *Géotechnique* special and successful. The GAP will continue to hold in-person meetings, with ICE's agreement on the use of their facilities. The annual nomination of *Géotechnique* papers for ICE prizes also remains in place, as well as the arrangements for Rankine and *Géotechnique* lectures. The journal currently has a long print queue, which is of concern, despite our efforts to reduce it, notably by limiting paper lengths and tightening up on acceptance rates. We had a constructive discussion with Emerald about increasing the size, rather than the number, of issues to reduce this queue as soon as possible. Further discussion on the ways to achieve this will certainly be on Lidija's agenda with the panel, as this also prevents us from reviving symposia in print and the associated public events at the ICE. The *Géotechnique* 75th anniversary event in October 2023, outstandingly organised and chaired by Alessandro Tarantino, was a great reminder of the value that such events, bringing together academia and industry, have for the journal and for the wider geotechnical community. By co-signing this editorial, we believe that the end of last year brought a positive outlook for the operation of *Géotechnique* over the next period with a new publisher.

Lidija Zdravkovic
Imperial College London

Matthew R. Coop
University College London