

## Contents

Foreword	xv
Members of the Working Party	xvi
<b>Chapter 1</b> Introduction	1
1.1. Deserts	1
1.1.1. Definitions	1
1.1.2. Scope of this report: hot deserts	2
1.1.3. Engineering significance of the hot desert environment	3
1.1.3.1. Major sand dunes	4
1.1.3.2. Dissected terrain	4
1.1.3.3. Indurated horizons (duricrusts)	4
1.1.3.4. Metastable soils	4
1.1.3.5. Karst	4
1.1.3.6. Stone pavements	4
1.1.3.7. Salinity	4
1.2. The Working Party	5
1.2.1. Membership	5
1.2.2. Objectives	5
1.3. Structure of the report: contents	5
References	6
<b>Chapter 2</b> Desert environments	7
2.1. Defining deserts	8
2.2. Distribution of the world's deserts	10
2.3. Causes of aridity	11
2.3.1. Atmospheric stability	11
2.3.2. Continentality	11
2.3.3. Orographic influences	11
2.3.4. Cold ocean currents	12
2.3.5. High reflectivity (albedo) of desert surfaces	12
2.3.6. Factors acting in combination	12
2.4. Controls on the diversity of desert environments	12
2.4.1. Geological controls	12
2.4.2. Climatic controls	13
2.4.2.1. Temperature and humidity regimes	14
2.4.2.2. Precipitation regimes	16
2.4.2.3. Wind regimes	20
2.4.3. Groundwater controls	22
2.5. Past climate change in deserts	24
2.6. Challenges facing desert environments	25
References	29
<b>Chapter 3</b> Processes and landforms in deserts	33
3.1. Weathering	33

3.1.1. Weathering processes	33
3.1.1.1. Insolation	33
3.1.1.2. Frost weathering	34
3.1.1.3. Wetting and drying weathering	34
3.1.1.4. Salt weathering	34
3.1.1.4.1. Salt types and occurrence	35
3.1.1.4.2. Mechanical effects	35
3.1.1.4.3. Chemical effects	35
3.1.1.4.4. Weathering products and rates	35
3.1.1.5. Chemical weathering	36
3.1.1.6. Weathering by lichens and algae	36
3.1.1.7. Solution processes and limestone: karst	37
3.1.2. Landforms and features produced by weathering	38
3.1.2.1. Tafoni	39
3.1.2.2. Amphitheatres, alveoles and pits	39
3.1.2.3. Rock varnish	40
3.1.2.4. Case hardening	41
3.1.2.5. Duricrusts	41
3.1.2.5.1. Calcrete (a form of duricrust)	42
3.1.2.5.2. Silcrete duricrust	44
3.1.2.5.3. Ferricrete (a form of duricrust)	44
3.1.2.5.4. Gypsum enrichment and gypcrete (a form of duricrust)	44
3.1.2.6. Near-surface nitrate enrichment	44
3.2. Wind, sand and dust	45
3.2.1. Aeolian processes	45
3.2.2. Wind and wind regimes	46
3.2.2.1. Definition and characteristics	46
3.2.2.2. Global air-mass movements	46
3.2.2.3. Diurnal wind variations	47
3.2.2.4. Local wind variations	47
3.2.3. Wind erosion, transport and deposition	47
3.2.3.1. Desert surface characteristics	47
3.2.3.2. The sand–dust system	47
3.2.3.3. Grain entrainment and transport	48
3.2.3.4. Grain deposition and bedform development	49
3.2.4. Aeolian landforms	50
3.2.4.1. Aeolian bedform classification	50
3.2.4.2. Free dunes	51
3.2.4.3. Impeded dunes	52
3.2.4.4. Erosional features	53
3.2.5. Wind-related hazards	55
3.3. Fluvial geomorphology	58
3.3.1. Water in deserts	58
3.3.2. Desert hydrology	60
3.3.2.1. Vegetation	60
3.3.2.2. Climate	60

## CONTENTS

ix

3.3.2.2.1. High-magnitude spatially localized storms	60
3.3.2.2.2. Aridity and drought	61
3.3.2.3. Overland flow	62
3.3.2.4. Channelized ephemeral stream flow	62
3.3.2.4.1. Flow regime	62
3.3.2.4.2. High sediment loads and channel scour	62
3.3.2.5. Subsurface water	63
3.3.2.5.1. Natural pipes and 'piping'	63
3.3.2.5.2. Karst	64
3.3.2.5.3. Capillary rise	64
3.3.3. Fluvial landforms	64
3.3.3.1. Rills and gullies	65
3.3.3.2. Ephemeral stream channels	67
3.3.3.3. Alluvial fans	67
3.3.3.4. Pediments	68
3.3.3.5. Playas	68
3.3.4. Hazards associated with fluvial processes	68
3.3.4.1. Flash floods	69
3.3.4.2. Channel changes under flood conditions	71
3.3.4.3. Sedimentation	72
3.3.4.4. Hydrocompaction/'collapsing' soils	72
3.4. Subsurface water, salts and aggressive ground	73
3.4.1. Aggressive ground conditions	73
3.4.2. Features of arid saltlands	75
3.4.2.1. Factors affecting salt accumulation	76
3.4.2.2. The coastal environment: sabkha	79
3.4.2.3. Inland saline environments: playas	83
3.4.3. Groundwater chemistry	85
3.4.3.1. The solubility of minerals in coastal water and groundwater	85
3.4.3.2. The influence of the carrier soils: chromatography	89
3.5. Conclusions	89
References	89
<b>Chapter 4 Hazards and the desert ground model</b>	<b>97</b>
4.1. Desert hazards	97
4.2. Existing desert ground models	100
4.3. An Earth systems model for desert landscape classification	105
4.3.1. Structural and volcanic landforms	121
4.3.2. Weathering landforms	124
4.3.3. Erosional landforms	128
4.3.4. Depositional landforms	133
4.4. Conclusions and recommendations	138
References	142
<b>Chapter 5 Soil and rock description and characteristics</b>	<b>143</b>
5.1. Hot deserts surfaces and soils	143
5.1.1. Relationship of rock and soil types to the desert model	143
5.1.2. Bare and/or patinated rock	144

5.1.3. Weathered <i>in situ</i> rock and soil mantles	148
5.1.4. Transported soils: fluvial/coastal	148
5.1.5. Transported soils: aeolian	149
5.1.6. Duricrusts	149
5.1.7. Salt-enriched soils	151
5.2. Existing soil and rock characterization and classification schemes	151
5.2.1. Introduction	151
5.2.2. Generic soil and rock classification and description	151
5.2.3. Hot desert specific soil characterization and classification schemes	152
5.2.4. Hot desert specific rock/duricrust characterization and classification schemes	153
5.3. Recommended method for hot desert soil and rock characterization and classification	154
References	156
<b>Chapter 6</b> Desk study, remote sensing, geographical information systems and field evaluation	159
6.1. The value of desk study and field evaluation	159
6.2. Themes for this chapter	160
6.3. The approach to and scope of desk study and field evaluation	161
6.3.1. Stages of investigation	161
6.3.2. The engineering geological model	161
6.3.3. Terrain evaluation	165
6.3.4. Uncertainties	167
6.3.4.1. Desk studies	167
6.3.4.2. Field evaluation	167
6.3.4.3. Risk registers and logs	167
6.4. Desk study	167
6.4.1. Planning and undertaking desk studies	168
6.4.2. Sources of information	169
6.4.3. Reporting desk studies	169
6.5. Remote sensing	171
6.5.1. Image processing and mapping	174
6.5.2. Remote-sensing applications	175
6.5.2.1. Geological mapping	175
6.5.2.2. Geomorphological surveys	176
6.5.2.3. Geoecological surveys	177
6.5.3. Sources and costs of remotely sensed data	177
6.5.3.1. Data costs (at 2010 prices, unless stated otherwise)	177
6.6. Field evaluation	178
6.6.1. Field reconnaissance	178
6.6.2. Field mapping	179
6.7. Geographical information systems (GIS) and data management	181
6.7.1. GIS data organization	181
6.7.2. Effective use of GIS	181
6.7.3. Review of GIS applications	182
6.7.3.1. Thematic mapping	182
6.7.3.2. Geohazard assessment	183
6.7.3.2.1. Flash flooding	183
6.7.3.2.2. Unstable ground	183

6.7.3.3. Water resources	183
6.7.3.4. Corridor or site selection	183
6.7.3.5. Land-cover changes	185
6.8. Reporting of the Stage I investigations (desk studies and field evaluations)	185
6.9. Case histories	186
6.9.1. Bahrain Surface Materials Resource Survey	186
6.9.1.1. Terrain	186
6.9.1.2. Technical objectives	186
6.9.1.3. Work done, results and key lessons learnt	186
6.9.2. In Salah Gas Project (pipelines), Algeria	187
6.9.2.1. Terrain	187
6.9.2.2. Technical objectives	187
6.9.2.3. Work done, results and key lessons learnt	187
6.9.3. Expansion of Suez city, Egypt	189
6.9.3.1. Terrain	189
6.9.3.2. Technical objectives	189
6.9.3.3. Work done, results and key lessons learnt	189
6.9.4. In Salah Gas Project (facility sites), Algeria	189
6.9.4.1. Terrain	193
6.9.4.2. Technical objectives	193
6.9.4.3. Work done, results and key lessons learnt	194
Appendix to Chapter 6: remote sensing and GIS Internet links	195
6A.1. Satellite remote sensing	195
6A.2. Radar remote sensing	196
6A.3. Aerial photography	196
6A.4. Airborne multispectral and hyperspectral sensors	196
6A.5. LiDAR remote sensing	196
References	197
<b>Chapter 7</b> Ground investigation, testing and interpretation of results	201
7.1. Ground investigation methods	201
7.1.1. Planning	201
7.1.2. Trial pits and trenches	202
7.1.3. Soft-ground boring	202
7.1.4. Rotary drilling	208
7.1.5. Diagraphy	209
7.1.6. Cone penetration testing	209
7.1.7. Geophysics	209
7.2. Sampling	211
7.2.1. Geotechnical sampling	212
7.2.2. Sampling aggregate sources	216
7.3. <i>In situ</i> and laboratory testing	216
7.4. Review of investigation techniques for individual environments	223
7.4.1. Zone I: uplands	226
7.4.2. Zone II: footslopes and fans	227
7.4.3. Zone III: plains	228
7.4.4. Zone IV: base level plains	229
7.5. Interpretation of results and reporting	231

7.6. Ground investigation during construction	232
7.6.1. Scope of investigation during construction	232
7.6.2. Examples of application to hot deserts	232
7.6.3. Records of investigation during construction	233
Appendix to Chapter 7: laboratory and <i>in situ</i> testing procedures	233
7A.1. National Standards bureaux	240
7A.2. National research bodies	243
References	255
<b>Chapter 8</b> Engineering behaviour of desert soils	259
8.1. Mechanics of sands	259
8.1.1. Background	259
8.1.2. Compression	260
8.1.3. Shearing and critical states	261
8.1.4. Application to engineering design	267
8.2. Moisture in desert soils	268
8.3. Mechanics of partially saturated soils	270
8.3.1. Background	270
8.3.2. Types of suction	270
8.3.3. The soil–water retention curve	272
8.3.4. Stress variables for partially saturated soils	273
8.3.5. Behaviour of partially saturated soils in compression	273
8.3.6. Shear strength and stiffness of partially saturated soils	276
8.3.7. Recent constitutive models	277
8.4. Dry soils	278
8.5. Potentially collapsible soils	278
8.5.1. Identification	278
8.5.2. Methods of estimating settlement	279
8.6. Expansive clays	280
8.6.1. Identification	280
8.6.2. Methods of estimating heave	282
8.7. Salts	282
8.7.1. Occurrence and characteristics	282
8.7.2. Precipitation of salts	283
8.7.3. Change in hydration	284
8.7.4. Cementing	285
8.7.5. Dissolution	285
8.8. Mechanics of cemented soils	289
8.9. Soils from sabkha and salina environments	294
References	296
<b>Chapter 9</b> Materials for construction in deserts	301
9.1. Engineering materials in the desert environment	301
9.1.1. Effects of the desert environment on source materials	301
9.2. Rock for engineering purposes	302
9.2.1. Location, extraction and processing of large blocks	302
9.2.2. Dimension and cladding stone	303
9.2.3. Armourstone	307

## CONTENTS

xiii

9.3. Sand, gravel and crushed rock aggregates	310
9.3.1. Location, extraction and processing	310
9.3.2. Natural sands and gravels as aggregate	312
9.3.2.1. Aggregate source evaluation	313
9.3.2.2. Aggregate processing	314
9.3.3. Crushed rock and duricrusts as aggregate	316
9.4. Materials for road construction	321
9.4.1. Sources of materials	321
9.4.2. Unpaved 'dirt' roads	323
9.4.3. Use of duricrusts and marginal materials	324
9.4.4. Bituminous paving materials	325
9.5. Concrete and mortars	328
9.5.1. Aggregates: requirements and specifications	328
9.5.2. Cement and cementitious materials	331
9.5.3. Reinforcement	332
9.5.4. Sand–lime bricks and blocks	332
9.5.5. Storage of materials	335
9.6. Traditional materials for building construction	336
9.6.1. Natural local building materials	336
9.6.2. Soil types: availability and evaluation	336
9.6.3. Brick-making materials	338
9.7. Construction and demolition wastes	339
9.7.1. Types of material	339
9.7.2. Utilization of demolition waste	339
9.7.3. Regulatory framework	340
9.8. Sources of water and water quality	340
9.8.1. Water requirements	340
9.8.2. Sources of water	340
References	342
<b>Chapter 10</b> Engineering design and construction	347
10.1. Earthworks	347
10.1.1. Excavatability of desert materials	347
10.1.2. Slope stability	347
10.1.3. Excavation support	348
10.1.4. Construction of fills	350
10.1.5. Placing and compacting fills	350
10.1.6. Salts in fill materials	351
10.1.7. Reinforced soil	351
10.2. Foundations	352
10.2.1. General considerations	352
10.2.2. Rock subgrades	352
10.2.3. Collapsible soils	352
10.2.4. Expansive soils	355
10.2.5. Dissolution and salt heave	355
10.2.6. Piled foundations	356
10.2.7. Protection of buried concrete	356

10.3. Roads and pipelines	359
10.3.1. Route selection	359
10.3.2. Subgrade	360
10.3.3. Pavements	364
10.3.4. Salt damage to pavements	365
10.3.5. Unsurfaced and temporary roads	367
10.3.6. Pipelines	367
10.4. Coastal development	368
10.4.1. Coastal development in desert areas	368
10.4.2. Dredging	368
10.4.3. Reclamation	369
10.4.4. Shore protection	370
10.4.5. Marine environment	370
10.5. Flooding and erosion	370
10.5.1. Prediction of runoff and channel flow	370
10.5.2. Erosion	372
10.5.3. Design approaches to mitigate flood and erosion hazard	372
10.6. Groundwater changes due to urbanization and development	372
10.7. Wind-blown sand and dust	375
10.7.1. Sand and dust hazards	375
10.7.2. Sand transport	375
10.7.3. Control of drifting sand	375
10.7.3.1. Trapping sand	375
10.7.3.2. Enhancement of transportation	379
10.7.3.3. Reduction of sand supply	379
10.7.3.4. Deflection of moving sand	380
10.7.4. Moving dunes	381
10.7.4.1. Removal of dunes	381
10.7.4.2. Dissipation of the dunes	381
10.7.4.3. Immobilization of dunes	381
10.7.5. Control of wind-blown dust	383
10.8. Concrete structures	383
10.8.1. Influence of climate and geology	383
10.8.2. Mixing and placing concrete	384
10.8.3. Concrete durability	385
10.9. Traditional construction	389
10.10. Environmental protection and sustainability	389
References	390
Glossary of some engineering and geological terms	393
Index	411