

## ErosLab: A modelling tool for soil tests

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**Abstract:** The focus of this paper is ErosLab, a useful tool for the development, analysis and application of constitutive models developed to solve the modelling problems inherent in soil tests. The ErosLab is programmed in the way of admixture programming with C#, MATLAB and FORTRAN, offering a powerful environment for various kinds of modelling soil tests. The proposed tool has six important features: (1) a mechanical calculator; (2) the ability to cover various kinds of soil tests; (3) a number of soil models with a user extension interface; (4) multiple methods of loading control; (5) comprehensive and efficient debugging; and (6) visualisation with graphical displays. Furthermore, the entire graphical user interface and usage instructions for the tool are briefly illustrated in simple and practical terms. Finally, three case studies are presented in which ErosLab was used, to highlight its performance in modelling tests for different soils.

**Key words:** laboratory tests; geomechanics; geotechnical engineering; constitutive model; interface; software

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## 1 Introduction

Constitutive models play an important role in the design and construction of geotechnical engineering. To date, hundreds of different soil constitutive models, varying in view from micro to macro, have been proposed [1-10]. A range of results may be obtained depending on the selection of model, leading to different engineering decisions, which consequently alters the economy and risk level of problems. However, most engineers have failed to fully understand constitutive models and have invariably chosen a model based on their own preferences and experiences, hoping that a “one-size-fits-all” approach can solve all engineering problems. Some widely used models can sometimes result in significantly unreasonable predictions when applying to conventional engineering [11], as seen when the Mohr-Coulomb model was adopted to analyse an excavation [12] and when the modified cam-clay was employed to predict the long-term settlement of embankment [13-16]. A lack of proper understanding of the constitutive model has become one of the main risk factors in terms of accidents [17-21]. Therefore, it is essential that the merits and drawbacks of the selected model are completely understood before its application. In general, the quickest way to do this is to simulate laboratory tests. However, most engineers struggle with writing a computer program that can implement the soil model to achieve such a simulation. To address this, a tool that could model soil tests by providing a variety of constitutive models would be highly useful.

Previously, a range of practical tools in the field of geotechnical engineering have been developed. These offer an object-oriented design to simulate engineering issues using a variety of constitutive models, such as some commercial codes (ABAQUS[22], FLAC[23], PLAXIS[24] and COMSOL[25]), or open sources codes [26-29]. Of these, only PLAXIS has partial functions in the modelling of soil tests. However, the kinds of tests provided, and the loading control, are somewhat limited. This bolsters the case for the development of a tool that can offer a powerful environment for simulating various kinds of laboratory tests. Engineers could use this to understand a soil model without the need to reproduce its mode of operation, which is another area of difficulty.

In this paper, a modelling tool (ErosLab) for soil laboratory tests is developed and introduced. First, the different kinds of tests that can be used with the tool are briefly introduced. Second, its

general framework is presented, including its mixed language programming and six main features. Third, its graphical user interface and usage instructions are illustrated. Finally, descriptions are given of the carrying out of three cases of parameter identification (first for modelling of sand behaviours, second for modelling of clay behaviours and the third for modelling of time effects of soil). The developed software can be freely downloaded from the following URL: <http://www.geoinvention.com/en/news.asp?big=14>.

Since the development of constitutive models is usually based on laboratory tests, developing this tool should be first helpful for the research purpose of constitutive modelling. Even though field-scale problems cannot be directly simulated, the debugging scheme in this tool includes complex loading combinations reflecting various in-situ conditions. Furthermore, the tool should also be helpful for the teaching purpose and basic training of constitutive modelling for students.

## 2 Basic definitions

### 2.1 Stress analysis

The stress state of a single element can be described using six independent stress components. In constitutive model programming, the stress tensor is usually expressed as

$$\sigma_{ij} = [\sigma_{xx} \quad \sigma_{yy} \quad \sigma_{zz} \quad \sigma_{xy} \quad \sigma_{xz} \quad \sigma_{yz}]^T \quad (1)$$

The  $\sigma_m$  (or  $p$ ) is defined as the average normal stress or mean effective stress:

$$\sigma_m = \frac{1}{3}(\sigma_{xx} + \sigma_{yy} + \sigma_{zz}) \quad (2)$$

~~Then, the stress tensor can be transformed to:~~

$$\sigma_{ij} = \begin{bmatrix} \sigma_{xx} - \sigma_m & \tau_{xy} & \tau_{xz} \\ \tau_{yx} & \sigma_{yy} - \sigma_m & \tau_{yz} \\ \tau_{zx} & \tau_{zy} & \sigma_{zz} - \sigma_m \end{bmatrix} + \begin{bmatrix} \sigma_m & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & \sigma_m & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & \sigma_m \end{bmatrix} \quad (3)$$

~~The first tensor in the equation is called the deviatoric stress tensor, while the second is termed the spherical stress tensor. The latter can be abbreviated to  $\sigma_m \delta_{ij}$  or  $p \delta_{ij}$ , where  $\delta_{ij}$  is the Kronecker symbol (when  $i = j$ ,  $\delta_{ij} = 1$ ; when  $i \neq j$ ,  $\delta_{ij} = 0$ ).~~

The deviatoric stress tensor can be expressed as:

$$s_{ij} = \sigma_{ij} - \sigma_m \delta_{ij} = \begin{bmatrix} \sigma_{xx} - \sigma_m & \tau_{xy} & \tau_{xz} \\ \tau_{yx} & \sigma_{yy} - \sigma_m & \tau_{yz} \\ \tau_{zx} & \tau_{zy} & \sigma_{zz} - \sigma_m \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} s_{xx} & s_{xy} & s_{xz} \\ s_{yx} & s_{yy} & s_{yz} \\ s_{zx} & s_{zy} & s_{zz} \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} s_{11} & s_{12} & s_{13} \\ s_{21} & s_{22} & s_{23} \\ s_{31} & s_{32} & s_{33} \end{bmatrix} \quad (3)$$

The first, second and third invariants of the stress tensor are:

$$I_1 = \sigma_{xx} + \sigma_{yy} + \sigma_{zz}$$

$$I_2 = \begin{vmatrix} \sigma_{xx} & \tau_{xy} \\ \tau_{yx} & \sigma_{yy} \end{vmatrix} + \begin{vmatrix} \sigma_{yy} & \tau_{yz} \\ \tau_{zy} & \sigma_{zz} \end{vmatrix} + \begin{vmatrix} \sigma_{zz} & \tau_{zx} \\ \tau_{xz} & \sigma_{xx} \end{vmatrix} = \sigma_{xx}\sigma_{yy} + \sigma_{yy}\sigma_{zz} + \sigma_{zz}\sigma_{xx} - \tau_{xy}^2 - \tau_{yz}^2 - \tau_{zx}^2 \quad (4)$$

$$I_3 = \begin{vmatrix} \sigma_{xx} & \tau_{xy} & \tau_{xz} \\ \tau_{yx} & \sigma_{yy} & \tau_{yz} \\ \tau_{zx} & \tau_{zy} & \sigma_{zz} \end{vmatrix} = \sigma_{xx}\sigma_{yy}\sigma_{zz} + 2\tau_{xy}\tau_{yz}\tau_{zx} - \sigma_{xx}\tau_{yz}^2 - \sigma_{yy}\tau_{zx}^2 - \sigma_{zz}\tau_{xy}^2$$

While the three invariants of the deviatoric stress tensor are:

$$\begin{cases} J_1 = s_{xx} + s_{yy} + s_{zz} = 0 \\ J_2 = \frac{1}{2}s_{ij}s_{ji} = \frac{1}{2}(s_{xx}^2 + s_{yy}^2 + s_{zz}^2 + 2\tau_{xy}^2 + 2\tau_{xz}^2 + 2\tau_{yz}^2) \\ J_3 = s_{xx}s_{yy}s_{zz} + 2\tau_{xy}\tau_{yz}\tau_{zx} - \sigma_{xx}\tau_{yz}^2 - \sigma_{yy}\tau_{zx}^2 - \sigma_{zz}\tau_{xy}^2 \end{cases} \quad (5)$$

It can be seen that the invariants of the deviatoric stress tensor  $J_1, J_2$  and  $J_3$  are related to the invariants of the stress tensor  $I_1, I_2$  and  $I_3$  through the following relations:-

$$\begin{cases} J_1 = 0 \\ J_2 = \frac{1}{3}(I_1^2 - 3I_2) \\ J_3 = \frac{1}{27}(2I_1^3 - 9I_1I_2 + 27I_3) \end{cases} \quad (7)$$

where the deviatoric stress  $q$  can be calculated using the second invariant of the deviatoric stress tensor  $J_2$ .

$$q = \sqrt{3J_2} \quad (6)$$

In a triaxial test, the deviatoric stress  $q$  can be simplified to  $q = |\sigma_a - \sigma_r|$ , or  $q = \sigma_a - \sigma_r$  to distinguish the compression or the extension conditions.

The lode angle  $\theta$  can be calculated using the invariants of the deviatoric stress tensor as follows:

$$\cos 3\theta = \frac{3\sqrt{3}}{2} \frac{J_3}{J_2^{\frac{3}{2}}} \quad (7)$$

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This works for a conventional triaxial compression test with  $\sigma_2=\sigma_3$ ,  $b=0$  and  $\theta=0^\circ$ ; for a conventional triaxial extension test with  $\sigma_2=\sigma_1$ ,  $b=1$  and  $\theta=60^\circ$ ; and when  $\sigma_2=(\sigma_1+\sigma_3)/2$ ,  $b=0.5$  and  $\theta=30^\circ$ . Note that  $b$  is the parameter of intermediate principal stress, and is defined as  $b=(\sigma_2-\sigma_3)/(\sigma_1-\sigma_3)$ .

The principal stress  $\sigma_1$ ,  $\sigma_2$  and  $\sigma_3$  can be obtained as follows,

$$\begin{cases} \sigma_1 = \frac{I_1}{3} + 2\sqrt{\frac{J_2}{3}} \cos \theta \\ \sigma_2 = \frac{I_1}{3} + \sqrt{\frac{J_2}{3}} (\cos \theta - \sqrt{3} \sin \theta) \\ \sigma_3 = \frac{I_1}{3} + \sqrt{\frac{J_2}{3}} (\cos \theta + \sqrt{3} \sin \theta) \end{cases} \text{ or } \begin{cases} \sigma_1 = p + \frac{2}{3}q \cos \theta \\ \sigma_2 = p + \frac{2}{3}q \cos \left( \theta - \frac{2\pi}{3} \right) \\ \sigma_3 = p + \frac{2}{3}q \cos \left( \theta + \frac{2\pi}{3} \right) \end{cases} \quad (8)$$

## 2.2 Strain analysis

Under the small deformation condition, ~~the strain state at a point can be described by the strain tensor:~~

$$\underline{\underline{\varepsilon_{ij}}} = \begin{bmatrix} \varepsilon_x & \frac{1}{2}\gamma_{xy} & \frac{1}{2}\gamma_{xz} \\ \frac{1}{2}\gamma_{yx} & \varepsilon_y & \frac{1}{2}\gamma_{yz} \\ \frac{1}{2}\gamma_{zx} & \frac{1}{2}\gamma_{zy} & \varepsilon_z \end{bmatrix} \equiv \begin{bmatrix} \varepsilon_{xx} & \varepsilon_{xy} & \varepsilon_{xz} \\ \varepsilon_{yx} & \varepsilon_{yy} & \varepsilon_{yz} \\ \varepsilon_{zx} & \varepsilon_{zy} & \varepsilon_{zz} \end{bmatrix} \equiv \begin{bmatrix} \varepsilon_{11} & \varepsilon_{12} & \varepsilon_{13} \\ \varepsilon_{21} & \varepsilon_{22} & \varepsilon_{23} \\ \varepsilon_{31} & \varepsilon_{32} & \varepsilon_{33} \end{bmatrix} \quad (9)$$

~~where  $\gamma$  is the engineering shear strain.~~ the strain tensor can be divided into deviatoric and spherical tensors as follows:

$$\underline{\underline{\varepsilon_{ij}}} = \begin{bmatrix} \varepsilon_x - \varepsilon_m & \frac{1}{2}\gamma_{xy} & \frac{1}{2}\gamma_{xz} \\ \frac{1}{2}\gamma_{yx} & \varepsilon_y - \varepsilon_m & \frac{1}{2}\gamma_{yz} \\ \frac{1}{2}\gamma_{zx} & \frac{1}{2}\gamma_{zy} & \varepsilon_z - \varepsilon_m \end{bmatrix} + \begin{bmatrix} \varepsilon_m & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & \varepsilon_m & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & \varepsilon_m \end{bmatrix} = e_{ij} + \varepsilon_m \delta_{ij} \quad (9)$$

where  $\gamma$  is the engineering shear strain,  $e_{ij}$  is deviatoric strain tensor, and the mean strain  $\varepsilon_m$  is defined as  $\varepsilon_m = (\varepsilon_x + \varepsilon_y + \varepsilon_z)/3$ .

~~Similarly to the stress tensor, the invariants of the strain tensor are:~~

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$$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} I_1' = \varepsilon_x + \varepsilon_y + \varepsilon_z \\ I_2' = \varepsilon_x \varepsilon_y + \varepsilon_y \varepsilon_z + \varepsilon_z \varepsilon_x - \left(\frac{\gamma_{xy}}{2}\right)^2 - \left(\frac{\gamma_{yz}}{2}\right)^2 - \left(\frac{\gamma_{zx}}{2}\right)^2 \\ I_3' = \varepsilon_x \varepsilon_y \varepsilon_z + 2 \left(\frac{\gamma_{xy}}{2}\right) \left(\frac{\gamma_{yz}}{2}\right) \left(\frac{\gamma_{zx}}{2}\right) - \varepsilon_x \left(\frac{\gamma_{yz}}{2}\right)^2 - \varepsilon_y \left(\frac{\gamma_{zx}}{2}\right)^2 - \varepsilon_z \left(\frac{\gamma_{xy}}{2}\right)^2 \end{array} \right. \quad (13)$$

The invariants of the deviatoric strain tensor are:

$$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} J_1' = (\varepsilon_{xx} - \varepsilon_m) + (\varepsilon_{yy} - \varepsilon_m) + (\varepsilon_{zz} - \varepsilon_m) = 0 \\ J_2' = (\varepsilon_{xx} - \varepsilon_m)(\varepsilon_{yy} - \varepsilon_m) + (\varepsilon_{yy} - \varepsilon_m)(\varepsilon_{zz} - \varepsilon_m) + (\varepsilon_{zz} - \varepsilon_m)(\varepsilon_{xx} - \varepsilon_m) - \left(\frac{\gamma_{xy}}{2}\right)^2 - \left(\frac{\gamma_{yz}}{2}\right)^2 - \left(\frac{\gamma_{zx}}{2}\right)^2 \\ J_3' = (\varepsilon_{xx} - \varepsilon_m)(\varepsilon_{yy} - \varepsilon_m)(\varepsilon_{zz} - \varepsilon_m) + 2 \left(\frac{\gamma_{xy}}{2}\right) \left(\frac{\gamma_{yz}}{2}\right) \left(\frac{\gamma_{zx}}{2}\right) - \varepsilon_x \left(\frac{\gamma_{yz}}{2}\right)^2 - \varepsilon_y \left(\frac{\gamma_{zx}}{2}\right)^2 - \varepsilon_z \left(\frac{\gamma_{xy}}{2}\right)^2 \end{array} \right. \quad (14)$$

The general shear strain  $\varepsilon_d$  is defined as:

$$\varepsilon_d = \sqrt{\frac{2}{3} e_{ij} e_{ji}} \quad \text{and} \quad \varepsilon_d = \frac{2}{3} (\varepsilon_1 - \varepsilon_3) \quad \text{for a triaxial test } (\varepsilon_2 = \varepsilon_3) \quad (10)$$

For a triaxial test ( $\varepsilon_2 = \varepsilon_3$ ), the general shear strain  $\varepsilon_d$  can be reduced to:

The volumetric strain  $\varepsilon_v$  is (under the small deformation assumption):

$$\varepsilon_v = \frac{\Delta V}{V} = (1 + \varepsilon_1)(1 + \varepsilon_2)(1 + \varepsilon_3) - 1 \approx \varepsilon_1 + \varepsilon_2 + \varepsilon_3 \quad (11)$$

### 3 ErosLab tool

#### 3.1 Mixed-language programming

Fig. 1 shows the schematic overview of the mixed-language programming for ErosLab. The tool is programmed using the admixture method, with Microsoft Visual C#, MATLAB and FORTRAN. The graphical user interface is programmed in C#, the post-processing (for plotting the figure, exporting the results, generating the report and reading the help documentation) is realised using MATLAB, and the constitutive models are programmed in FORTRAN. All MATLAB files are built as dynamic library files (\*.dll) under the .NET Framework 4.0. The version of MATLAB used is MATLAB 2016b.

## 3.2 General structure of ErosLab

The general structure of ErosLab is shown in Fig. 2 and the six main features are summarised in this section.

### 3.2.1 Provision of a mechanical calculator

The tool provides a practical mechanical calculator. For a given stress tensor  $\sigma_{ij}$ , the invariants of the stress tensor ( $I_1$ ,  $I_2$  and  $I_3$ ), the invariants of the deviatoric stress tensor ( $J_1$ ,  $J_2$  and  $J_3$ ), the principal stress ( $\sigma_1$ ,  $\sigma_2$  and  $\sigma_3$ ), the mean stress  $p$ , the deviatoric stress tensor  $s_{ij}$ , the deviatoric stress  $q$ , the lode angle  $\theta$ , and the directions of principal stresses ( $l$ ,  $m$  and  $n$ ) can be obtained. Furthermore, the transformation of coordinates can also be achieved. For a given strain tensor, the invariants of the strain tensor ( $I'_1$ ,  $I'_2$  and  $I'_3$ ), the invariants of the deviatoric strain tensor ( $J'_1$ ,  $J'_2$  and  $J'_3$ ), the principal strain ( $\varepsilon_1$ ,  $\varepsilon_2$  and  $\varepsilon_3$ ), the mean strain  $\varepsilon_m$ , the deviatoric stress tensor  $e_{ij}$ , and the deviatoric strain  $\varepsilon_d$ , can be similarly obtained. The stress and strain analysis can be conducted rapidly via the mechanical calculator provided by ErosLab, which is useful for study and research purposes.

### 3.2.2 Provision of various types of soil tests

A range of common laboratory tests are provided in this tool, including the oedometer test, the triaxial test, the simple shear test, the biaxial test, true triaxial test, and the cylindrical hollow torsional shear test. Compared to PLAXIS, the proposed tool offers a greater variety of types of laboratory tests. The laboratory tests available in ErosLab are briefly introduced below.

In the tool, the oedometer test is simulated as a one-dimensional compression test, where the lateral deformation is constrained to zero and only vertical deformation is allowed. The lateral stress necessarily keeps changing during the loading process because of the restriction of lateral deformation. Therefore, the test can be conveniently controlled by pure strain loading or strain-and-stress mixed loading. Note that the proposed ErosLab has difficulty in conducting the conventional 24h oedometer test because of lacking implementation of soil-water coupling analysis, which will be available in further development for finite element analysis tool.

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417 For the conventional consolidated drained triaxial compression test, the soil sample is first  
418 consolidated to a given confining pressure; then, the axial load is increased up to the failure of the  
419 sample while keeping the confining pressure constant. The slope of this loading path in the  $p'$ - $q$  plane  
420 is 3. For the conventional consolidated undrained triaxial compression test, the increment of total  
421 confining stress is kept constant; thus, the slope of the loading path on the  $p$ - $q$  plane remains 3. Under  
422 the conventional confining pressure, both the soil particle and the water are considered  
423 incompressible, creating the possibility of fulfilling the undrained condition by keeping the  
424 volumetric strain constant. In this way, whether compression or extension occurs depends on the  
425 increasing or decreasing of the axial strain respectively. In this program, all undrained simulations  
426 (except for the creep simulation using the ANICREEP model) are performed by keeping the  
427 volumetric strain constant.  
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439 In the simple shear test, the shear strain ( $\gamma$ ) is defined as the ratio of the horizontal displacement  
440 to the sample height. Under the loading of vertical shear strain, the shear stress, vertical stress and  
441 vertical displacement can be obtained using a simple shear test. Two options exist for conducting this  
442 simple shear test: (1) keeping a constant vertical load, which is the drained simple shear test, and (2)  
443 keeping the volume of the sample constant, which can be regarded as the undrained simple shear test.  
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450 The aim of the biaxial test is to study the stress-strain-strength behaviours of soil in a plane-  
451 strain condition. For this test, the displacement in the perpendicular to the plane is constrained to  
452 zero and the lateral of the sample is constrained by applying a horizontal confining pressure ( $\sigma_h$ ).  
453 Then, the sample is loaded by applying a vertical load (either by displacement  $\varepsilon_v$  or stress  $\sigma_v$ ).  
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459 The purpose of the true triaxial apparatus is to study the stress-strain-strength behaviours of soil  
460 in a 3D condition. Since all 3D stresses can be controlled respectively, the true triaxial test can make  
461 many complicated stress paths a reality. A common stress path is to carry out a series of drained  
462 shear tests with different constant intermediate principal stress factors  $b$  ( $b=(\sigma_2-\sigma_3)/(\sigma_1-\sigma_3)$ ), or lode  
463 angle ( $\theta$ ), while keeping the mean stress constant.  $p'$  and  $b$ , as input values are known; that is, the  
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sample is loaded to failure by increasing the major principal stress along with the intermediate and minor principal stress calculated according to Eq.(12).

$$\begin{cases} p' = \frac{\sigma'_1 + \sigma'_2 + \sigma'_3}{3} \\ b = \frac{\sigma'_2 - \sigma'_3}{\sigma'_1 - \sigma'_3} \end{cases} \Rightarrow \begin{cases} \sigma'_2 = \frac{3(1-b)p' + (2b-1)\sigma'_1}{2-b} \\ \sigma'_3 = \frac{3p' - (1+b)\sigma'_1}{2-b} \end{cases} \Rightarrow \begin{cases} d\sigma'_2 = \frac{(2b-1)}{2-b} d\sigma'_1 \\ d\sigma'_3 = \frac{-(1+b)}{2-b} d\sigma'_1 \end{cases} \quad (12)$$

The hollow cylinder torsional shear test is an effective means of studying the influence of principal stress rotation on the stress-strain relationship and the anisotropy of soil. When the principal stress does not rotate, the apparatus can also be used to conduct the true triaxial test in different stress paths. In the program, the sample is first isotropically compressed to a confining pressure, then kept constant; loading is applied by changing the values of  $q$ ,  $\alpha$  and  $b$ , as shown in Eq.(13).

$$\begin{cases} \sigma_1 = p + \frac{2-b}{3\sqrt{b^2-b+1}}q \\ \sigma_2 = p + \frac{2b-1}{3\sqrt{b^2-b+1}}q \\ \sigma_3 = p - \frac{b+1}{3\sqrt{b^2-b+1}}q \end{cases} + \begin{cases} \sigma_z = \frac{\sigma_1 + \sigma_3}{2} + \frac{\sigma_1 - \sigma_3}{2} \cos(2\alpha) \\ \sigma_r = \sigma'_2 \\ \sigma_\theta = \frac{\sigma_1 + \sigma_3}{2} - \frac{\sigma_1 - \sigma_3}{2} \cos(2\alpha) \\ \tau_{z\theta} = \frac{\sigma_1 - \sigma_3}{2} \sin(2\alpha) \end{cases} \Rightarrow \begin{cases} \sigma_z = p' + \frac{1-2b}{6\sqrt{b^2-b+1}}q + \frac{1}{2\sqrt{b^2-b+1}}q \cos(2\alpha) \\ \sigma_r = p' + \frac{2b-1}{3\sqrt{b^2-b+1}}q \\ \sigma_\theta = p' + \frac{1-2b}{6\sqrt{b^2-b+1}}q - \frac{1}{2\sqrt{b^2-b+1}}q \cos(2\alpha) \\ \tau_{z\theta} = \frac{1}{2\sqrt{b^2-b+1}}q \sin(2\alpha) \end{cases} \quad (13)$$

### 3.2.3 Provision of a variety of soil models and supporting of the extension

In ErosLab, a total of six soil constitutive models (Perfect EP, NLMC, MCC, SIMSAND, ASCM and ANICREEP) are provided, which covers most commonly adopted mechanical soil models. Other advanced soil models will be available in the next version of ErosLab. There follows short descriptions of the presented soil models.

The perfect elastoplastic model (Perfect EP) is a series of perfect elastoplastic models involving different yield criteria (the Von-Mises, Tresca, Mohr-Coulomb, SMP and  $g(\theta)$  of Sheng). The Nonlinear Mohr-Coulomb model (NLMC) was developed against the framework of Mohr-Coulomb, by implementing nonlinear elasticity, nonlinear plastic hardening, and a simplified 3D strength

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535 criterion (Jin et al., 2016a)[30]. The model is similar to the shearing element of the Hardening Soil  
536 model (HS). The Modified Cam-Clay model (MCC) was developed by researchers at the University  
537 of Cambridge, based on the mechanical behaviour of remoulded clay (Roscoe & Burland[31]) and is  
538 widely used for geotechnical analysis. The critical-state-based SIMple SAND model (SIMSAND)  
539 was developed on the basis of the NLMC by implementing the critical state concept and the capping  
540 mechanism (Jin et al., 2016a, 2016b) [30, 32]. The Anisotropic Structured Clay Model (ASCM) was  
541 developed with the MCC as its foundation and takes into account the behaviour of intact clays  
542 because of its natural structure (Yang et al.[33]). The model can be used to predict the mechanical  
543 behaviour of soft structured clay, stiff clay and artificially reinforced clay. The ANIsotropic CREEP  
544 model (ANICREEP), for natural soft clays, was also based on the MCC, as well as the overstress  
545 theory and the different time-dependent behaviours of such clays (Yin et al. [5, 34, 35]). The  
546 ANICREEP can be applied to a range of natural soft clays, stiff clays and artificial soils.

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559 To improve the extensibility of the proposed tool, the user-defined material (UMAT) is  
560 supported, which allows the user to implement other soil models in ErosLab Fig. 3 shows an  
561 interface module of UMAT written in the FORTRAN language. A \*.dll file can be compiled by  
562 adopting the Intel FORTRAN 32 bit as the compiler tool. Thereafter, the \*.dll file should be renamed  
563 “Umat.dll” and placed into the same directory as the main program of ErosLab. Then, the user-  
564 defined material can be found in the tool. Note that the name of the subroutine must be “Umat”  
565 (altering this will lead to errors). IDtask is the task number. IDtask=1 is the initialisation of the state  
566 variables; IDtask=2 calculates the elastic matrix; and IDtask=3 updates the stress and state variables.  
567 The cm is a vector with the material parameters; deps is the strain increment; sig is the stress; hsv is  
568 the state variables; and CC is the elastic matrix tensor. Other parameters and state variables can be  
569 defined by the user. “!DEC\$ ATTRIBUTES DLLEXPORT, DECORATE, ALIAS: ‘Umat’ :: Umat”  
570 is the statement of the subroutine name.

### 581 582 583 *3.2.4 Provision of multiple ways of loading control*

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585 Two conventional loading methods are provided: (a) monotonic loading and (b) cyclic loading.  
586 For the former, the loading of stress control and strain control for all laboratory tests is available. To  
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594 efficiently conduct the simulation, one-stage and multi-stage loading can be alternatively chosen by  
595 the user; for example, the arbitrary stress or strain path can be simulated for the triaxial test. For  
596 cyclic loading, the cyclic stress control and strain control are allowed. Note that the function takes  
597 effect only when the selected constitutive model is able to reproduce the cyclic behaviours of soil.  
598 Diversified loading control provides greater possibilities for users to deeply and comprehensively  
599 understand the constitutive model.  
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### 607 3.2.5 Provision of a comprehensive and efficient debugging

608 It is important to debug a newly developed constitutive model before applying it to solve  
609 engineering problems. ErosLab offers a comprehensive and efficient debugging for four kinds of  
610 laboratory tests (the oedometer tests, the triaxial test, the simple shear test and the true triaxial test).  
611 When debugging is invoked, potential issues with a soil model can be discovered by using it to  
612 successively simulate the four types of test along different stress paths. This function can give a new  
613 model greater robustness in the numerical calculation. Note that the debugging is in an elementary  
614 stage with complex loading combinations which reflects somehow the in-situ conditions. Therefore,  
615 even though no simulation of in-situ problems can be directly conducted, the current debugging  
616 scheme for a newly developed model should be effective for the practical purpose. and thus f  
617 Further possible problems can be investigated by implementing the model in the numerical software.  
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### 629 3.2.6 Provision of visualisation with graphical displays

630 The graphic user interface (GUI) of the developed software is composed of seven interface  
631 objects: Main Form, Test-type Form, Constitutive Model Form, Drainage Condition Form, Loading  
632 Condition Form, Data Management Form and Command Form. The Main Form interacts with the  
633 user and connects to the other forms, the functionalities of which can be recognised from their names.  
634 The Test-type Form defines the type of laboratory tests provided and the initial stress state. The  
635 Constitutive Model Form allows the user to select the constitutive model and set the parameters. The  
636 Drainage Condition Form provides a selection of drainage conditions for the chosen laboratory test.  
637 The Loading Condition Form offers a variety of loading controls for different tests. The Data  
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653 Management Form enables the importing of experiments, exporting of the simulated data and  
654 generating reports. The Command Form is used to give the commands to run, stop and exit the  
655 program.  
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## 661 **4 Graphical user interface and usage instructions**

### 662 **4.1 Graphical user interface**

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664 Fig. 4 shows ErosLab's main interface, which is divided into six zones: *Test type*, *Constitutive*  
665 *model*, *Drainage condition*, *Loading condition*, *Data management* and *Command*. For the *Test type*  
666 and *Constitutive model*, a graphic illustration showing the user's choice is provided. The forms for  
667 stress and strain and the debug are presented separately.  
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674 Fig. 5 shows the GUI window for selecting the test and setting the initial stress. All the tests  
675 provided are important for highlighting the behaviours of a constitutive model. After selection, the  
676 initial stress corresponding to the general stress state should be given. Note that the initial suction  
677 only works for the constitutive model of unsaturated soils; this will be addressed in the next version.  
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683 To allow the user greater choice, a variety of constitutive models accounting for different  
684 mechanical behaviours are collected and implemented into the ErosLab tool. Fig. 6 (a) shows the  
685 GUI window for selecting the soil model. **Note that some constitutive models are temporarily not**  
686 **available in current platform, which are marked as grey items**. More useful constitutive models will  
687 be included in the next version of ErosLab. After selecting the soil model, the corresponding  
688 parameters should be given, as shown in Fig. 6 (b), which takes the SIMSAND as an example. Fig. 7,  
689 meanwhile, shows the GUI window of parameter input for UMAT. **In current version, any**  
690 **constitutive model can be used only if the name of subroutine is signed as UMAT**. A total of ~~20~~ 30  
691 parameters are defined for the UMAT, which is enough for most existing constitutive models and  
692 even for newly developed examples. **It should be pointed out that the determination of model**  
693 **parameters is an important work, which arises the challenge with increasing the number of**  
694 **parameters, especially for advanced soil models. To author's knowledge, the newly developed**  
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712 optimization-based parameter identification [30, 36-41] would be useful and can be incorporated into  
713 the proposed tool in next version.  
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716 To show the user how to select an appropriate constitutive model for his test, a user's manual  
717 explaining the capabilities and applicability of each constitutive model is provided, illustrated with  
718 tutorial examples, which can be downloaded from the website:  
719 <http://www.geoinvention.com/en/newsshow.asp?id=244&big=14>.  
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726 Fig. 8 displays the GUI window of monotonic loading for the triaxial test. For said test, a  
727 consolidation stage prior to the shearing can be selected by giving a confining stress. Otherwise, the  
728 values of said stress are kept the same as those of the initial stress. The displayed  $\sigma_a$  is the axial  
729 confining stress, and  $\sigma_r$  is the radial confining stress.  $\sigma_r = \sigma_a$  refers to the isotropic consolidation and  
730  $\sigma_r \neq \sigma_a$  refers to the anisotropic consolidation. The loading time only works for the models that  
731 account for the time-dependent behaviours of soil (ANICREEP in this version). Two loading  
732 methods of shearing are provided. Apart from the conventional triaxial tests, the creep and relaxation  
733 triaxial tests can be easily and adequately simulated by the ErosLab tool, which is superior to other  
734 tools for modelling soil tests. Moreover, the simulation of any stress or strain path can be achieved  
735 by multi-stage loading, the GUI window for which is shown in Fig. 9. In total, six stages are allowed,  
736 and more may be added in the future. The functionality of multi-stage loading control is powerful, a  
737 quality that cannot be found in other similar tools. Because of the length of this paper, the GUI  
738 windows of other tests are not presented here, but can be found in the ErosLab tool.  
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752 In addition to the abovementioned GUI windows, those for stress and strain analysis and for  
753 debugging remain to be illustrated. Fig. 10 exhibits the GUI window for the stress and strain analysis;  
754 most stress- or strain-related variables can be obtained via this window. Fig. 11 displays the GUI  
755 window for debugging, which specifies the setups of loading for different tests. For the triaxial test in  
756 debugging, three tests with loading, unloading and reloading under different confining pressures will  
757 be simulated and presented. Similarly, the oedometer and simple shear tests are the same situations  
758 compared to the triaxial test. For the true triaxial test, a yield surface in  $\pi$  plane for the selected  
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771 constitutive model can be obtained from the simulations with different values of  $b$  from 0 to 1 in a  
772 step size of 0.1.  
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## 775 776 **4.2 Usage instructions** 777

778 The basic procedure for using the ErosLab tool to simulate a laboratory test can be divided into  
779 six steps:  
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782 *Step 1: Select the test type and set the initial stress.*  
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784 *Step 2: Select the soil model and assign the model parameters.*  
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786 *Step 3: Select the drainage condition.*  
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788 *Step 4: Set the loading condition.*  
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790 *Step 5: Run the tool.*  
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792 *Step 6: Export the simulated results.*  
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794 *Step 7: Generate the report.*  
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## 798 **5 Case studies** 799

800 In this section, the results of three case studies are described that were conducted to showcase  
801 the performance of ErosLab. To cover most kinds of soils, the first case is the use of SIMSAND to  
802 simulate the sand behaviour (e.g., dilatancy, contractiveness, static and cyclic liquefactions); the  
803 second case is the use of ASCM to model the behaviour of natural clays (e.g., structure, anisotropy  
804 and cyclic densification); the last case is the use of ANICREEP to model the time-dependent  
805 behaviour of soft clays.  
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### 812 **5.1 Case 1: Modelling of sand behaviours by SIMSAND** 813

814 The tests selected for this case were triaxial tests performed on Hostun sand by Liu et al. [42]  
815 and Li et al. [43]. All the tests were isotropically consolidated to the corresponding consolidation  
816 pressure before shearing. Fig. 12 shows the adopted parameters of SIMSAND for simulating the  
817 behaviour of Hostun sand, where the line represents the simulations and the red circle points  
818 represent the experimental results. All parameters refer to the results of Jin et al. [30, 44].  
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830 First, three drained triaxial tests with different confining pressures and initial void ratios on  
831 Hostun sand were simulated using the SIMSAND model via the proposed tool. Then, four undrained  
832 triaxial tests with different confining pressures and initial void ratios on said sand were also  
833 simulated in a similar way. Fig. 13 (a) shows the comparisons between the simulations and  
834 experiments for the drained tests, while Fig. 13 (b) does the same for the undrained tests. It can be  
835 seen that the proposed tool offers many ways of displaying simulated results ( $\varepsilon_a - q$ ,  $p' - q$ , time-  $\varepsilon_a$ ,  $e -$   
836  $\varepsilon_a$ ,  $e - p'$ , and time- $p'$ ,  $q$ ), which provides a comprehensive method of understanding a constitutive  
837 model. Moreover, all the comparisons, with good agreement, demonstrate that the sand behaviours  
838 (such as contraction, dilation, the critical state and interlocking effect) can be adequately reproduced  
839 via SIMSAND in ErosLab.  
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850 To show ErosLab's ability on the loading control, the cyclic test was simulated using  
851 SIMSAND for sand. The same parameters, corresponding to Hostun sand, were used. In this case, a  
852 two-way cyclic test with a value of cyclic stress 20 kPa was selected and simulated. Because  
853 experiments were not available, only the simulated results are presented. Fig. 14 (a) and (b) show the  
854 simulations of drained and undrained cyclic triaxial tests using SIMSAND, respectively, while Fig.  
855 14 (c) shows the simulations of the undrained cyclic simple shear test using the same model. It may  
856 be observed that the modelling of cyclic tests can be adequately achieved using the ErosLab tool.  
857 Furthermore, the results also indicate that the SIMSAND model has an outstanding ability to  
858 reproduce the cyclic behaviours of sand (for example, its densification in drained conditions and  
859 mobilisation in undrained conditions).  
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## 870 **5.2 Case 2: Modelling of clay behaviours using ASCM**

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872 In this case, four undrained triaxial tests performed on Shanghai clay were simulated via the  
873 ErosLab tool using the ASCM model. According to Huang *et al.* [45], undisturbed samples of  
874 Shanghai clay were taken at depths of 10 m, with in-situ horizontal consolidation stress  $\sigma'_{hc} = 41$   
875 kPa and vertical consolidation stress  $\sigma'_{vc} = 68.6$  kPa. The initial mean effective stress  $p'_c$  was  
876 determined as 50.3 kPa. The parameters of ASCM employed for Shanghai clay are shown in Fig. 15,  
877 these were collected from results garnered by Yang *et al.* [33] and Ye *et al.* [46].  
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889 First, two isotropically-consolidated undrained compression tests (CIUC) were simulated. The  
890 simulations were compared to the experiments, as shown in Fig. 16 (a). Similarly, another two  
891 anisotropically consolidated undrained compression tests (CAUC) were then simulated. The  
892 comparisons between the simulations and experiments are shown in Fig. 16 (b). Furthermore, the  
893 cyclic behaviours can also be captured by using ASCM via ErosLab. Fig. 17 (a) and (b) display the  
894 simulations of drained and undrained cyclic tests by ASCM, respectively.  
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901 The results denote that the provided ASCM model can reproduce the anisotropy and  
902 destructuration behaviours for normal and over-consolidated natural clays undergoing monotonic and  
903 cyclic loadings.  
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### 906 **5.3 Case 3: Modelling of time effects of clay behaviours by ANICREEP**

907 A series of undrained triaxial tests in both compression and extension conditions at three  
908 different strain rates (0.2 %/h, 2 %/h and 20 %/h) on  $K_0$ -consolidated Wenzhou clay were selected  
909 and simulated using the ANICREEP model in the ErosLab tool. The Wenzhou clay deposit is a  
910 marine clay characterised as slightly organic and highly plastic. Intensive laboratory tests were  
911 conducted out along various stress paths, focusing on the rate-dependent mechanical properties of  
912 Wenzhou clay (Yin et al. [35]). The parameters of ANICREEP for Wenzhou clay were obtained  
913 from the study by Yin et al. [47]. Fig. 18 shows the employed parameters of ANICREEP that  
914 correspond to Wenzhou clay in ErosLab.  
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923 Three sets of undrained triaxial tests in compression and extension under vertical effective  
924 stress ( $\sigma'_{v0} = 150$  kPa) at strain-rates of 0.2 %/h, 2 %/h and 20 %/h were simulated. Fig. 19 (a) and (b)  
925 show the comparisons between the simulated and measured results of three different strain-rates,  
926 respectively. Good agreement between the experimental results and simulations was generally  
927 achieved using the ANICREEP model. The results demonstrate that the behaviours of strain rate  
928 dependency, combined with anisotropy and the destructuration of natural soft clays, can be  
929 adequately captured by the ANICREEP model.  
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## 6 Conclusions

In this paper, the development of ErosLab, a modelling tool for soil tests, was described. ErosLab also offers support for both research and teaching as regards the practice of constitutive models in the fields of geomechanics and geotechnics. Simple and clear interfaces render the tool easily used by engineers; for example, the friendly graphical interface can help users view and analyse results. Various constitutive models can be used with an open interface for the user-defined model. The performance of different models can be compared and their results discussed. Three selected case studies to simulate the behaviours of sand and clays were carried out, the results proving that ErosLab is a useful tool in engineering practice.

Furthermore, this study can be used for the teaching purpose to present the basic constitutive modelling of soil behaviours for postgraduate students who major on civil engineering, water conservancy, transportation, railway and engineering geology. It also can be used for the purpose of the relevant professional scientific research.

In future work, the tool can be extended by using other advanced constitutive models for more types of tests. With the growing ubiquity of the Internet, a discussion window will be added for easy online communication and exchange, which will foster the growth of an ErosLab community.

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[47] Yin Z-Y, Jin Y-F, Shen S-L, Huang H-W. An efficient optimization method for identifying parameters of soft structured clay by an enhanced genetic algorithm and elastic–viscoplastic model. *Acta Geotech* 2016:1-19.

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## Figure captions

Fig. 1 Schematic overview of the mixed-language programming for ErosLab

Fig. 2 General structure of ErosLab

Fig. 3 Interface module of UMAT written in FORTRAN language

Fig. 4 Main GUI window of ErosLab

Fig. 5 GUI window for the list test types and initial stress state

Fig. 6 (a) GUI window for the list of constitutive models; (b) GUI window for parameter input of SIMSAND

~~Fig. 7 GUI window for parameter input of SIMSAND~~

Fig. 7 GUI window for parameter input of UMAT

Fig. 8 GUI window of monotonic loading for triaxial test

Fig. 9 GUI window for multi-stage loading

Fig. 10 GUI window for stress and strain analysis

Fig. 11 GUI window for debugging

Fig. 12 Parameters of SIMSAND for Hostun sand

Fig. 13 Comparisons between simulations and experiments for Hostun sand: (a) drained triaxial test; (b) undrained triaxial tests

~~Fig. 14 Comparisons between simulations and experiments of undrained triaxial tests on Hostun sand~~

Fig. 14 Simulations of cyclic test using SIMSAND: (a) drained cyclic triaxial test; (b) undrained cyclic triaxial test; (c) undrained cyclic simple shear test

~~Fig. 16 Simulations of undrained cyclic triaxial test using SIMSAND~~

~~Fig. 17 Simulations of undrained cyclic simple shear test using SIMSAND~~

Fig. 15 Parameters of ASCM for Shanghai clay

Fig. 16 Comparisons between simulations and experiments for Shanghai clay using ASCM: (a) CIUC test; (b) CAUC test

~~Fig. 20 Comparisons between simulations and experiments of the CAUC test on Shanghai clay~~

Fig. 17 Simulations of cyclic tests using ASCM: (a) drained cyclic triaxial test; (b) undrained cyclic triaxial test

~~Fig. 22 Simulations of undrained cyclic triaxial test using ASCM~~

Fig. 18 Parameters of ANICREEP for Wenzhou clay

Fig. 19 Comparisons between simulated and experimental results of triaxial tests at a vertical stress of 150 kPa: (a) undrained compression CRS; (b) undrained extension CRS tests

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Fig. 25 Comparisons between simulated and experimental results of undrained triaxial extension-CRS tests at a vertical stress of 150 kPa



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1420 **Figure 1**  
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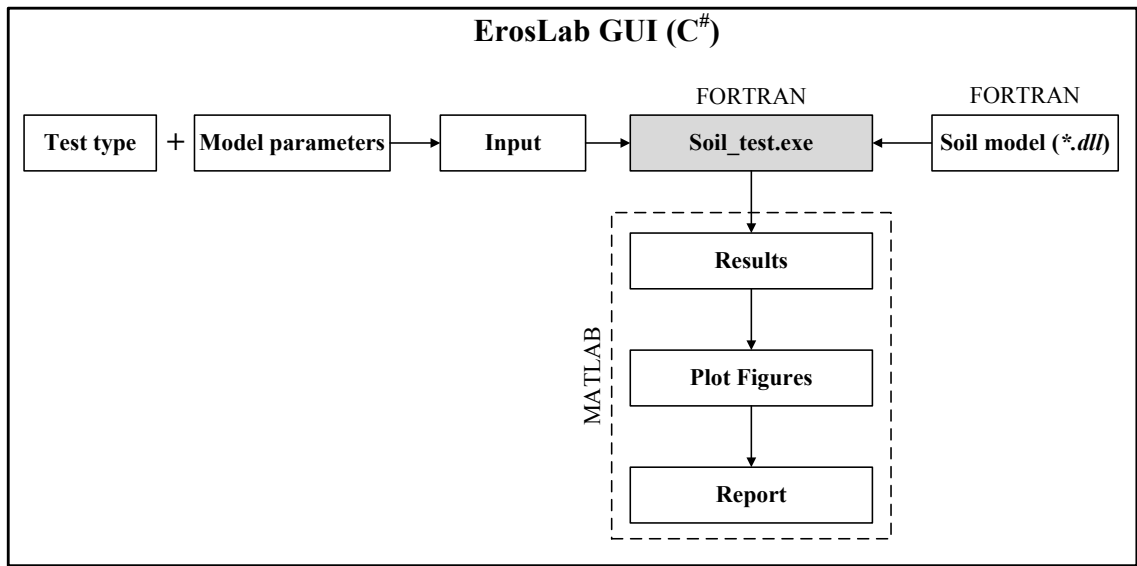


Figure 2

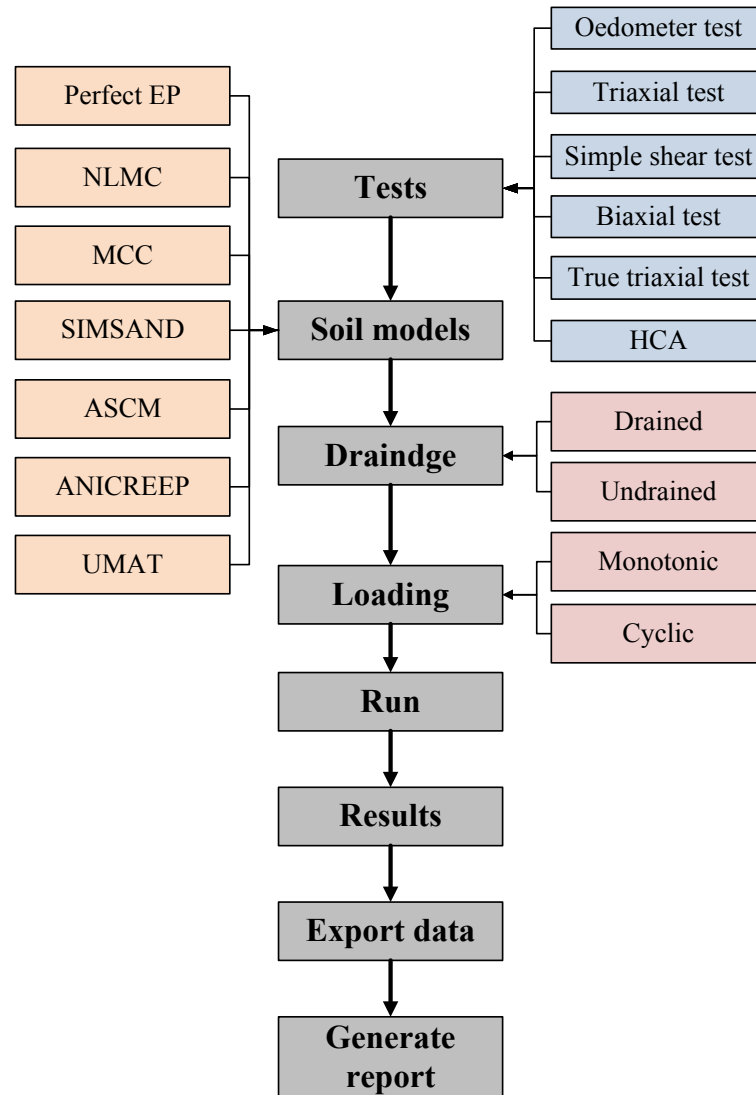


Figure 3

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1541 Subroutine Umat (IDtask,cm,deps,sig,hsv,CC,dTime)
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1543 !DEC$ ATTRIBUTES DLLEXPORT, DECORATE, ALIAS:"Umat" :: Umat
1544
1545 Implicit Double Precision (A-H, O-Z)
1546 Double Precision cm(50),hsv(50),deps(6),deps0(6),epsp(6)
1547 Double Precision Sig(6),CC(6,6),Adding the defitions...
1548 Integer etype, IDtask
1549 Logical :: converged ! convergence for iteration
1550
1551 ! parameters definition
1552 xNu = cm(1) ! Poisson's ratio
1553 dkappa = cm(2) ! Swelling index
1554 dlambda = cm(3) ! Compression index
1555 .....Please add parameters the user needs
1556
1557 if (IDtask.eq. 1) then
1558   hsv = 0.
1559   hsv(1)=e0 ! size of yield surface
1560   hsv(2)=0. ! PORE pressure
1561   hsv(3)=pm0 ! void ratio
1562   .....Please add state variables the user needs
1563 end if
1564
1565 if (IDtask.eq. 2) then
1566   call MATRIXDE (Sig,cm,hsv,CC) !Elastic stiffness matrix
1567 end if
1568
1569 if (IDtask.eq. 3) then
1570   .....Please update stress and state variables
1571 end if
1572
1573 Return
1574
1575 end Subroutine
```

Figure 4

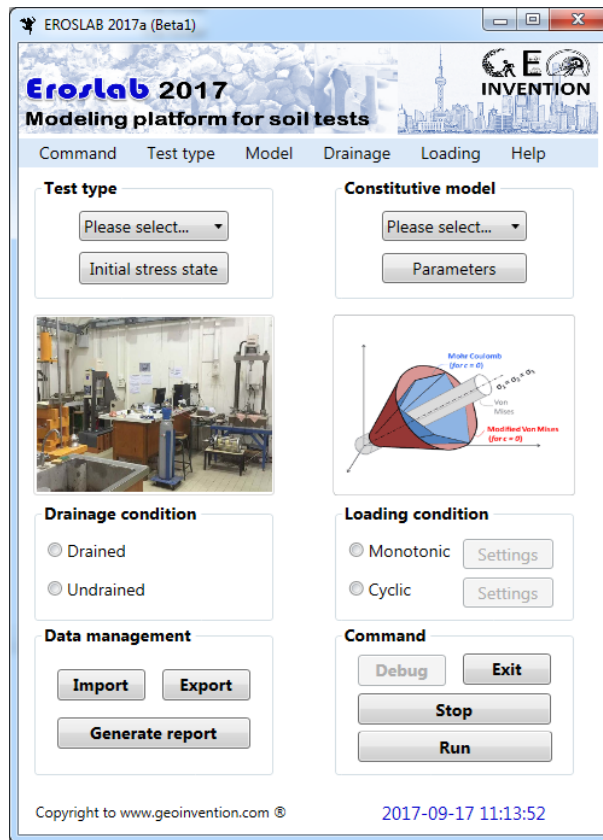


Figure 5

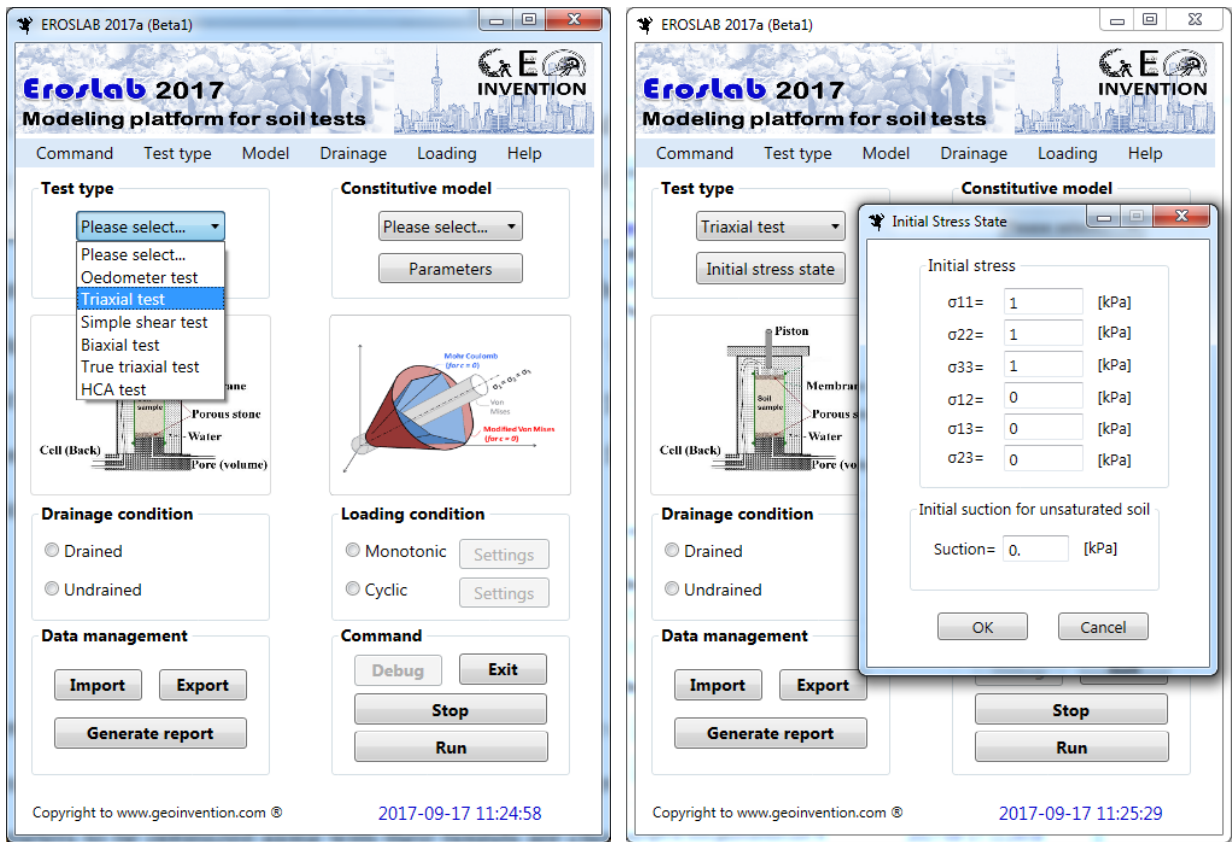
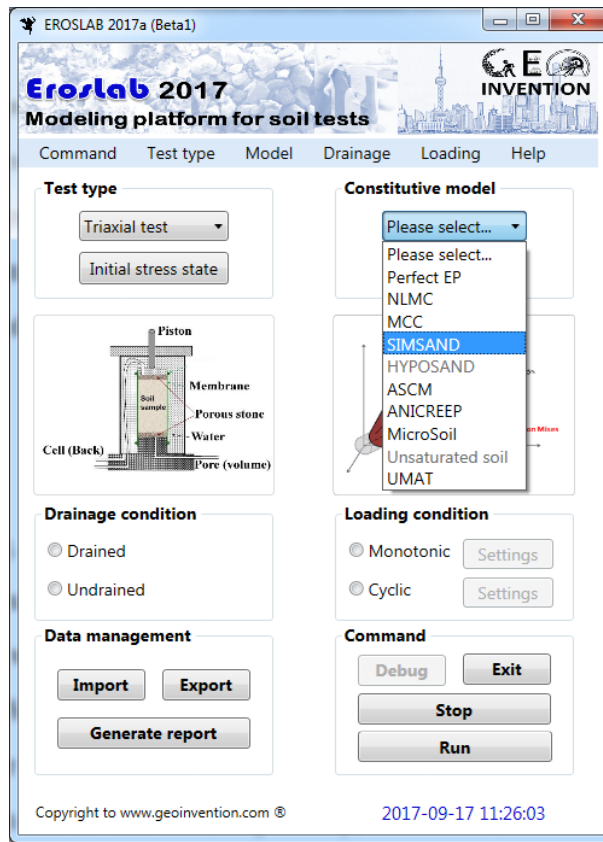
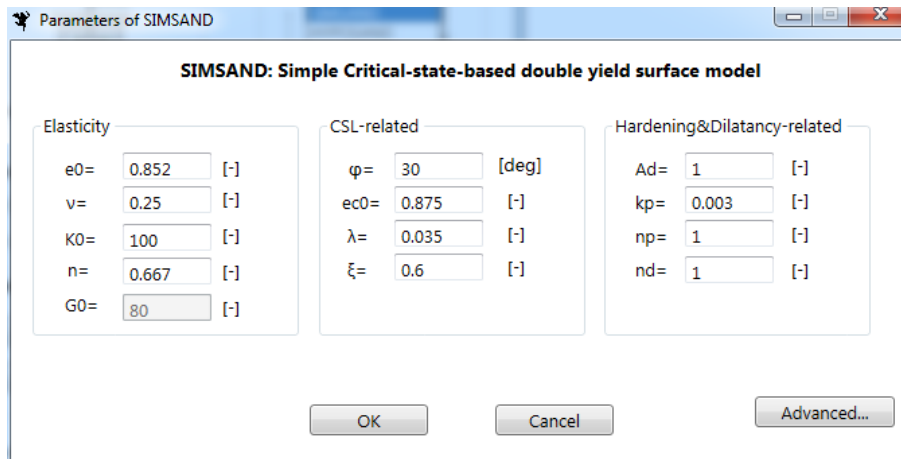


Figure 6



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(b)

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**Figure 7**

Parameters of UMAT

**UMAT: User defined material**

Parameters

Para-1=	0.25	Para-11=	0	Para-21=	0
Para-2=	0.01	Para-12=	0	Para-22=	0
Para-3=	0.1	Para-13=	0	Para-23=	0
Para-4=	1.2	Para-14=	0	Para-24=	0
Para-5=	1.2	Para-15=	0	Para-25=	0
Para-6=	100	Para-16=	0	Para-26=	0
Para-7=	1	Para-17=	0	Para-27=	0
Para-8=	0	Para-18=	0	Para-28=	0
Para-9=	0	Para-19=	0	Para-29=	0
Para-10=	0	Para-20=	0	Para-30=	0

OK Cancel

Figure 8

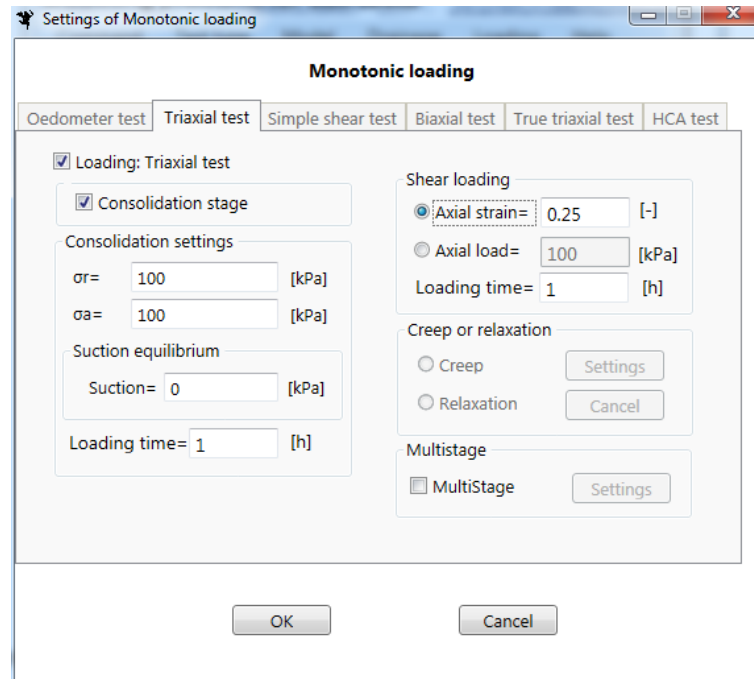




Figure 9

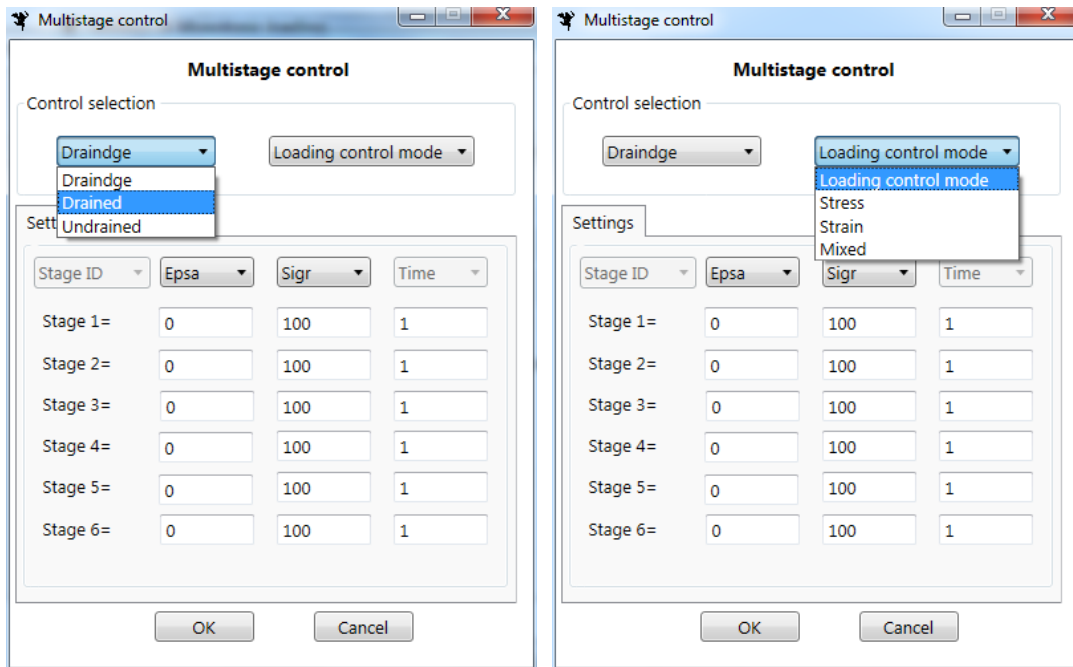


Figure 10

Calculator

### Stress & Strain analysis

**Stress**

$\sigma_{11}$ = -10 [kPa]  
 $\sigma_{22}$ = 0 [kPa]  
 $\sigma_{33}$ = 8 [kPa]  
 $\sigma_{12}$ = 9 [kPa]  
 $\sigma_{13}$ = 5 [kPa]  
 $\sigma_{23}$ = 0 [kPa]

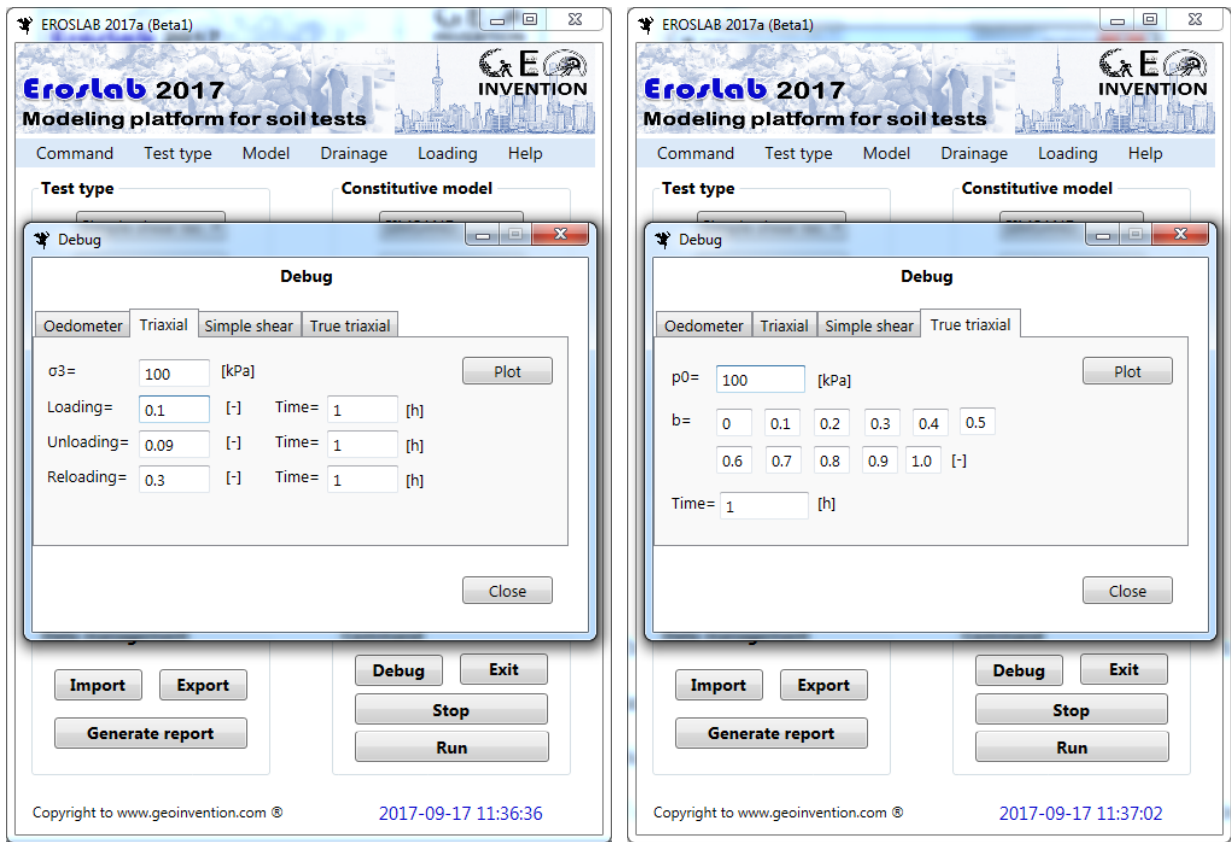
**Strain**

$\epsilon_{11}$ = 0.1 [-]  
 $\epsilon_{22}$ = 0.1 [-]  
 $\epsilon_{33}$ = 0.1 [-]  
 $\epsilon_{12}$ = 0 [-]  
 $\epsilon_{13}$ = 0 [-]  
 $\epsilon_{23}$ = 0 [-]

Deviatoric strain		Transformation of coordinates			
Principal stress	Deviatoric stress	Principal strain			
$I_1$ = -2 [kPa]	$\sigma_1$ = 10.076696830622 [kPa]	$l$ =	0.3628	0.3621	-0.858
$I_2$ = -186 [kPa]	$\sigma_2$ = 4.00000000000000 [kPa]	$m$ =	0.3240	0.8148	0.4806
$I_3$ = -648 [kPa]	$\sigma_3$ = -16.076696830622 [kPa]	$n$ =	0.8736	-0.452	0.1783
$p$ = -0.666666666666666 [kPa]					

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Figure 11



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**Figure 12**

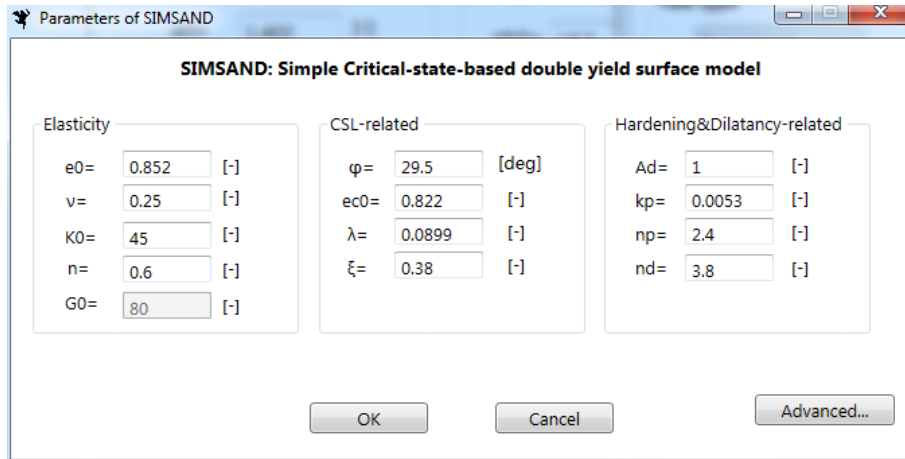
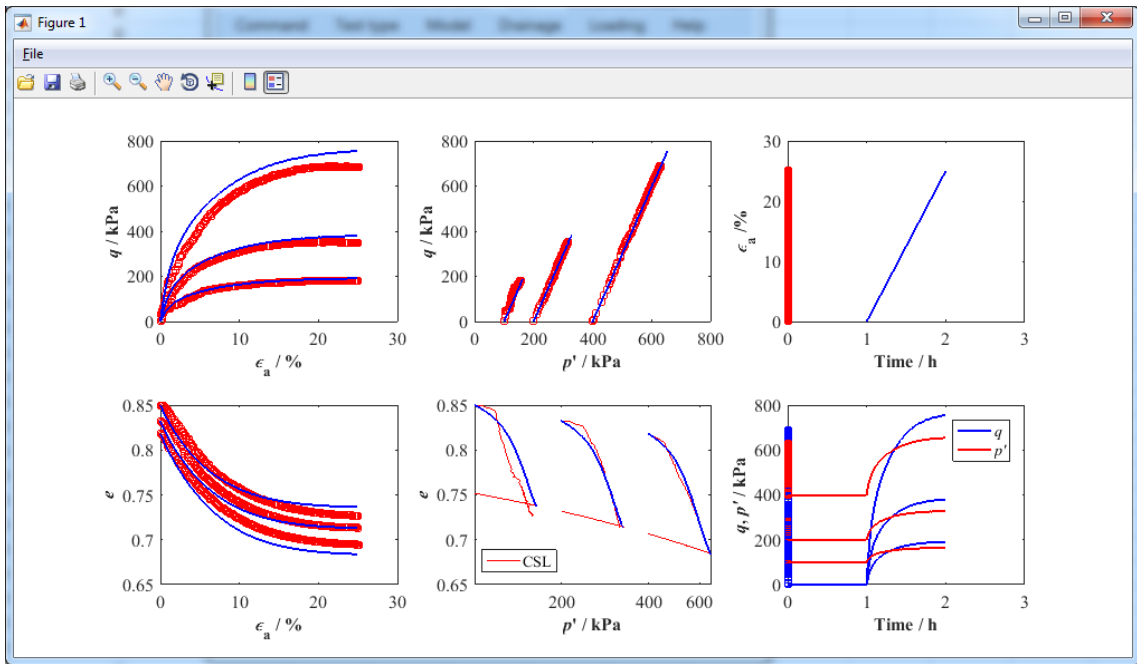
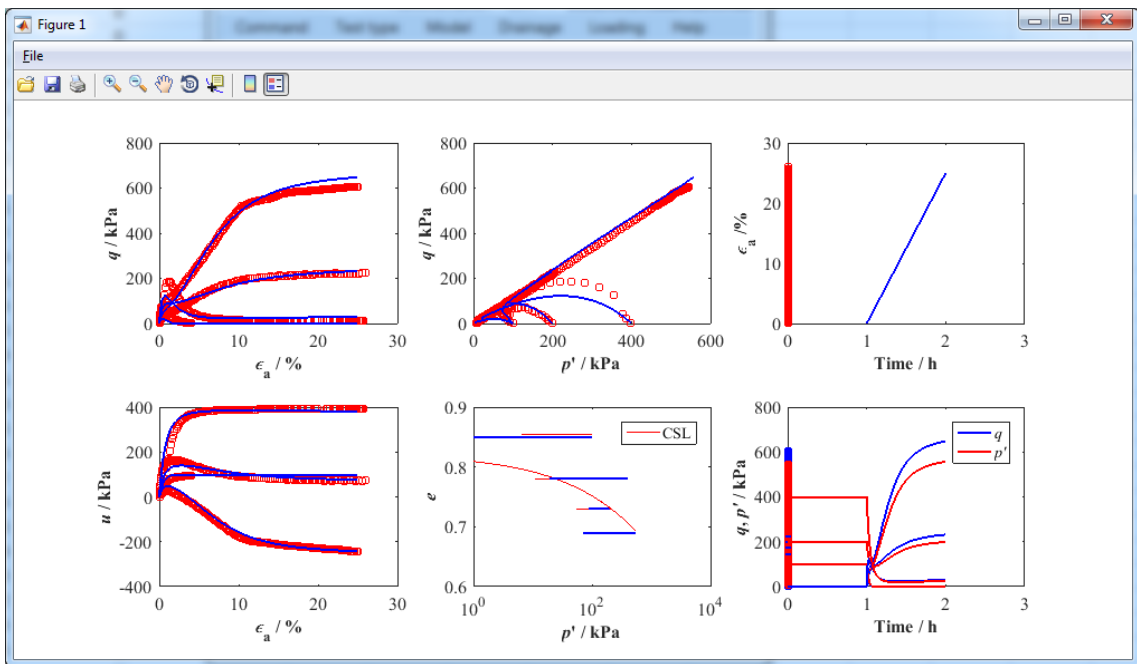


Figure 13



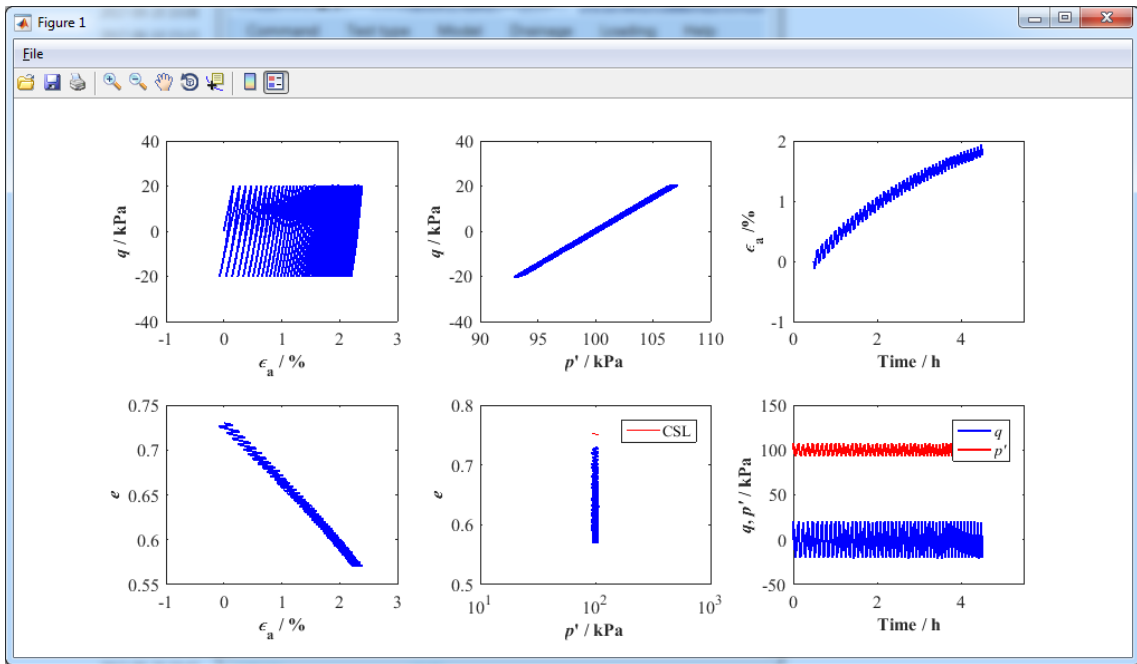
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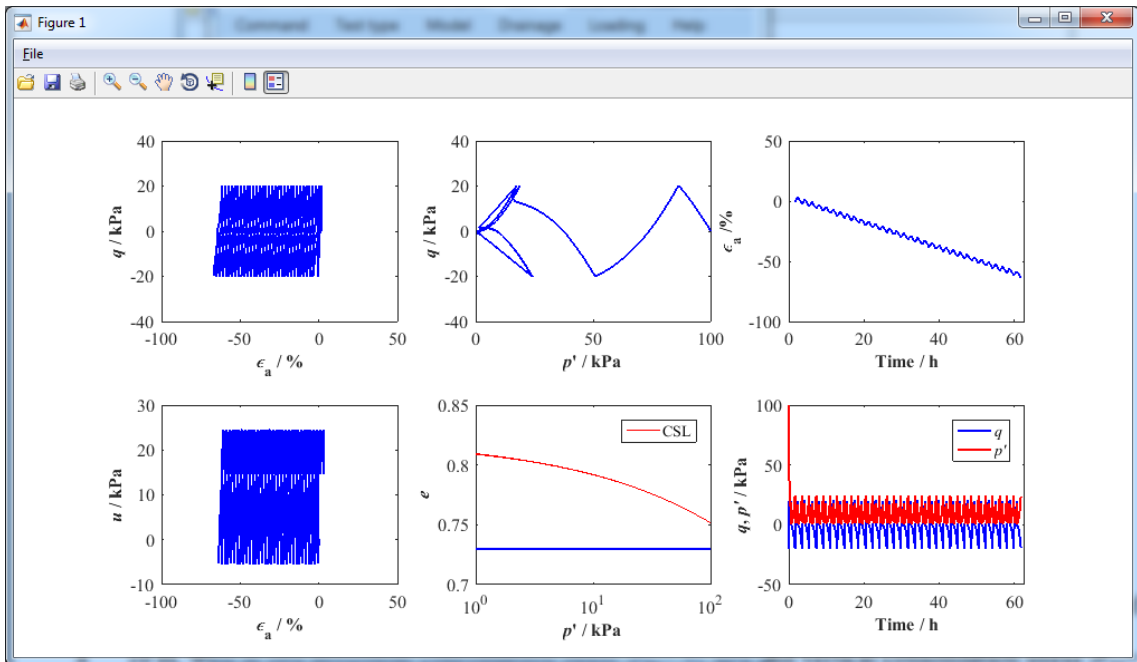
(b)

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Figure 14

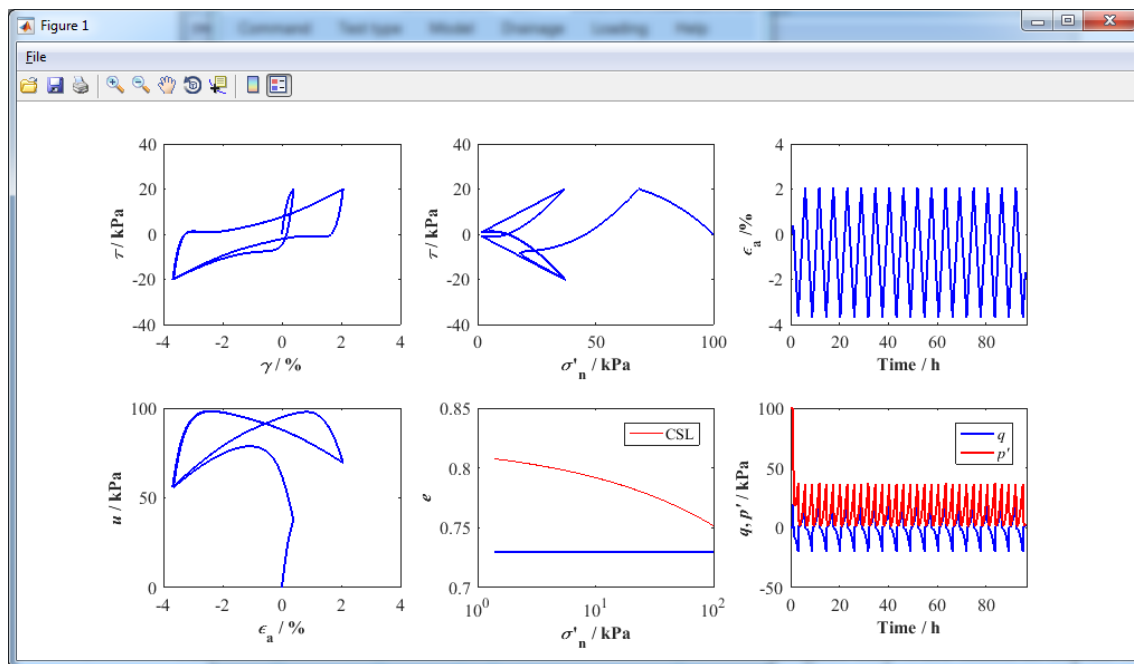


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(c)

Figure 15

Parameters of ASCM

**ASCM: Anisotropic Structured Clay Model**

MCC related Parameters

e0= 1.402 [-]

v= 0.25 [-]

ki= 0.036 [-]

λi= 0.17 [-]

Mc= 1.04 [-]

σ'p0= 92 [kPa]

pc0= 68.496124 [kPa]

Cohesive bonding

pb0= 18.5 [kPa]

ξb= 2 [-]

Compressive bonding

χ0= 3.0 [-]

ξ= 5 [-]

ξd= 0.2 [-]

Plastic modulus constant

kp= 500 [-]

Cross-anisotropic elasticity

Eh/Ev= 1 [-]

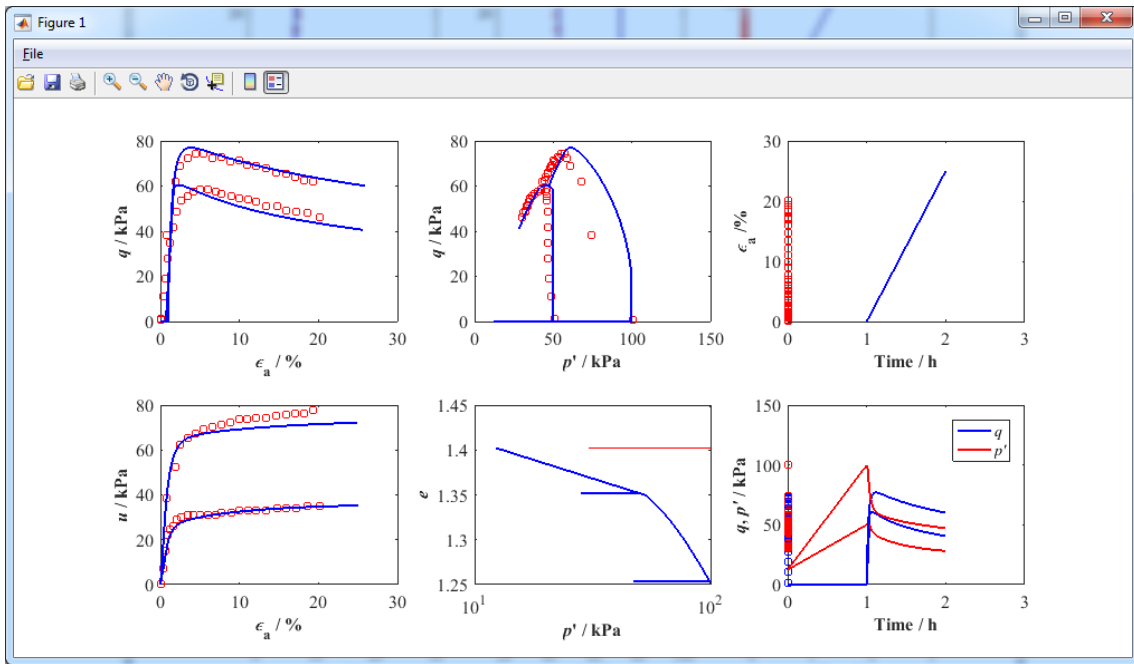
Anisotropy

Yes  No

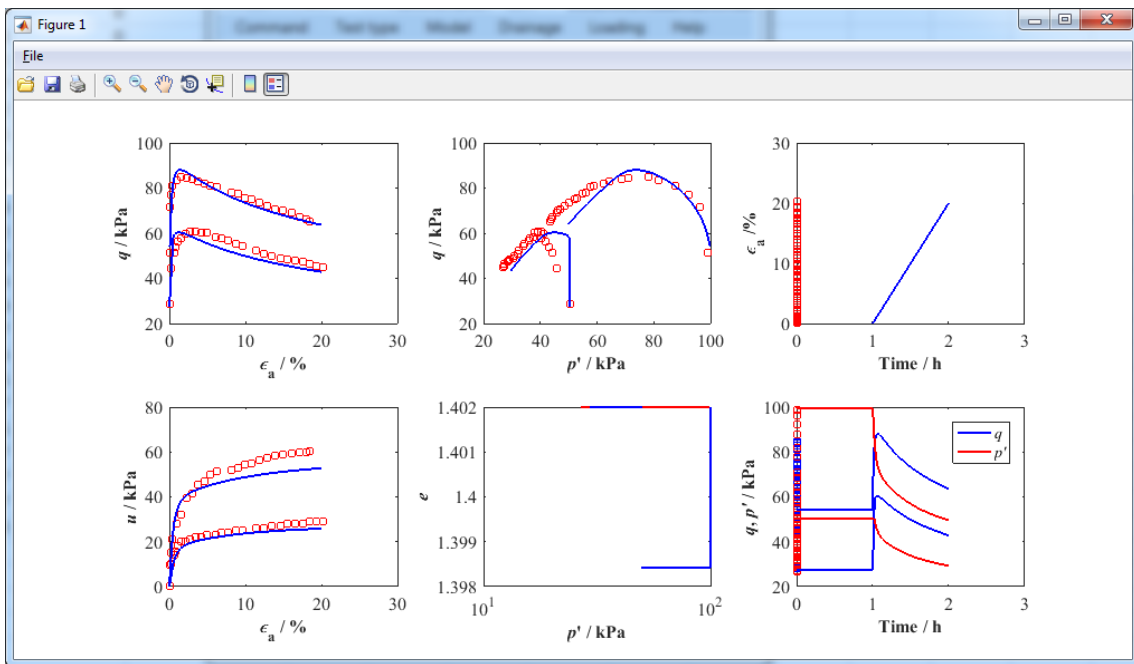
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Figure 16



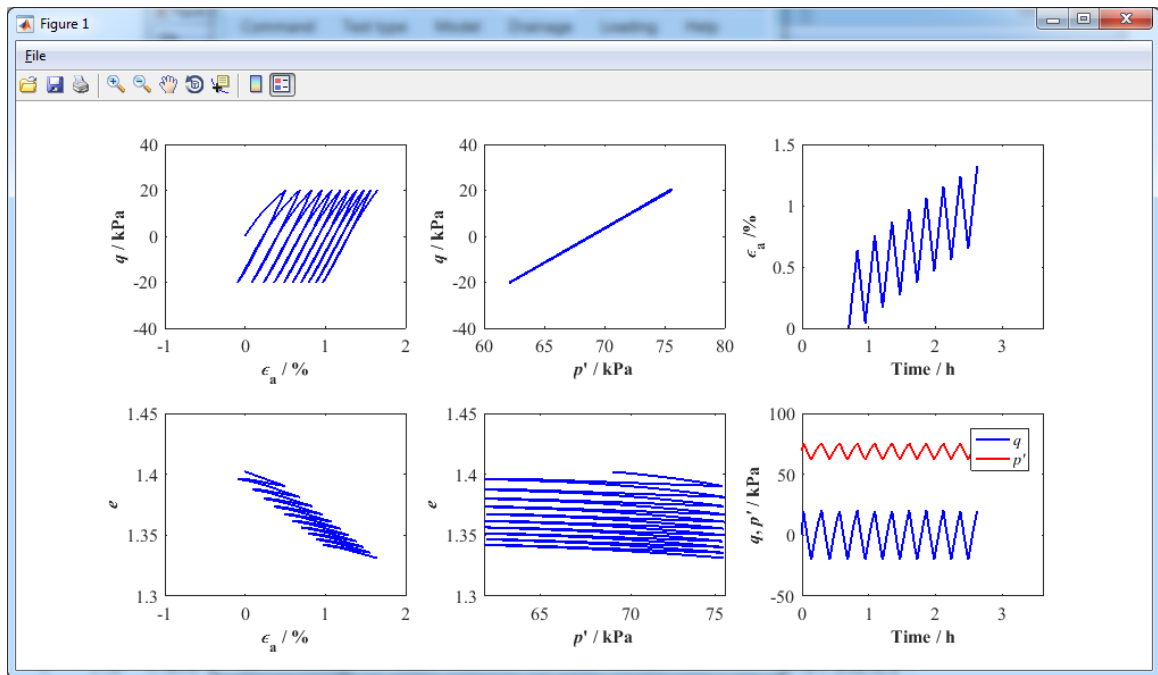
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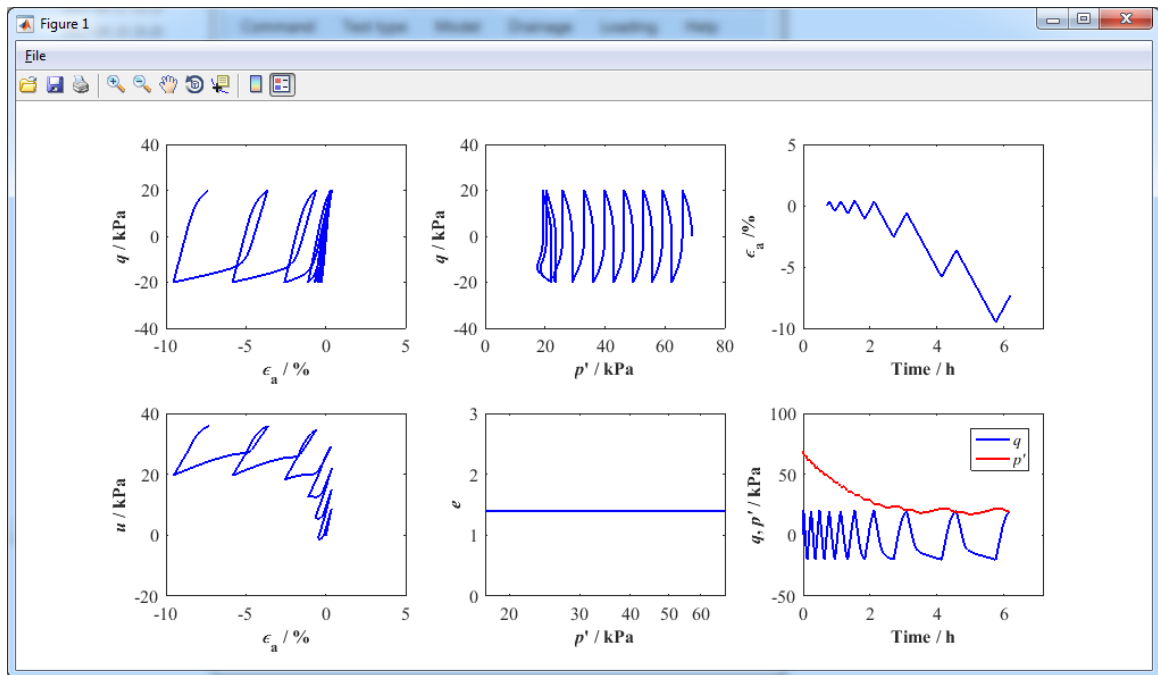
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Figure 17



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Parameters of ANICREEP

**ANICREEP: Anisotropic Creep model for natural soft clays**

MCC related parameters

e0= 1.895 [-]

v= 0.25 [-]

$\kappa$ = 0.052 [-]

$\lambda_i$ = 0.225 [-]

Mc= 1.18 [-]

$\sigma_{p0}$ = 90 [kPa]

$p_{c0}$ = 64.523113 [kPa]

Creep

Caei= 0.0069 [-]

$\tau$ = 24 [h]

Destructuration

St= 5 [-]

$\xi$ = 11.5 [-]

$\xi_d$ = 0.425 [-]

Cross-anisotropic elasticity

Eratio= $E_h/E_v$ = 0.8 [-]

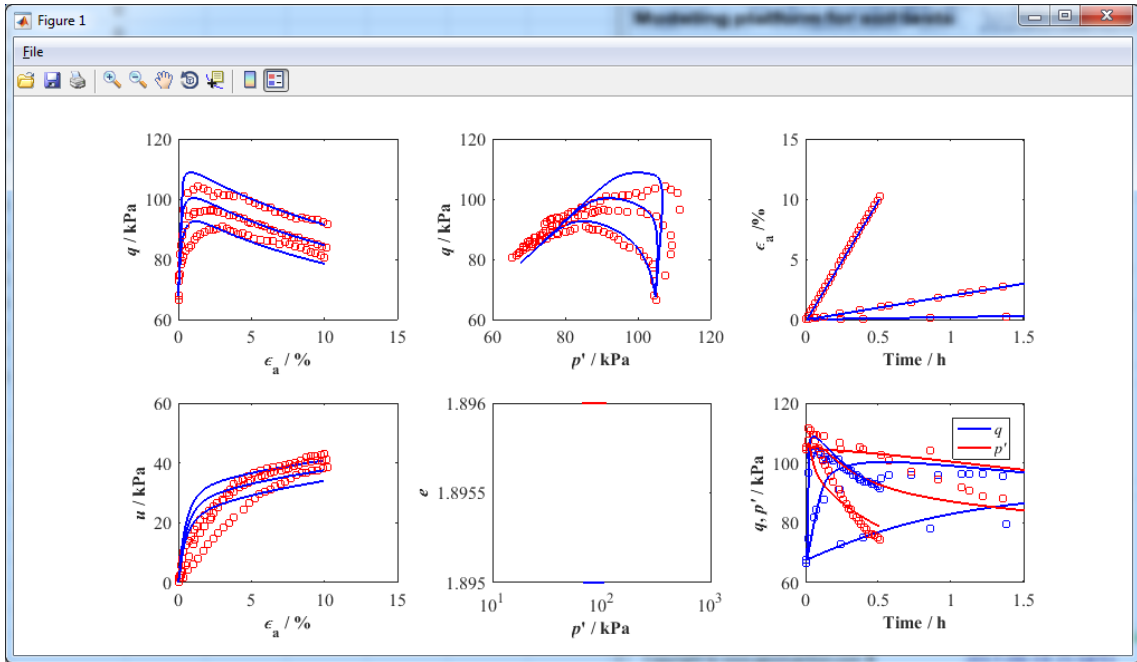
Anisotropy

Yes  No

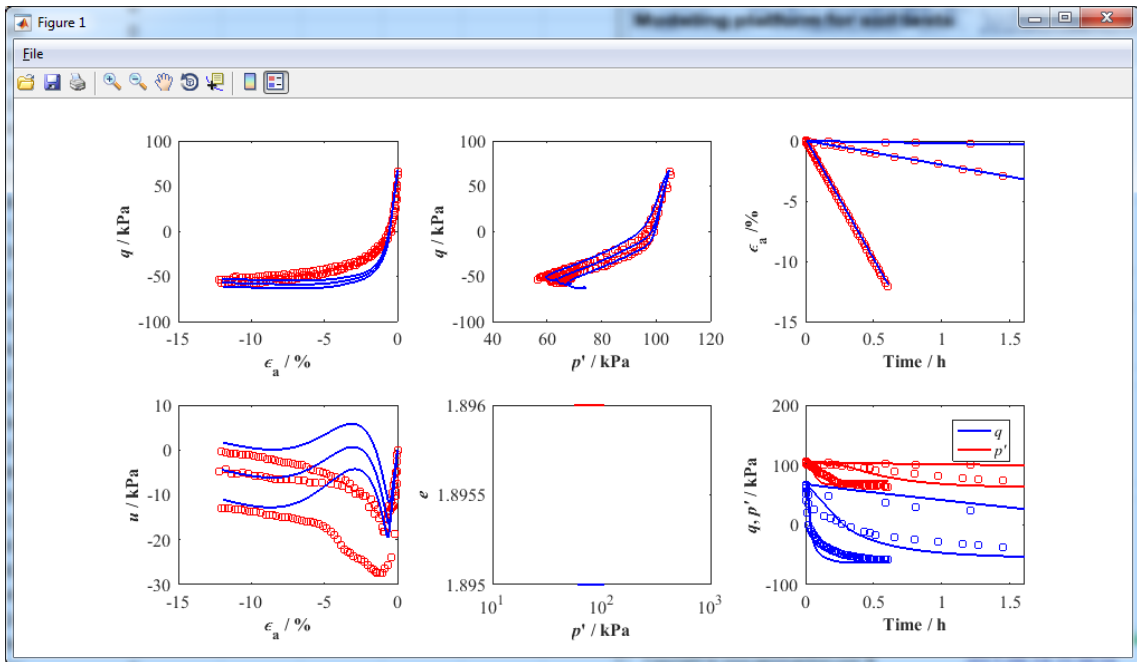
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Figure 19



(a)



(b)