**IFIP Referee Code of Conduct**

**R1. Analysis**

R1.1 The modern scientific edifice rests on the publication system. The publication system rests on a sound, honest and sustainable refereeing process. The refereeing process rests on ethical behavior by referees as well as by the authors of submitted papers.

R1.2 The sole duty of referees is to help publication venues select, from submitted proposals, the ones most appropriate for presentation, publication or both.

R1.3 While every publication venue defines its specific acceptance criteria and their relative weights, commonly applied criteria include: scientific soundness; originality; generality of the results; relevance to the venue’s topic and area; positioning at the current state of the art; application of generally recognized principles of scholarly research and publication; quality of evidence supporting the claimed results; software and other artifacts supporting the results; reproducibility of the results; applicability of the results (particularly in publication venues with an applied focus).

R1.4 If a publication venue treats quality of form (in addition to content) as one of its important criteria, due consideration should be given to authors who are not native speakers of the publication language.

R1.5 The following are some examples of non-appropriate evaluation criteria: authors’ personalities; authors’ relationship with the referee (unless explicitly mentioned in the review); differences of opinion between the referees and the authors.

**R2. Scope**

R2.1 The present Code does not innovate but codifies widely accept Best Practices of the scientific ITC community, applying them to IFIP-related events.

R2.2 The present Code shall govern the refereeing of submissions to all IFIP-organized venues such as journals, conferences, symposia and workshops. Every venue shall make referees aware of the Code as part of standard refereeing information (in particular in the venue’s Web-based review system if any).

R2.3 Individual publication venues may override specific aspects of the present Code. Any such changes shall be part of refereeing information provided per R2.2. They shall be compatible with the spirit of the present Code, in particular the principles of soundness, honesty and sustainability (R1.1).
R2.4 The present Code shall govern all venues co-organized by IFIP and other organizations. It is the responsibility of the organizers of such venues to identify any conflicts with rules of other organizations involved, and to resolve them through specific overriding rules per R2.3.

R2.5 The natural complement to ethical referee behavior is ethical author behavior. A companion document describes the IFIP Author Code of Conduct.

R3. Rules

R3.1 Acceptance to review a submission by a referee implies a commitment to provide a detailed review in a timely manner in accordance with the remaining rules in this section.

R3.2 (Definition.) Any of the following, relative to any of the authors of a submission, shall constitute a conflict of interest for a referee: prior or planned joint publication; prior or current joint participation in a project; prior or current simultaneous employment by the same institution; prior or current relationship, either way, as author of a substantial thesis (such as a master’s or PhD thesis) and supervisor or thesis committee member; any other prior or current close professional relationship; personal relationship such as family ties; prior or current strong disagreements having led to disputes or controversy; current situation of direct competition for significant goals such as funding or a position; any other connection, positive or negative, that could lead to suspicions of bias.

R3.3 When asked to review a submission, every referee shall determine whether this would create a conflict of interest as per R3.2. If so, the referee shall either withdraw or inform the venue organizer of the situation. In the latter case it shall be the responsibility of the venue organizer to decide on the appropriate action, such as replacing the referee, requesting that the referee’s potential conflict be disclosed as part of the review, or confirming the referee’s assignment unchanged (if the organizer determines that the potential conflict cannot adversely affect the process).

R3.4 It is the responsibility of every venue to set rules regarding the anonymity level of authors and referees, such as blind or double-blind referees, and separation of referee comments into those to be shown to authors and those reserved for organizers and committees. Such rules shall be part of the information provided to authors and referees.

R3.5 Even in a process that provides for referee anonymity, it shall be possible for a referee, for some or all of the referee’s reviews, to request waiving the referee’s anonymity in the comments shown to authors.
R3.6 If a venue allows referees to assign the actual reviewing work to colleagues (such as PhD students), any review not principally written by the referee shall be identified as such to the organizers and committee, together with the name of the review’s principal writer.

R3.7 Every referee shall limit reviews strictly to assessment of the submitted work, per R1.2, according to the venue’s assessment criteria (R1.3), and shall include no inappropriate element per R1.5.

R3.8 Reviews shall explicitly mention any factor that may affect the referee’s assessment, such as lack of expertise in an area covered by the work under review.

R3.9 A contribution’s failure to cite a particular work or author may be noted in a review as a suggestion to the author, but shall not by itself be a reason to recommend rejection.

R3.10 A contribution’s citation of a referee’s own work, or the absence of such a citation, shall not influence the referee’s assessment.

R3.11 Comments on the form of a submission, such as its style, shall be limited to items that affect the understandability of the submission, its professionalism, and the venue’s acceptance criteria (R1.3). Referees shall pay consideration to the case of non-native speakers per R1.4.

R3.12 Reviews shall be courteous, clear, professional and constructive.

R3.13 Every referee shall, unless otherwise instructed, treat every submitted contribution as confidential for as long as it is not publicly available, and shall not seek to gain personal advantage from the information obtained through the refereeing. In delicate cases (such as learning from the submission about an important development that affects the referee’s own work) the referee shall ask the venue organizer for advice and, if necessary, permission to contact the authors.

R4. Responsibilities

R4.1 It is the responsibility of the organizers of every IFIP-sponsored venue (conference chairs, program chairs, multi-author book editors, journal editors) to enforce this Code for the corresponding venues.

R4.2 It is the responsibility of the entire IFIP community to make the present Code widely known by potential referees.
R4.3 It is the special responsibility of senior leaders and scientists in the IFIP community to educate junior potential referees to the rules of ethical refereeing, as reflected in the present Code.

R5. Sanctions

R5.1 It is the responsibility of organizers, when violations of the present Code are suspected, to handle them promptly, efficiently and in collaboration with interested parties, to maintain fairness to all persons involved, and when appropriate to devise and apply appropriate sanctions.

R5.2 Before applying any sanction, organizers shall give the suspected violators an opportunity to explain their alleged behavior and to correct any unfounded accusation.

R5.3 Sanctions may include one of more of the following:
- Private reprimand to violators.
- Rejection of reviews on grounds of principle, regardless of content.
- Notification of affected parties, such as program committees, editorial boards and steering committees.
- Ban on refereeing or publishing for the corresponding venue or venues for a specific period of time.