Peer Review Declaration

- Type of Peer Review

The peer reviewing process is a vital step to ensure the quality of published papers in the 4th ICES. The conference required all received scientific papers to go through the double-blind reviewing process (i.e., each paper was evaluated by 2 reviewers independently of each other). If any paper got discrepant review results from two reviewers, the paper must be sent to a third reviewer for evaluation. In reviewing process, authors and reviewers’ identities are hidden to each other. More than 200 experts and academic researchers in various engineering fields collaborated to review and evaluate the conference papers to make sure that all received papers meet necessary criteria for publication and acceptance.

- Guidelines for Reviewers (Criteria for accepting and declining papers)

1. The Responsibility of the Peer Reviewer

The peer reviewer is responsible for critically reading and evaluating a manuscript in their specialty field, and then providing respectful, constructive, and honest feedback to authors about their submission. It is appropriate for the Peer Reviewer to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the article, ways to improve the strength and quality of the work, and evaluate the relevance and originality of the manuscript.

2. Before Reviewing

Please consider the following:

- Does the article you are being asked to review match your expertise?
- Do you have time to review the paper?
- Are there any potential conflicts of interests?

3. The Review

When reviewing the article, please keep the following in mind:

- Content Quality and Originality
  - Is the article sufficiently novel and interesting to warrant publication?
  - Does it add to the canon of knowledge?
  - Does the article adhere to the Conference standards?
  - Is the research question an important one?
  - In order to determine its originality and appropriateness for the conference, it might be helpful to think of the research in terms of what percentile it is in?
  - Is it in the top 25% of papers in this field?
You might wish to do a quick literature search using tools such as Scopus to see if there are any reviews of the area. If the research has been covered previously, pass on references of those works to the conference scientific committee.

- **Organization and Clarity**

  **Title:**
  - Does it clearly describe the article?

  **Abstract:**
  - Does it reflect the content of the article?

  **Introduction:**
  - Does it describe what the author hoped to achieve accurately, and clearly state the problem being investigated?
  - Normally, the introduction should summarize relevant research to provide context, and explain what other authors' findings, if any, are being challenged or extended. It should describe the experiment, the hypothesis(es) and the general experimental design or method.

  **Method:**
  - Does the author accurately explain how the data was collected?
  - Is the design suitable for answering the question posed?
  - Is there sufficient information present for you to replicate the research?
  - Does the article identify the procedures followed?
  - Are these ordered in a meaningful way?
  - If the methods are new, are they explained in detail?
  - Was the sampling appropriate?
  - Have the equipment and materials been adequately described?
  - Does the article make it clear what type of data was recorded; has the author been precise in describing measurements?

  **Results/Discussion:**

  This is where the author/s should explain in words what he/she discovered in the research. It should be clearly laid out and in a logical sequence. You will need to consider if the appropriate analysis has been conducted.
  - Are the statistics correct?
  - If you are not comfortable with statistics, please advise the scientific committee when you submit your report.
  - Have the authors indicated how the results relate to expectations and to earlier research?
Does the article support or contradict previous theories?

**Conclusion:**

- Are the claims in this section supported by the results, do they seem reasonable?
- Does the conclusion explain how the research has moved the body of scientific knowledge forward?

**Tables, Figures, Images:**

- Are they appropriate?
- Do they properly show the data?
- Are they easy to interpret and understand?

**Scope:**

- Is the article in line with the aims and scope of the conference?

4. **Final Comments**

- All submissions are confidential and please do not discuss any aspect of the submissions with a third party.
- If you would like to discuss the article with a colleague, please ask the conference scientific committee first.
- Please do not contact the author directly.
- Ethical Issues:
  - **Plagiarism:**
    - If you suspect that an article is a substantial copy of another work, please let the conference scientific committee know, citing the previous work in as much detail as possible
  - **Fraud:**
    - It is very difficult to detect the determined fraudster, but if you suspect the results in an article to be untrue, discuss it with the scientific committee.

5. **Next Steps**

Please complete the “Reviewer’s Comments” form by the due date. Your recommendation regarding an article will be strongly considered when the scientific committee make the final decision, and your thorough, honest feedback will be much appreciated. When writing comments, please indicate the section of comments intended for only the scientific committee and the section of comments that can be returned to the author(s). Please never hesitate to contact the scientific committee with any questions or concerns you may have.

- Conference Management System
A web-based conference management system which was developed in the form of open source has been used in the conference. The conference management system was programmed and designed using several websites languages including: HTML, HTML5, CSS, CSS3 and ASP.NET MySQL. This system allows to collect abstracts, extended abstracts, full papers and presentations. Additionally, it facilitates the distribution of abstracts and papers to the reviewers, based on their specialty topics.

- **Conference Number of Submissions**

The following table presents a brief summary regarding the number of submissions that have been made to the conference.

| Type of Submission                                           | Number |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| Abstract Submissions (total number of received abstracts)    | 306    |
| Abstracts Sent to Reviewers                                 | 306    |
| Accepted Abstracts (Preliminary Acceptance)                 | 215    |
| Abstract Acceptance Rate                                    | 70%    |
| Final Papers Submissions (total number of received final papers which their abstracts have been initially accepted) | 215 |
| Final Papers Sent to Reviewers (the paper reviewing process was conducted by two reviewers independently of each other) | 215 |
| Accepted Papers (Final Acceptance)                          | 158    |
| Paper Acceptance Rate                                        | 73.5%  |

- **Plagiarism Check System**

The Turnitin plagiarism detection system was used to check all received papers for similarity with content available on the web. A detailed Turnitin report is produced for submissions identifying the sources of those similarities and the percentage of match.

- **Contact person for queries**

Alaa M. Shaban, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Civil Engineering Department
Engineering College, University of Kerbala
Email address: alaa.shaban@uokerbala.edu.iq
CellPhone: +9647812527728