Editorial

ACM Transactions on Software Engineering and Methodology (TOSEM) is proud to announce the *Board of Distinguished Reviewers*, the first step of an ambitious editorial plan for the coming years.

The ACM TOSEM plan aims to consolidate the high quality of the journal, while improving its impact by hosting many high-quality articles. The Board of Distinguished Reviewers is the first step toward attracting an increasing amount of articles that present exciting and novel ideas and toward acknowledging the too-often underestimated contribution of many reviewers, whose precious work is a core element for the quality of the journal.

ACM TOSEM is the leading software engineering journal in terms of average citations per article, and, at the same time, publishes the smallest amount of articles among top software engineering journals. TOSEM seems to be more attractive for articles that consolidate long-term work than for articles that present completely novel ideas. Over 60% of TOSEM articles are archive articles that harmonise the results of a considerable amount of work previously presented at conferences and workshops, and less than 40% are journal-first articles that report completely new research results or present novel contributions that significantly extend and were not previously reported in prior work.

Journal-first articles ask for a fast time to publication, and the TOSEM *Board of Distinguished Reviewers* is a first step toward a reliable upper bound of the turnaround review time. With a current average time to first decision of 107 days,¹ TOSEM turnaround review time is as good as and sometimes better than most top software engineering events; however, few TOSEM articles suffer long delays. Long delay in review time is rooted in the increasing difficulty of finding good and reliable reviewers and in the high variance of reviewers' response time. We are witnessing an increasing rate of declined invitations to review articles, and it is not unusual for editors to contact more than ten specialists before finding three reviewers for an article, and this may accumulate conceivable delays. While many reviewers return their review within a reasonable time, a few reviewers respond after far too many months, and this impacts the excellent work of many good reviewers.

The Board of Distinguished Reviewers gives space to the many reliable and qualified reviewers who promptly accept review invitations and return valuable and detailed reviews within an acceptable deadline. Our ultimate goal is to guarantee a first response within three months from the submission.

ACM TOSEM welcomes self-nominations to the Board of Distinguished Reviewers and will publicly acknowledge the invaluable contribution of the members of the Board of Distinguished Reviewers to a reliable and timely review process both in the ACM TOSEM Web page and in the first issue of each year.

Mauro Pezzè
Editor-in-Chief

¹Average response time for the review of the first submission of manuscripts in 2018.