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Special Issue Information

Dear Colleagues,

The Special Issue explores the ways in which contemporary societies address environmental, economic, social, and cultural challenges through urban and regional policies, aiming to protect the environment and ensure a high standard of living for their inhabitants. This issue conceptualizes sustainable development as being founded upon four interrelated pillars: environment, economy, society, and culture. The condition of the environment in an urban or rural or region, whether it is already developed or still developing, is identified as a critical determinant of long-term economic growth. Moreover, the social and cultural contexts of urban areas are equally crucial for achieving an enhanced quality of life.

The Special Issue emphasizes the imperative to integrate these four pillars into coherent policies that address both immediate needs and long-term development objectives.

Environmental sustainability is presented as a key concern in urban and regional planning, particularly in light of the growing pressures cities and rural areas face from climate change, pollution, and the depletion of natural resources.

Economic sustainability, on the other hand, pertains to the creation of resilient, inclusive economies that promote equitable opportunities for growth, while safeguarding ecological and social systems.

Social sustainability is concerned with fostering equity, inclusion, and social cohesion, particularly in relation to access to housing, education, and healthcare.

Cultural sustainability, which is frequently undervalued, is seen as essential for preserving the identity and diversity of areas, safeguarding heritage, promoting cultural expression, and ensuring that modernization efforts do not erode the distinctive characteristics that make cities and regions vibrant and livable.

The Special Issue places particular emphasis on the use of case studies and field research to illustrate the practical application of these pillars within urban and



regional policy frameworks. These empirical examples provide valuable insights into how theoretical concepts of sustainability are operationalized in practice.

By presenting these empirical findings, the Special Issue contributes to the enrichment of scientific literature on sustainable development and offers evidence-based models for success. Furthermore, it calls for continued research and innovation in the pursuit of sustainable urban, rural and regional planning that enhances the quality of life for present and future generations.

Guest Editors

Keywords:

- sustainability,
- quality of life,
- urban areas
- rural areas
- environment
- society
- economy