

***EDITORIAL: A Relay Race on Sustainability...***

Dear Colleagues,

I am very pleased to announce that The Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Sustainability has successfully launched with Volume 1: “Ecological Planning and Sustainability.” I consider it a great honor to be the editor of this special issue and would like to thank and express my gratitude to all members of the Editorial Board for providing the support and feedback necessary to find, develop, and publish material of such consistent high quality. We have had a great start with Volume 1, publishing the maximum allocated number of pages. This shows that there is a high demand for a journal of interdisciplinary research on sustainability. As the world reaches the limits of natural resources, humankind must become more responsible than ever before. Although cities have begun to develop climate change action plans and more ecologically sensitive policies, there is still a great need for an interdisciplinary mechanism by which research and expert knowledge can contribute to effective solutions. Clearly, cities are playing an increasing role in responding to climate challenges and this is why we have decided to embark on the new path of this journal firstly through an ecological planning perspective. Our journey in this first issue begins with research on weather forecasting and flood simulation in Sri Lanka. Many parts of the world have been experiencing severe damage due to hurricanes and floods, such as Hurricane Harvey in 2017, and this article makes a significant contribution to understanding the factors behind a flood using GIS modelling.

The second research article in this first issue of the Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Sustainability highlights the importance of ecosystem services, combining a detailed literature review with a case study on the Belgrad Forestry Area in Istanbul. The following paper covers the planning and management problems of water basins. The article attempts to summarize not only ecological but also the social and legal parameters of a sustainable water basin management framework.

On the road of sustainability, many discussions have focused on the problem of urban sprawl in past decades. As cities are witnessing an extremely high level of migration from rural parts, more land has to be devoted to urban development. The result is usually a pattern of development on fertile farmlands and ecologically sensitive areas, such as natural forestry and water catchment areas. From a postmodern point of view, the negative effects of sprawl could be overcome through a “smart growth” perspective with cities both more compact and employing smart principles of urban development such as energy efficient neighbourhoods and buildings, transit oriented development, and a vibrant economy. Of course, not all cities can follow the same path since each city in the world has its “unique” footprint on earth, both ecologically and socio-economically. While some cities already experience a high density with unhealthy conditions, some have potential to be made more intensive still. However, regardless of its location and different characteristics, it is commonly agreed that a sustainable city should have walkable and connected streets. From this perspective, the fourth article provides an empirical study on the measurement of “walkability” for a border city, Edirne in Turkey. The study not only successfully elaborates smart growth principles, but also introduces GIS methodology into a walkability performance analysis of a city.

The final article in this issue of the Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Sustainability aims to serve as a review paper, summarizing recent debates on mobility and energy efficiency. The analysis is undertaken via a keyword search of the Web of Science database. I believe that readers will benefit from this research as it brings out the whole fruitful discussions in “mobility and energy efficient planning.”

On the journey to sustainable thinking, I owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to Prof. Dr. Semra Atabay, from whom I have learned much about the value of “interdisciplinary work on ecological planning,” and therefore I would like to dedicate this first Volume of the Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Sustainability to her name.

As a visionary researcher, Prof. Atabay started working on climate change and ecological planning long ago in the early 1980s, when little attention had been paid to environmental planning both in academia and in planning practice. I would like to recognize Prof. Atabay for her extraordinary accomplishments in the academic and practical planning sectors both in Germany and Turkey. As a follower of Prof. Dr. Atabay and other valuable academicians who have devoted much energy to a sustainable future, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce the first Volume of the Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Sustainability.

Finally, I would like to thank all of the authors and reviewers, and especially Dr. Zeynep Kacmaz Milne, the editor in chief, for offering me the honor of being the guest editor of the first Volume.

It is my pleasure to invite all researchers in different fields of sustainability to submit scientific articles to the Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Sustainability.

*Ayşegül Özbakır*

*Guest Editor*