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## Introduction

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**Biographical notes:** Konstantinos L. Katsifarakis is Professor at the Department of Civil Engineering of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece. He holds a Diploma in Civil Engineering and a Bachelor degree in Geology, a MS degree in Engineering Mechanics and a Doctoral degree in Civil Engineering. His research interests include groundwater flows and contamination control, management of water resources, low enthalpy geothermal energy, optimisation techniques, environmental impact mitigation, education of engineers and history of hydrology. He has published more than 100 scientific papers and has supervised a large number of undergraduate and graduate diploma theses and seven PhD theses.

Nicolaos Theodossiou is Associate Professor at the Division of Hydraulics and Environmental Engineering of the Department of Civil Engineering of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. His research activities include simulation and optimisation in water resources management as well as protection and restoration of groundwater aquifers. He has also participated in a number of technical studies concerning water-related works and their environmental impacts. He acts as a reviewer in the most significant journals and conferences. His published work includes about 65 papers and their scientific value is evaluated by more than 100 references. He has also participated in 14 research projects.

Zisis Mallios is Lecturer at the Division of Hydraulics and Environmental Engineering of the Civil Engineering Department, A.U.Th., Greece. His research is focused on natural resources and environmental economics, geographical information systems and water resources management. He has several scientific publications and participated in nine research projects as scientific associate of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, from 1998 up to today. He has served as reviewer of scientific publications in national conferences and participated in a significant number of national and international conferences.

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This current issue of *International Journal of Innovation and Sustainable Development* includes extended versions of six papers, initially presented at the “Protection and Restoration of the Environment XI” International Conference, which took place in Thessaloniki, Greece, from 3 to 6 of July, 2012.

Thessaloniki is an inspiring place for an environmental conference: it is a large city, facing many environmental problems, lately aggravated by financial crisis, but, at the same time, it is situated in the middle of an area of undisputable beauty (including Chalkidiki, Mount Athos and Mount Olympus), which exhibits the environmental quality that we have to preserve for future generations.

The conference attracted about 300 papers and even more delegates and covered a very large spectrum of environmental issues. The papers, selected for this issue, reflect this diversity.

“Indicators and options towards sustainability in industrial areas” presents an integrated procedure for sustainable development of industrial areas, based on SWOT analysis and taking into account social, economic and environmental factors.

“Measuring the sustainability of tourism development in protected areas: an indicator-based approach” deals with the co-existence of tourism activities and ecological processes. In particular, it attempts to simplify the measurement of tourism sustainability by proposing a two-step approach for developing a set of sustainable indicators under data limitations and financial constraints.

“Promoting decision making through a Sustainable Remediation Assessment Matrix (SRAM)” presents a tool for the evaluation of sustainability of remedial action plans, taking into account environmental, economic, and social indicators and properly defining boundaries of the examined system.

“Riparian areas in urban settings: two case studies from Greece” deals with evaluation of ecosystems services provided by riparian areas in urban environments. It also discusses practical details of restoration and management of these areas.

“Evaluation of sodium lignosulphonate for the remediation of chromium-contaminated soil and water” is dedicated to in-situ and ex-situ treatment of soil and water contaminated by a very dangerous heavy metal, namely hexavalent chromium, which is extensively used in industry.

“The climate challenge and EU cohesion policy: implications for regional policies” seeks to examine the way European Union cohesion policy takes into account the challenge of climate change, which increases the vulnerability of cities and regions all over the planet. The paper also investigates the strategies which are promoted at the regional level.

We hope that the papers of the special issue will offer useful information and interesting points of view to the “audience” of the *International Journal of Innovation and Sustainable Development*.