



## EDITORIAL

### *Special Issues in Scientific Journals*

Special issues of academic journals are dedicated editions that focus on a specific, timely theme within a field of study. They often emerge from emerging research trends, interdisciplinary dialogues, or important conferences, and are curated by guest editors with expertise in the topic. These issues provide a concentrated platform for advancing knowledge, encouraging scholarly debate, and highlighting cutting-edge research [1]. By bringing together contributions from diverse authors around a central theme, special issues contribute significantly to shaping the research agenda and fostering collaboration within the academic community [2].

Additionally, Virtual Special Issues (VSIs) and curated collections are thematic groupings of articles that, unlike traditional special issues, are published individually in regular journal issues but later assembled online under a shared topic. This model allows for greater flexibility and faster dissemination of research, as articles appear as soon as they are accepted and published. By leveraging digital platforms, VSI collections enhance visibility and impact without the constraints of fixed print editions [3]. Along this line, this Virtual Special Issue brings together a curated selection of high-quality papers presented at three major conferences held in 2022, each contributing to the advancement of operations research, smart city development, and engineering innovation in Ibero-America.

*ASOCIO+ISIE 2022 / IV Congreso Colombiano de Investigación Operativa & XIX Congreso IISE Región 16:* Held in Bogotá and Chia, this joint congress fostered collaboration between the Colombian Operational Research community (ASOCIO) and the Latin American chapter of the Institute of Industrial and Systems Engineers (IISE). The event focused on building bridges among researchers and practitioners to address real-world challenges through operations research and systems engineering methodologies.

*ICSC-CITIES 2022 – Ibero-American Congress of Smart Cities:* Held in Cuenca, Ecuador, and supported by the Universidad de Cuenca, this forum encouraged interdisciplinary discussions on Smart Cities. Contributions ranged from technological innovation and urban planning to sustainability and citizen-centered design, reflecting the diversity and dynamism of smart urban development in the region.

*IC-EXPOI 2022 –Congreso Internacional de Ingeniería:* Held in Medellín, the second edition of this international academic engineering congress tackled four critical and

current themes: Energy, Infrastructure, Industry 4.0 Technologies, and Vital Engineering. With a mix of national and international experts, the event served as a platform for sharing applied research and engineering solutions to modern societal challenges.

Although REDIN typically does not publish special issues or virtual special issues, the editors recognized the exceptional academic quality and relevance of the contributions from these conferences. This collection was thus created to highlight the significant impact of the presented research and to support the visibility of collaborative efforts across the region. This VSI highlights the synergy among these three events and offers readers a panoramic view of cutting-edge research and innovative solutions driving progress in Latin America. The selected papers reflect both academic rigor and practical relevance, aiming to inspire further dialogue and collaboration across disciplines and borders.

In addition to the papers featured in this Virtual Special Issue, several other contributions from these conferences have already been published in previous regular issues of the journal. We invite readers to explore the complete list of articles at the following link [4]. These earlier publications form an integral part of the broader discussion initiated by the conferences and further enrich the thematic scope of this collection. Importantly, all these articles are available in Open Access, in accordance with the journal's Open Access policy. This ensures free and universal access to research findings, promoting the dissemination of knowledge and supporting global academic exchange.

By gathering this diverse and impactful body of work, this Virtual Special Issue offers a comprehensive view of current research trends and fosters continued dialogue among scholars, professionals, and institutions. It highlights how engineering research plays a fundamental role in supporting sustainable development, addressing pressing societal challenges through innovation, efficiency, and interdisciplinary collaboration.

## References

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