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Editorial

# Welcome to the Inaugural Issue of Regional and Rural Development

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Regional and rural development refers to the processes and initiatives aimed at improving the economic, social, environmental, and infrastructure conditions of less urbanized and often geographically distant areas within a country or region. These areas typically have smaller populations, fewer resources, and lower levels of industrialization compared to urban centers. The primary goal of regional and rural development is to narrow the disparities between urban and rural areas by fostering sustainable growth and enhancing the quality of life for residents in these regions. Key components of regional and rural development include, but are not limited to, economic development, infrastructure improvement, agricultural and rural diversification, access to basic services, environmental sustainability, community empowerment, institutional capacity building, poverty reduction, cultural preservation, and human capital development.

In an era of competitive globalization, contentious geo-politics, climate change, and expanding information technologies, rural areas are exceedingly important to national economies. In addition to their economic activities, rural areas are often 'home' to key infrastructure connecting urban areas or linking rural resources to urban users, such as roads, waterways, pipelines, and electrical grids. Rural regions also provide an array of *nonmonetized* services to urban populations such as food, energy, water purification, ecosystem diversity, and natural amenities. They are home to a complex array of cross-boundary issues such as regional watersheds, extreme weather events, and natural disasters. New research and new approaches to rural development are required to achieve sustainable regional rural areas. It is therefore the goal of *Regional and Rural Development* to provide a forum for new and innovative research that contributes to our understanding of key components for sustainable rural development.