



Introducing the Environment and Sustainability Research Center at the Open University of Israel

Who we are

The Environmental and Sustainability Research Center at the Open University of Israel conducts interdisciplinary and innovative research in the fields of environment and sustainability. The Center was established in 2023, in response to the current ecological and climate crisis, with the aim of promoting applied research that directly contributes to the adoption of quality environmental policy in Israel. In the establishment phase, the Center will focus on research responding to the challenges of environmental quality and climate change preparedness at the municipal government level. We aim to address these challenges through innovative, interdisciplinary and policy-oriented research.



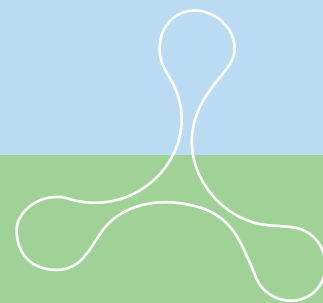
The Challenge

Israel is one of the most urbanized countries in the world and is still undergoing rapid urbanization. By the year 2065 Israel is expected to double its population and reach an estimated population of 20 million. Over 95% of Israelis will live in cities, some of them new. Others will inhabit extensions to existing cities or live in the heart of cities undergoing urban renewal. Due to climate change and pressures of rapid urbanization, open space management, resource use, climate resilience of infrastructures, provision of public services and overall maintenance of livability, present themselves among the country's most urgent and substantial challenges in the medium and long terms. These interlinked areas



of sustainability serve as key challenges for future generations and are central to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Urban Sustainability Transformations Approach serves as a basis for developing pathways for cities to transform and live up to their potential to solve some of our planet's most urgent problems. To design urban sustainability policies cities will need to harness the power of new technologies and the imagination of their residents. They will need to attract global capital and investment and address governance challenges, all based on sound scientific evidence.



Our Mission

The Environment and Sustainability Research Center will be a major scientific player and an incubator for scientific research initiatives in the fields of urban sustainability transformations. We will promote data and science-based decision-making in Israel. The Center's researchers, as individuals and as a collective, strive to develop interdisciplinary studies, which deal with the core challenges of urban sustainability policy in Israel. We strive to provide comprehensive and multidimensional scientific responses to some of the most complex environmental problems. The studies we carry out will lay the foundations for promoting transitions to sustainability, mitigating climate risks, and promoting environmental

justice and multilevel cooperation among various authorities. The Center will contribute to the development of dialogue and to the accessibility of the latest scientific knowledge to decision makers.



Our Work

The Center operates within the framework of the Open University of Israel, and brings together senior faculty researchers, research associates and affiliates, students and research assistants. In line with our mission, our steering committee includes researchers from a wide range of disciplines (data science, ecology, earth sciences, sociology, geography, law and public policy). Alongside, our research staff, we promote forums for dialogue and collaboration with stakeholders such

as local government representatives, central government officials, NGOs and business organizations. We communicate scientific knowledge to decision makers through a series of review papers, policy briefing papers and innovative scientific studies. The Center's research is made accessible to decision makers in Hebrew and presented at round tables to our stakeholders.



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