



## MULTI-CRITERIA DECISION MAKING IN CIVIL ENGINEERING: PART I – A STATE-OF-THE-ART SURVEY

Edmundas Kazimieras ZAVADSKAS<sup>a</sup>, Jurgita ANTUCHEVIČIENĖ<sup>a</sup>, Oleg KAPLIŃSKI<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Faculty of Civil Engineering, Vilnius Gediminas Technical University,  
Saulėtekio al. 11, 10223, Vilnius, Lithuania

<sup>b</sup>Faculty of Architecture, Poznań University of Technology, Nieszawska 13C, 60-965 Poznań, Poland

Received 20 November 2015; accepted 19 December 2015

**Abstract.** For several decades, multi-criteria decision-making (MCDM) methods have been in use to address issues particular to design, organisation and management of constructions. This article reviews the history of MCDM methods since their origins to current times. The academic database Thomson Reuters Web of Science Core Collection was used to overview publications that contain keyword “MCDM” and are included in Web of Science Category “Engineering Civil”. The analysis of publications was made according to their year, state, journals and used MCDM methods.

**Keywords:** civil engineering, MCDM, MADM, Web of Science.

### Introduction

The design and implementation of an effective life-cycle process of a building require focusing on rationality throughout the entire development since the definition of needs and goals to the very end-of-life stage of the building. There is a number of stakeholder groups concerned with stages of the life-cycle of a building: customers, designers, contractors, producers and suppliers of materials and products, users, managers, self-governance institutions, building maintenance and repair organisations, etc. It is already during the design of a building that decision-making must consider the needs and goals of these groups. The life-cycle process of a building must be designed and implemented in view of its stages, possibilities and goals of stakeholder groups, all of which impact on the effectiveness of the life-cycle process of a building, as well as considering the external environment. A variety of factors impacting on the effectiveness of the life-cycle process of a building leads to a relevant question: how to assess

decisions of the process from several aspects (Zavadskas *et al.* 2001)?

Aiming to achieve strategic, economic, social, technical, qualitative or other aims, it is necessary to draw on quantitative and qualitative assessment criteria that describe possibilities and goals particular to stakeholder groups of the life-cycle process of a building, alternative solutions and the existing situation of the external environment. Multiple-criteria analysis methods, which can also be successfully introduced into decision support systems, have to be used to define, reason and achieve these aims (Zavadskas *et al.* 1998, 1995; Filip *et al.* 2014).

### 1. The development of MCDM methods

Multiple-criteria decision making (MCDM) has grown as a part of operations research, concerned with designing mathematical and computational tools for supporting the subjective evaluation of performance criteria by decision makers (Mardani *et al.* 2015).

Corresponding author:

E. K. Zavadskas E-mail: [edmundas.zavadskas@vgtu.lt](mailto:edmundas.zavadskas@vgtu.lt)

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MCDM methods cover a wide range of somewhat distinct approaches. MCDM methods can be broadly classified into two categories: discrete MCDM or discrete MADM (Multi-Attribute Decision Making) and continuous MODM (Multi-Objective Decision Making) methods (Fig. 1) (Zavadskas, Turskis 2011).



Fig. 1. Broad classification of MCDM methods

MCDM methods were originally created by Franklin (1772), Condorcet (1785), Borda (1785), Cantor (1874), Edgeworth (1881), and Pareto (1896–1897, 1906, 1971). Since 1992, the International Society of Multiple-Criteria Decision Making has been giving out Georg Cantor awards and Edgeworth–Pareto awards.

First axioms essential for the selection of the most valuable alternatives were formulated by Ramsey (1931). In 1944, John von Neumann and Oskar Morgenstern continued Ramsey's work and prepared their monumental masterpiece entitled *Theory Games and Economic Behavior* (1944). For the contributions to the development of game theory, Nash (1950a, 1950b) received the Nobel Prize in 1994. Next, the Theory of Value was developed by Gerard Debreu (1959) who was also awarded the Nobel Prize. Yet another Nobel Prize laureate (1970) Samuelson (1938) announced a very important piece of work. Edwards (1954) published the theory of decision making. The piece of work of Simon (1955), Nobel Prize laureate (1978), played a special role in the most up-to-date MCDM theory. An important role in the development of MCDM was played by efforts of Arrow (1951) and Sen (1970). The authors also became laureates of the Nobel Prize. Luce and Raiffa (1957) introduced the newest decision theory. Frisch (1961) received the Nobel Prize for a relatively little-known publication. A great input into the MCDM theory was made by Fishburn (1964, 1970) who publicised two books on issues of the value theory. A significant contribution to the development of the MCDM theory was also made by Roy (1968). Multiple Objective Mathematical programming techniques were created by Dantzig (1948) and Kantorovich (1939), who were also awarded the Nobel Prize. Koopmans (1951) elaborated on Pareto's

theory and was also awarded the Nobel Prize in 1975. Other important contributions were made by Gass and Saaty (1955), Zeleny (1974), Charnes *et al.* (1978).

Zadeh (1965) announced the Fuzzy Sets Theory. This year was the 50th anniversary since the introduction of this theory. To commemorate this date, the journal *Technological and Economic Development of Economy*, which is jointly published by VGTU and Taylor and Francis, released a special anniversary issue. The introductory article was authored by one of the most renowned scholars of MCDM Herrera-Viedma (2015). Other articles were authored by VGTU researchers Turskis, Antuchevičienė, Banaitis and Banaitienė with co-authors (Razavi Hajiagha *et al.* 2015; Khandekar *et al.* 2015; Pourahmad *et al.* 2015). To commemorate this anniversary, the journal *International Journal of Computers Communications & Control* released a thematic issue as well. This special issue had the introduction written by world-renowned scientist Ronald R. Yager (2015). It also contained an article authored by VGTU researchers (Turskis *et al.* 2015).

MCDM name was first used in an article by Zeleny (1975). Later, this new notion was explained by Zionts (1979).

Especially important results of the MCDM topic were announced in books by Keeney, Raiffa (1976), Zeleny (1982) and Saaty (1980).

Hwang *et al.* (1979) reviewed MODM methods, and Hwang and Yoon (1981) overviewed MADM methods (SAW, TOPSIS, ELECTRE, LINMAP and the permutation method).

Since 1980, MCDM methods were rapidly developed in various areas. In 1986, Peldschus defended a post-doctoral dissertation on the use of gaming theory to address construction problems.

In 1987, at Moscow Institute of Civil Engineering, Zavadskas defended a post-doctoral dissertation, in which MADM methods were used to deal with Civil Engineering problems (Zavadskas, 1987a). Later, 35 doctoral dissertations were defended under his leadership, all of which focused on the used MCDM methods.

MCDM methods were overviewed in books by Hwang, Lin (1987), Roy (1996), Saaty (1996), Belton, Stewart (2002), Brauers (2004), Figueira *et al.* (Eds.) (2005), Bouyssou *et al.* (2006), Kahraman (Ed.) (2008), Miettinen (2009), Hanne (2009), Triantaphyllou (2010), Ehrgott *et al.* (Eds.) (2010), Zopounidis and Pardalos (Eds.) (2010), Kaliszewski (2010), Pedrycz *et al.* (2010), Tzeng, Huang (2011), Köksalan *et al.*

(2011), Doumpos and Grigoroudis (2013), Ishizaka and Nemery (2013).

Zavadskas (1987b, 1991, 2000) authored books, in which MCDM methods were used to address construction problems. VGTU researchers announced a number of books dedicated to the use of MCDM methods in Civil Engineering: Zavadskas *et al.* (1994a, 1995, 1998, 2001, 2004a), Peldschus, Zavadskas (1997), Kaklauskas, Zavadskas (2002, 2015) and Zavadskas, Kaklauskas (2007).

The use of MCDM methods is discussed in monographs by Kapliński (1997), Kapliński (Ed.) (2007), Chen and Li (2006), Koo *et al.* (2009).

The evolution of MCDM in 1975–2015 was discussed in a number of review articles: Wiecek *et al.* (2008), Zavadskas *et al.* (2008, 2014), Kapliński (2009a, 2009b), Zavadskas, Turskis (2011), Liou, Tzeng (2012), Tamošaitienė, Kapliński (2013), Liou (2013), Gay, Sinha (2013), Kaplinski *et al.* (2014a, 2014b), Kabir *et al.* (2013), Masri (2014), Mardani *et al.* (2015a, 2015b, 2015c).

Up to 1991, no articles containing examples of the use of MCDM methods in Civil Engineering were referred in ISI Web of Science database. First articles addressing the use of MCDM methods in Civil Engineering were authored by Duckstein *et al.* (1991), Shafike *et al.* (1992), Sobanjo *et al.* (1994), Bose, Chakrabarti (2003). First Lithuanian authors to publish papers in Isi Web of Science data base on this topic were Zavadskas *et al.* (2003, 2004b).

The development of MCDM methods and their application in Civil Engineering was discussed in many articles (Kapliński 2008a, 2008b; Zavadskas *et al.* 2008; Kapliński, Tamošaitienė 2010; Kaplinski, Tupenaite 2011; Tamošaitienė, Kapliński 2013; Kaplinski *et al.* 2014a, 2014b; Jato-Espino *et al.* 2014; Antucheviciene *et al.* 2015; Kaplinski, Tamošaitienė 2015).

Since 1986, Leipzig Higher Technical School, Poznan University of Technology and Vilnius Civil Engineering Institute (later renamed into Vilnius Technical University and Vilnius Gediminas Technical University) commenced with biannual colloquiums, which addressed issues related to the development and application of MCDM methods in Civil Engineering (Fiedler *et al.* 1986; Peldschus 1995; Kapliński *et al.* 2004; Kaklauskas *et al.* 2005; Peldschus *et al.* 2006; Zavadskas 2008; Tamosaitiene *et al.* 2010; Kapliński 2010; Peldschus 2013). Later, a EURO Working Group on *Operational Research in Sustainable Development and Civil Engineering* was established. Work by this group

is coordinated by researchers of VGTU Department of Construction Technology and Management (Zavadskas, Vilutienė 2013). This Working Group issues an annual newsletter (The Association of... 2015). In 2015, the 15th German-Lithuanian-Polish colloquium (ORSDCE 2015) was organised by this group in Poznan. On the occasion of the event, Elsevier issued a publication *Procedia Engineering, Volume 122* (Kapliński *et al.* 2015).

## 2. Research methodology

In this paper, the literature related to MCDM has been reviewed comprehensively on the basis of papers referred in Thomson Reuters Web of Science academic database. Following a methodological analysis (Fig. 2) on the entire body of collected publications, a number

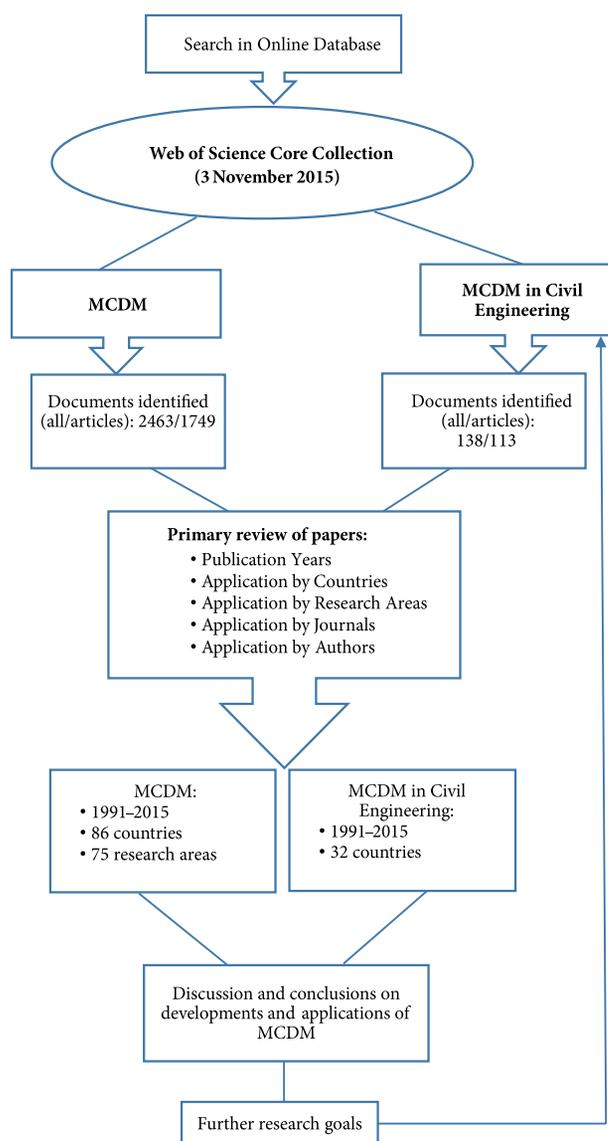


Fig. 2. Summary of the research procedure

of articles were reviewed from the first international publications in the area up to now (October 2015). The presented research attempts to answer the following questions: (1) How have the papers been distributed by the period of publishing? (2) How have the papers been distributed by a country? (3) In what research areas MCDM has been applied? (4) How have the papers been distributed by authors? (5) How have the papers been distributed by journals?

**3. Number of publications by year**

Web of Science Core Collection contains 2463 referred publications (Figs 3, 4) on the topic of MCDM (3 November 2015), covering all document types, including articles (1749) (Fig. 4) (Table 1).

Table 1. Publications on the topic of MCDM in Web of Science database

Publications on MCDM methods	Number of publications
All	2463
Articles	1749
Publications on Engineering Civil	
All	138
Articles	113

The publications that are dedicated to Civil Engineering with applied MCDM methods are taking the tenth place and amounting to 5.6% of the total number of publications dedicated to MCDM (i.e., 113 articles) (Fig. 3).

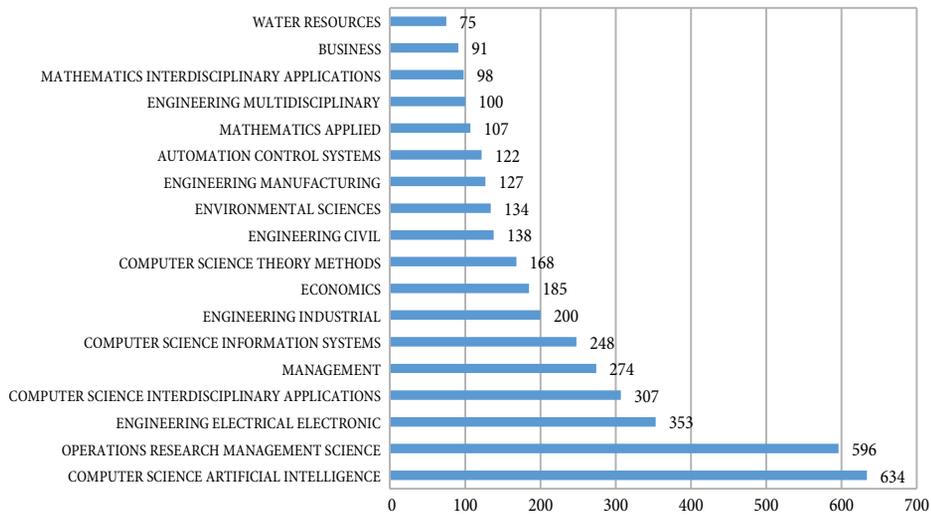


Fig. 3. Web of Science database (total: 2463)

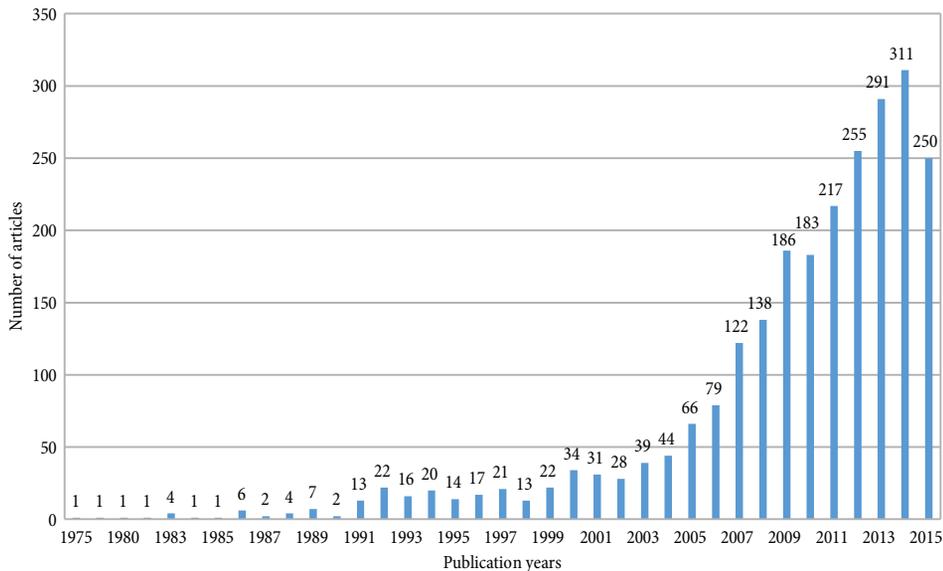


Fig. 4. Number of publications on the MCDM topic (total: 2463)

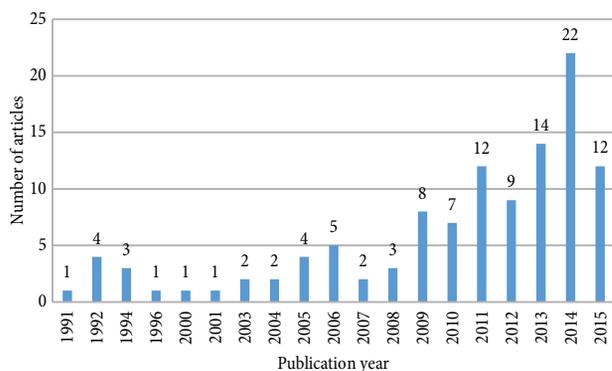


Fig. 5. Number of publications on the category "civil engineering+MCDM" (total: 113)

As depicted in Figure 5, the extent of research in the area has been rapidly increasing during the last ten years. Numbers of publications on MCDM increased from one-to-two papers per year up to 22 journal articles in 2014. As much as 61 per cent of articles on the topic were published during the last five years (2011–2015). Articles published in the last three years (2013–2015), comprise a share of 42 per cent.

**4. Number of publications: by country, author, journal and MCDM methods**

Further, the analysis focused on the use of MCDM by country. Articles were announced by researchers representing thirty countries of the world. Information on the distribution of MCDM papers by country is given in Figure 6, which shows that Lithuanian authors announced 22 articles. This number amounts to about 20% of the total number of articles, which places Lithuania in the second place following the USA.

Authors listed in Table 2 published their articles on the topic of the MCDM use in Civil Engineering. The table demonstrates that Lithuanian authors are leaders of this particular topic. The top ten has four Lithuanian authors. Articles were announced by 100 authors, and 15 (15%) of them were Lithuanians.

Table 3 provides information on journals in ISI Web of Science database, which issued publications on the use of MCDM methods in Civil Engineering. In total, articles were announced in 44 journals. The majority of publications – 18 – were announced in Springer Publishing journal *Water Resources Management*. The second place with 17 publications is occupied by the *Journal of Civil Engineering and Management* published by VGTU and Taylor & Francis. Elsevier and Wroclaw University of Technology take the third place

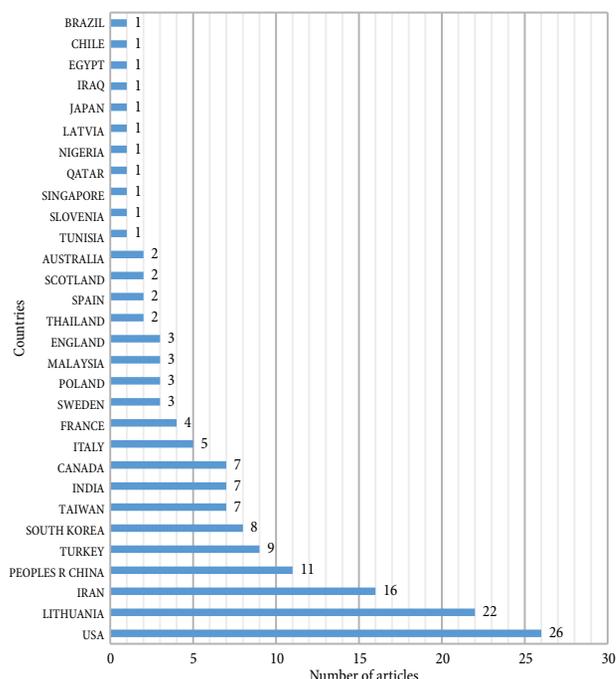


Fig. 6. MCDM application by country (number of publications) in the category of Civil Engineering

Table 2. Publications on the MCDM topic by author

Author's name	Articles
Zavadskas EK	15
Turskis Z	11
Duckstein L	6
Antucheviciene J	5
Zahraie B	4
Sadiq R	4
Medineckiene M	4
Li H	4
Tesfamariam S	3
Tamosaitiene J	3
Susinskas S	3
Raju KS	3
Karamouz M	3
Chung ES	3
21 authors	2
65 authors	1

with their journal *Archives of Civil and Mechanical Engineering*, which published seven articles on the topic.

Table 4 provides MCDM methods, their authors and numbers of publications, in which the methods were used. The table demonstrates that MADM methods AHP, SAW, TOPSIS, Permutation method, the

Fuzzy Sets Theory (developed in 1965), and ELECTRE method that emerged in 1968 were mostly used in the period since 1980 (Hwang, Yoon 1981). Later decision making methods have been intensively developed and applied to various engineering and managerial problems. It should be noted that methods created by VGTU researchers are popular as well as used for addressing Civil Engineering issues.

Table 3. Publications on the MCDM topic by journal

Sources titles	Articles
Water Resources Management	18
Journal of Civil Engineering and Management	17
Archives of Civil and Mechanical Engineering	7
Water Resources Bulletin	5
Stochastic Environmental Research and Risk Assessment	5
Energy and Buildings	4
Automation in Construction	4
Transportation	3
Journal of Hydroinformatics	3
Journal of Advanced Transportation	3
Building and Environment	3
Tunnelling and Underground Space Technology	2
Transportation Research Record	2
Transportation Research Part E Logistics and Transportation Review	2
Structure and Infrastructure Engineering	2
Journal of Water Resources Planning and Management Asce	2
Journal of Construction Engineering and Management	2
Journal of Computing in Civil Engineering	2
Civil Engineering and Environmental Systems	2
Baltic Journal of Road and Bridge Engineering	2
Other 23 journals*	1

Note: \*The following journals have one article each: *Water International, Thin Walled Structures, Stochastic Hydrology and Hydraulics, Proceedings of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers Part F Journal of Rail And Rapid Transit, Preservation of Roadway Structures and Pavements, Ocean Engineering, Natural and Anthropogenic Disasters Vulnerability Preparedness and Mitigation, KSCE Journal Of Civil Engineering, Journal of Water Supply Research and Technology Aqua, Journal of Urban Planning and Development ASCE, Journal of Transportation Engineering ASCE, Journal of Performance of Constructed Facilities, Journal of Irrigation and Drainage Engineering, Journal of Hazardous Materials, Journal of Earthquake Engineering, Journal of Construction Engineering and Management ASCE, International Journal of Concrete Structures and Materials, European Journal of Environmental and Civil Engineering, Earthquakes and Structures, Construction and Building Materials, Computers Structures, Computer Aided Civil and Infrastructure Engineering, Advances in Structural Engineering.*

Table 4. Methods applied in articles on Civil Engineering

Methods	Articles
AHP, Saaty 1980	37
TOPSIS, Hwang, Yoon 1981	22
Fuzzy Sets, Zadeh 1965	14
ELECTRE, Roy 1968	13
ANP, Saaty 1996	8
PROMETHEE, Mareschal, Brans 1992	7
COPRAS, Zavadskas et al. 1994b	7
WASPAS, Zavadskas et al. 2012	6
ARAS, Zavadskas, Turskis 2010	5
VIKOR, Opricovic 1998	5
SAW, MacCrimon 1968	4
Entropy, Shannon 1948	3
SWARA, Kersulienė et al. 2010	2
Permutation method, Paelinck 1976	2
TODIM, Gomes, Lima 1992	1

## Conclusions

MCDM methods have been developing since the 18th century. Starting with 1990, research related to these methods gained a new momentum.

Currently, Thomson Reuters Web of Science Core Collection refers 2463 publications on a topic of MCDM, 1749 of which are articles.

Publications applying MCDM in Civil Engineering (138) are in the tenth place. Nevertheless, 61% of the publications were announced in 2011–2015.

Most publications (26) were announced by researchers of the USA. The second place is occupied by Lithuanian researchers with 22 publications.

The top ten of researchers with most articles on the MCDM topic involve five authors from VGTU.

The majority of publications (18) were printed in the journal *Water Resources Management*. The second place with 17 articles is occupied by the *Journal of Civil Engineering and Management* published by VGTU and Taylor & Francis.

About 18% of all published articles used MCDM methods authored by VGTU researchers, namely, COPRAS, WASPAS, ARAS and SWARA.

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**Edmundas Kazimieras ZAVADSKAS** is Professor, Head of the Department of Construction Technology and Management at Vilnius Gediminas Technical University, Vilnius, Lithuania, and a chief researcher at Research Institute of Smart Building Technologies. He has a PhD in building structures (1973) and DrSc (1987) in building technology and management. He is a member of the Lithuanian and several foreign Academies of Sciences. He is Doctor Honoris Causa at Poznan, Saint-Petersburg, and Kiev universities. He is Editor in Chief and a member of editorial boards of a number of research journals. He is author and co-author of more than 400 papers and a number of monographs. Research interests are: building technology and management, decision-making theory, automation in design and decision support systems.

**Oleg KAPLIŃSKI** is Professor of Civil Engineering at Faculty of Architecture (IAP), Poznan University of Technology, Poznan, Poland. He lectures economics and organization of the investment process, as well as the theory and principles of work places design. The author of 240 publications. Doctor Honoris Causa of VGTU (1996). Member of the CE Committee of the Polish Academy of Sciences. His current research are: an integral management, integral design, risk management, theory of decision making and research methods in CE and architecture.

**Jurgita ANTUCHEVIČIENĖ** is Professor at the Department of Construction Technology and Management at Vilnius Gediminas Technical University, Vilnius, Lithuania. She received a PhD in Civil Engineering in 2005. She is author and co-author of about 50 scientific papers. Research interests include: multiple criteria analysis, decision-making theories and decision support systems, sustainable development, construction management and investment.