



The Cost of Environmental Degradation (Directions in Development)

Lelia Croitoru, Maria Sarraf

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How much is a cleaner environment worth? For policy makers, that question used to go largely unanswered. Many economic activities cause environmental degradation, entailing real costs to the economy and to people's welfare. Knowing the extent of these costs is crucial for identifying a country's main environmental priorities and allocating appropriate funds for environmental protection. Over the past decade, the World Bank has initiated a systematic effort to measure the costs of environmental degradation in the Middle East and North Africa, shedding new light on their magnitude and on the need for policy changes. In many cases, these costs were found to be surprisingly large. 'The Cost of Environmental Degradation: Case Studies from the Middle East and North Africa' brings together the best case studies of this program and summarizes their policy impacts at the national and regional levels. The case studies quantify monetarily the annual damage due to environmental degradation and express these estimates as percentages of the countries' gross domestic product. The studies use the most recent environmental valuation methods to estimate the economic costs resulting from air pollution, water degradation, deforestation, and land degradation. Uniquely, the book dedicates a case study to value the costs of environmental degradation resulting from an oil spill and demolition waste in times of conflict. The studies then illuminate the concrete implications on policy, investments, and institutions for the respective nations. This book will be of interest to policy makers, nongovernmental organizations, and academic and research institutions.

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