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### Abstract

Soil erosion is a complex and dynamic conjunction of processes that work on all natural systems, but which are particularly serious and problematical in semi-arid environments subject to strong human pressure. The Segura basin finds itself in this situation. The loss of soil in this area of SE Spain is one of the highest and most serious of the whole Iberian peninsula; in some parts it reaches  $200 \text{ Tm ha}^{-1} \text{ year}^{-1}$  and in others up to  $300 \text{ Tm ha}^{-1} \text{ year}^{-1}$ , which amounts to a soil thickness of  $\frac{1}{4}$  and 20 mm, respectively. These irreversible soil losses imply the reduction and destruction of the biological or productive potential of the earth and lead to desertification.



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