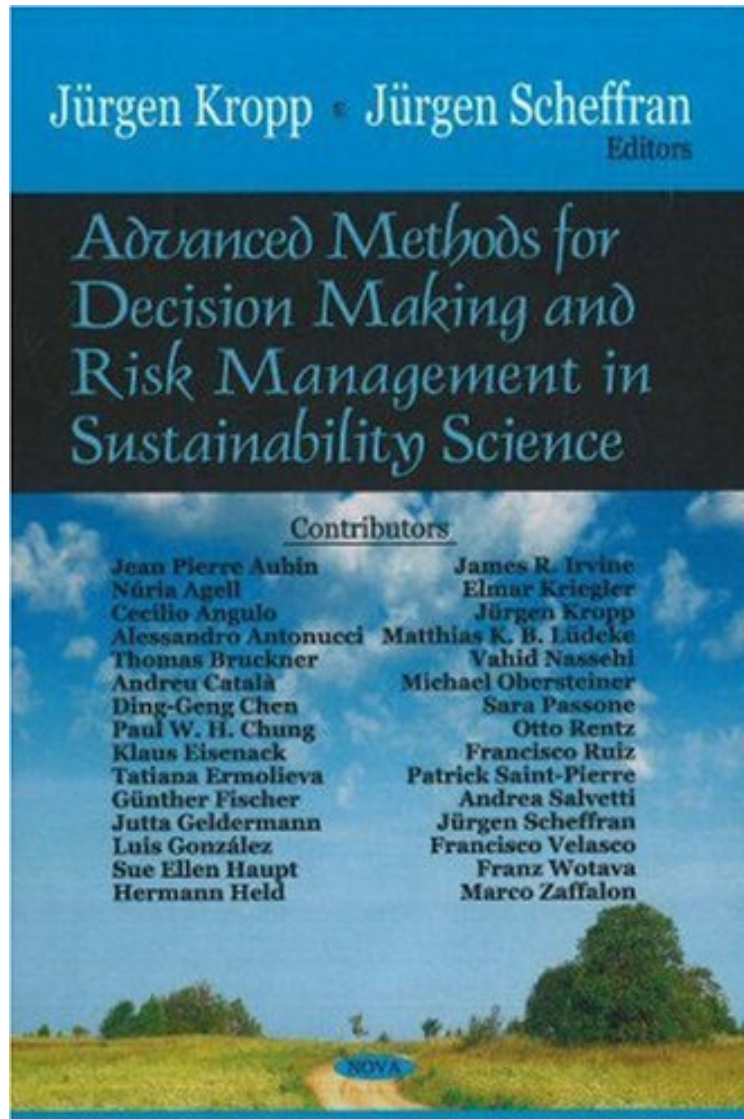


Advanced Methods for Decision Making and Risk Management in Sustainability Science

Jurgen Scheffran

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Understanding sustainability is vital to resolving and managing many of today's problems, on a global as well as local scale. Sustainability science is an emerging field of research that comprises concepts and methodologies from different disciplines in a problem-oriented manner. Research efforts are often concentrated in a variety of sectoral domains. The heterogeneity of scientific tasks involved here and the complexity of environmental and social systems call for specific research strategies which are generally a compromise between high-precision analysis and educated guesswork. For understanding of global change, which embraces a variety of processes on several scales, information needs to be refined and compressed rather than amplified. This book aims at presenting advanced methods and techniques to make them available to a wider scientific community involved in global change and sustainability research. The contributions describe novel schemes to study the relationship between the socio-economic and the natural sphere and/or the social dimensions of climate and global change. The methodological approaches can be useful in the design and management of environmental systems, for policy development, environmental risk reduction, and prevention/mitigation strategies. In this context, a variety of environmental and sustainability aspects can be addressed, e.g. changes in the natural environment and land use, environmental impacts on human health, economics and technology, institutional interactions, human activities and behaviour.