

Preface

The environmental challenges of the modern era cannot be faced with scientific knowledge alone. Additionally, experience of how such knowledge can be communicated and applied, an understanding of the inherent social factors as well as knowledge of the economic causes and effects, are all of equal importance. It is therefore important that practitioners of Environmental and Resource Management (ERM) combine the fields of environmental science, engineering, management and sociology. Environmental and resource managers may be found in all industry sectors, as well as in politics, commerce and academia, thus must be fundamentally transdisciplinary. This volume illustrates the broad range of work currently being performed by practitioners of ERM by presenting a collection of papers written by ERM Alumni from the Brandenburg University of Technology, Cottbus, Germany.

The work in this volume, which has been divided into three distinct sections: Energy Efficiency and Innovation; Planning and Decision Making; and Limits to Managing the Environment, demonstrates the wide reaching implementation possibilities of ERM as well as the range of knowledge and experience of its practitioners. The need for such a broad expertise in global environmental issues has been demonstrated repeatedly over recent years. Consider for example the damaging disconnect between climate scientists and climate change-denying politicians in the USA or the need to negotiate an accord on cash benefit sharing for genetic resource exploitation before any agreement on biodiversity protection could be reached at the COP10 in Nagoya Japan. These examples demonstrate a very current and serious breakdown in communication between socio-political and scientific bodies. Clearly there is a need for politicians who can communicate with ecologists, economists who understand scientific dialogue and scientists who can argue their case with social advocate groups. Graduates in ERM can provide a method of bridging these seemingly incompatible issues or even become specialists in one field while retaining sufficient knowledge and experience in others to make that bridge unnecessary.

This volume is the result of the 2008 BTU ERM Alumni Conference and represents the collected works of ERM Alumni as well as young professionals and researchers who are involved in the field of ERM. The connecting theme of these works is the successful implementation of environmental and resource management in a wide range of issues including energy management, climate change response, fossil fuels, sustainable development and the economic, social and legal aspects of resource management in developing countries.

The completion of this volume leaves us indebted to many people. First of all we wish to thank all authors from the various countries for their valuable articles, which made possible this comprehensive publication. We thank the German Academic Exchange Service in Bonn (DAAD – Deutscher Akademischer Auslandsdienst) for its generous support in organising the ERM Alumni Conference and in publishing the resulting book. We are very grateful to Gerhard Wiegleb for his help in preparing this volume and for the comprehensive review of all chapters.

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We hope that researchers, academics, students as well as teachers of ERM will find the content of this book valuable in their work, research and studies.

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