

Preface

This book lies at the interface of the natural sciences, economics and philosophy. It builds on the results of a major research programme that has evolved over the last fifteen years in various strands, with the aim of providing conceptual foundations for ecological economics and for environmental policy.

As in any jointly authored book, each chapter has a different weight of contribution by the three authors. However, our collaboration in research and in writing this book was so extremely close that even when the original version of a chapter was drafted by only one or two of us, a significant influence of all three of us is present in every chapter. Furthermore, in writing various chapters of this book we have been very fortunate to enjoy the collaboration of a number of colleagues with backgrounds in business administration, chemistry, economics, engineering, mathematics, philosophy, physics. Each of them has made a unique and very different contribution, as acknowledged on pages vii–viii. As a result, this book is fundamentally interdisciplinary.

The University of Heidelberg's Interdisciplinary Institute for Environmental Economics provided an ideal platform for conducting this research. We are grateful for the opportunity to benefit from its environment of intellectual openness and scientific excellence. Indeed, all three authors, and most of the cooperating and contributing authors, have been associated with this institution in one way or another. We are also grateful for the comments and ideas that emerged from discussion with students when one of us (S.B.) taught courses on this material in Heidelberg in 2002/03 and 2004/05. In particular, we thank Christoph Heinzl, Eva Kiesele, Philipp Krohn, Karoline Rogge, Christian Traeger and Torsten Stein.

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