Introduction

This book covers Wuppertal Institute's findings on applied eco-efficiency concepts throughout Europe, with particular emphasis on Europe-based policies on material flows and energy. These findings are based on research, conducted from June 2000 until January 2002, in the context of the collaboration projects initiated by the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI), Mitsubishi Research Institute (MRI) and Nomura Research Institute (NRI). This book also contains conclusions regarding any application of the discussed concepts to Japanese sustainable development policies.

Since the beginning of the collaboration projects, four conferences have been held in Japan (Osaka, September 2000, Tokyo, March and September 2001, February 2002). The Wuppertal Institute (WI) itself has gained valuable experience through participating in these conferences. In addition, WI has convened small workshops in Wuppertal for selected experts with knowledge of Japanese policies. We consider these workshops essential for our research.

The publication of the revised and updated edition of our final report (in January 2002) is an additional reward and quite a good opportunity to disseminate Wuppertal Institute's policy analysis to a broader public. It covers a broad review of eco-efficiency concepts as they are in effect in several European countries, including Germany.

At this point we would like once more to thank cordially the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI), Mitsubishi Research Institute (MRI) and Nomura Research Institute (NRI) for entrusting WI with this study.

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