Meta-Analysis in Environmental Economics

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Preface

The present publication addresses the issue of comparative analysis of environmental economic policy studies at a meso level. It is based on the principles of meta-analysis, which means that studies for policy preparation are itself analyzed and evaluated from a more general and comparative perspective. It sets out to review various approaches to deal with such meta-analysis and presents various applications of meta-analysis to distinct fields of environmental economics and environmental policy analysis.

The study itself is the result of a project financed by the EU DG XII programme on ENVIRONMENT, Area III (contract number EV5V-CT94-0388), which deals with 'Research on Economic and Social Aspects of Environmental Issues' (1994-1996). The scientific research was undertaken by teams from three different universities in Europe, viz. the Free University of Amsterdam also acting as the coordinating institution, the University of Catania and the University of Loughborough (UK). The teams have tried to further develop and apply comparative analysis of meso environmental policy based on modern meta-analysis. The latter approach is able to synthesize results from separate but similar studies. Its aim is to enforce a more rigorous and systematic framework for evaluating case studies. The research in this publication has not only focussed attention on conventional meta-analytical (i.e. statistical) techniques, but also on advanced rough set analysis. The concept of meta-analysis has a considerable history in the natural sciences (e.g. medical research), but only recently it has begun to influence the social sciences (in particular, psychology). This book aims to demonstrate the methodological merits and empirical strengths of meta-analysis for environmental economics and policy analysis.

The strong research collaboration between the participating teams has to be recognized here as a noteworthy critical success factor, not only in the methodological but also in the applied part of this book. In addition to the main authors, various other colleagues have contributed to the contents of this book. Their names and specific contributions are listed on the following page. The actual writing of this book has taught the authors an important lesson on meta-analysis which is so beautifully expressed in an old Chinese saying: "If you read, you will forget; if you see, you will remember; if you do, you will understand".

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