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## Editorial: Offshore wind energy

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Welcome to another issue of the *International Journal of Environment and Sustainable Development*. This issue deals with one of the most actual topics in today's environment debate, namely the need to develop approaches and methods to use energy in a rational way. As part of this theme, alternative energy sources play a key role and wind energy is a matter of prime concern, especially in northern Europe.

Although the matter of wind energy is an important one, we do not often find resources that describe current trends and technologies in a comprehensive way. It is therefore with great pleasure, that we have been able to present you, our reader, with some of the best papers delivered at the 'Offshore Wind Conference' organised by the European Wind Energy Association (EWEA) and held in Brussels, Belgium on 10-12 December 2001, as part of EWEA's project 'Concerted Action on Offshore Wind Energy in Europe' (CA-OWEE). The aim of CA-OWEE is to define the current state of the art of offshore wind energy in Europe through gathering and evaluation of information from across Europe and to disseminate the resulting knowledge to all interested parties, in order to help stimulate the development of the industry. The project, which was funded by the European Commission, was recently completed. It divides offshore wind energy into five clusters of subjects, reviews the recent history and summarise, the current state of affairs, relating to:

- *Cluster 1* offshore technology, of wind turbines and support structures
- *Cluster 2* grid integration, energy supply and financing
- *Cluster 3* resources and economics
- *Cluster 4* activities and prospects
- *Cluster 5* social acceptance, environmental impact and politics

The conclusions from these surveys are then used to define recommendations for the future RTD strategy for Europe. The project's 17 partners come from 13 countries, thus covering the majority of the European Community's coastline. The partners cover a wide range of expertise and include developers, utilities, consultants, research institutes and universities.

The papers in this issue, devoted to offshore wind energy, not only contain state-of-the-art information on this important issue, but also outline some of the areas where future action is expected. Happy reading!