

# *Science-policy interaction in Estonian forestry*

Paavo Kaimre

Institute of Forestry and Rural Engineering  
Estonian University of Life Sciences

Biri, 16th of May 2018

Paavo Kaimre, 2018



# Introduction

- In Estonia, research is carried out mostly by universities. Forestry related research groups work at the Estonian University of Life Sciences (forest science), University of Tartu (ecology, biosciences), Tallinn University (ecology).
- Different ministries are responsible for forestry issues: Ministry of the Environment, Ministry of Rural Affairs, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communication.
- Universities are administered by the Ministry of Education and Research.
- Fundamental research is financed by the Estonian Research Council
- Participatory approach is used when working with forest policy matters



# Forest-relevant policy documents in the country

- **Estonian Forest Policy, approved by the Parliament 1997**

## 3.9 Forest Research

The objective of forest related research is to provide scientific background information in support of practical decision-making in forest management, conservation and multiple use of forests.

Forest research will also support the formulation and evaluation of forest-related policies by conducting scientific analyses on key issues.



# Forest-relevant policy documents in the country

## Estonian Forestry Development Programme until 2020

Due to limited resources for R&D, the participation of researchers in international programmes, networks, doctoral schools etc. is essential.

The number of researchers is rather small in different research areas, therefore there is a lack of visible opinion leaders. The participation of scientists in policy formulation is modest.



# Forest-relevant policy documents in the country

## Estonian Forestry Development Programme 2021- 2030

The process of preparation of the new EFDP started in March 2018

Researchers are involved in the work groups

A background study on acute topics will be carried out within the next  
months



# Forest-relevant policy documents in the country

**Forest Act**

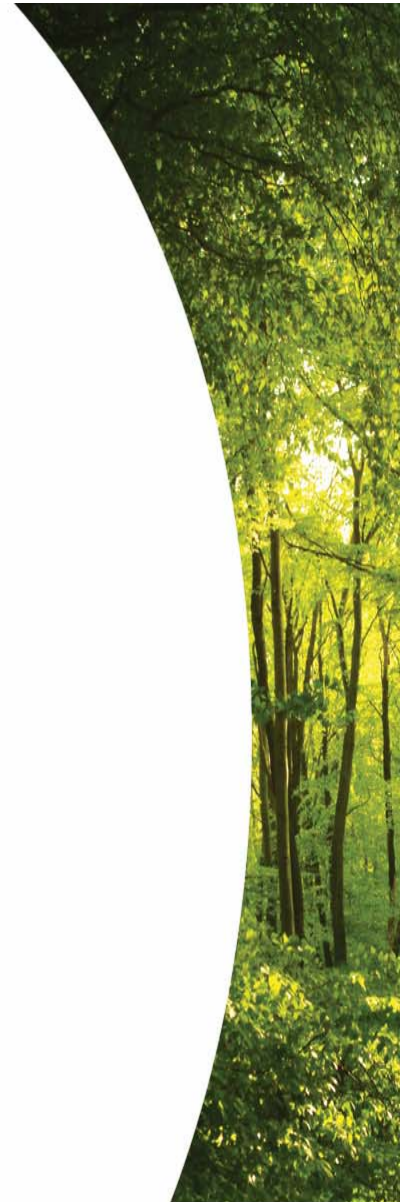
**Rules of Forest Management**

Changes in these documents have created a short-term demand for „express studies“ to clarify topics and to answer questions under discussion



# International agreements influencing the forest policy

- EU forest strategy
- Forest Europe
- The Paris Agreement
- LULUCF Decision 529/2013/EU Art 10



# National strategies influencing the forest policy

Estonian Environmental Strategy until 2030

Development Plan for Nature Protection

Action Plan for Renewable Energy Production in Estonia until 2020

Estonian Rural Development Plan (ERDP) for 2014–2020





# Science-practice and science-policy interfaces in Estonia

The main facilitators of science-practice interactions should be the **Research Council of the State Forest Management Centre** and the **Foundation Private Forest Centre**.

Representatives of the Estonian University of Life Sciences and University of Tartu are members of the **Forestry Council at the Ministry of the Environment**.



# Estonian Research Council

Applied research in smart specialisation growth areas – NUTIKAS

Support for sectoral R&D – RITA

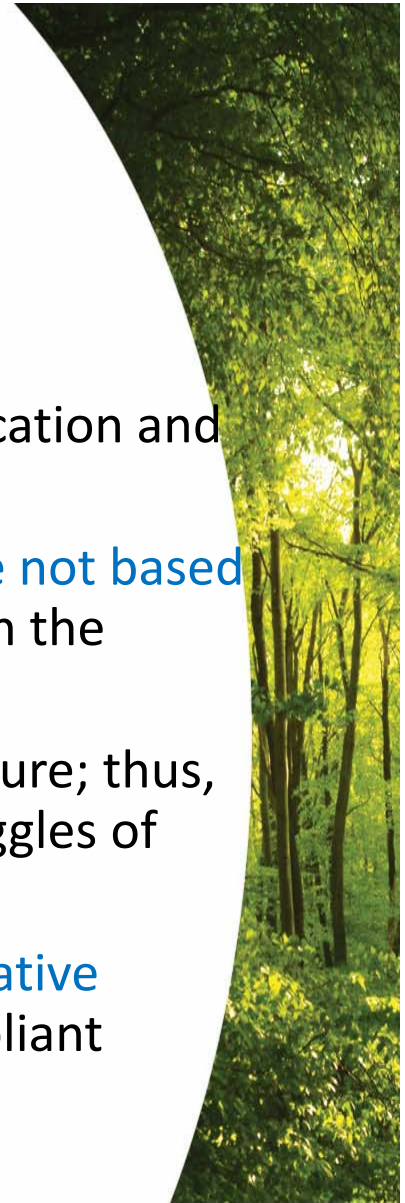
The Ministries select the topics for applied research based on their sectoral needs. Research is conducted by R&D institutions. RITA aims to strengthen the capabilities of the Ministries in commissioning applied research needed by the state.



# Comments on participation of scientists

- Scientists are **relatively modest**, they will not start an altercation and perhaps it does not suit them.
- Usually heated vigorous discussions of **policy processes are not based on scientific information** presented by the scientists, but on the *Weltanschauung* (world-view) of the stakeholder.
- The policymaking discussions are not academic in their nature; thus, **scientists act more like observers**, just monitoring the struggles of other stakeholders.
- Scientists are sometimes **expected to take** a more **authoritative attitude** in challenging discussions, rather than being compliant

Teder and Kaimre, 2018



# Concluding remarks

- Changes in the national forest policy documents promote the co-operation of policy makers and researchers.
- Policy-makers expect from researchers a quick and definite response to topical questions.
- Indicators of research performance do not support the participation in policy processes.
- Short-term demand for topical studies prevails on mid- and long-term studies and research programs.

Thank you for your attention!  
[paavo.kaimre@emu.ee](mailto:paavo.kaimre@emu.ee)