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LIFE15 CCM/DE/000138

LIFE project «Reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by restoring degraded peatlands in  
Northern European Lowland»

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LIFE Peat Restore

# **Socio-economic impact assessment Estonia**

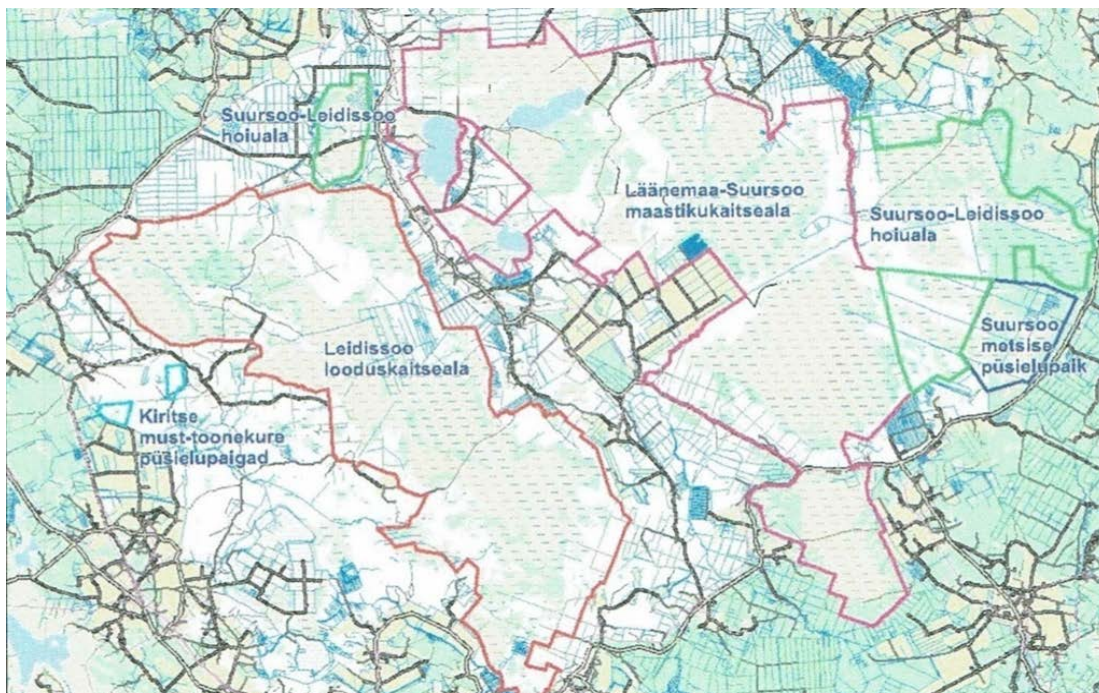
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### **Project site:**

Läänemaa Suursoo and Leidissoo is a mire complex (22,628 ha), parts of which have different nature conservation status (Fig. below) and have different quality of natural status. The Life Peat Restore project area makes an eastern part of this mire complex (3,343 ha). It has conservational status as limited-conservation area for protecting plants (*Myrica gale*), migratory birds and breeding birds (*Circus pygargus*, *Grus grus*, *Tetrao tetrix*), and Natura 2000 habitats.



**Fig. Mire complex at Läänemaa Suursoo and Leidissoo, protected in different level. Leidissoo is the nature protection area, Läänemaa Suursoo is the landscape protection area, Suursoo-Leidissoo hoiuala is the special protection area with a permanent habitat for *Tetrao urogallus*. The eastern part of mire complex (3343 ha) is the project site of Life Peat Restore. All sites together make the Suursoo-Leidissoo nature- and bird area (EE0040202). Source: Map of the Estonian Landboard.**

### **Status:**

International nature- and bird site, Natura 2000 site. Part of the project area makes permanent habitat for *Tetrao urogallus*.

### **Socio-economic assessment methods:**

In general term, Social Impact Assessment (SIA) includes the processes of analysing, monitoring and managing the intended and unintended social sequences, both positive and negative, of project and any social change processes (Vanclay, 2003).

All stakeholders should be involved in the assessment process. In current assessment, stakeholders were not questioned personally but their interests on the project site were taken into account by compilers of the assessment.



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The stakeholders who are directly interested of project impacts, all connected to the nature conservation, and only one, hunters, are designated to resource use.

### **The stakeholders:**

- Environmental Board, Republic of Estonia as landowner. It has to assure the favourable status of conservation values;
- Estonian State Forest Management Centre – it has to manage forests in protection zone, install border bollards;
- Environmental Inspectorate, Republic of Estonia – inspection of the protected area;
- Land owners – management of forests;
- Hunters – the area is in the Padise hunting district and they have to follow the hunting rules on the site.

### **Assessment:**

#### **1. Direct interests**

The project site is designated for nature conservation. Site is not directly used for any economic purposes besides hunting and does not provide any direct economic benefits besides hunting products. Beside hunting, picking berries and mushrooms is also allowed on the project site. Any other economic activities are prohibited.

The near surrounding of the project site is weakly populated, the villages are outside the potential impact zone of water level rising up on the mire.

As the only landowner on the site is the State, then most stakeholders work for implementation of nature protection goals. Changes related to project implementation (rising water level, termination of afforestation) only support the improvement of the quality of the habitats, especially for rare plant and bird species. Considering that protected areas nearby are rich in rare species, especially rare plants and birds, then improving site conditions on the Life Peat Restore project area is the prerequisite for increase for species richness on the project site.

From 01.07.2017 the Regulation No. 73 of the Ministry of Environment came into force. Kaldamäe and Kõrtsi streams on the project area and the Piirsalu River on the border of the Project area are as the migratory corridors for the salmon and trout. It requires us to take fish protection into account when adjusting the water level.

The forests bordering the project area in north and east will not have any negative effect by our activities (rising water level) because of considerable surface height differences in most cases.

#### **2. Climate regulation**

Estonia has endorsed the EU policy to reduce greenhouse gas emission. Peatlands play a crucial role in the global carbon budget. The main aim of the project Life Peat Restore is to improve the regulation of carbon dioxide and methane cycles, in other words, change peatlands that are influenced by drainage and are sources of GHG to the carbon sinks.

Estonian long-term policy guidelines for shifting to a low-carbon economy, which means gradually transforming the economy and energy system in accordance with the intended purpose and making it



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more resource-efficient, productive, and environmentally friendly. By 2050, the aim is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Estonia by almost 80% compared to 1990 levels.

### 3. **Jobs market and Local service market**

Project designing and implementation will give temporal jobs for approximately 10-12 people. According to the rules, the companies will be selected through competitive tendering.

Long fieldwork period during project implementation supports local accommodation providers in the Lääne county and the western part of the Harju county. For example, in 2017 some 25 person-nights were paid for accommodation.

### 4. **Tourism**

In the conservation management plan for whole mire complex (Leidissoo-Suursoo ... 2016-2025) the walking paths, camping places, etc. are planned to be built in the neighbouring mire complex (Läänemaa Suursoo). The Project area is not dedicated for touristic arrangements, now specific tracks are not planned to construct as the accessibility to the site is too complicated.

### 5. **Reduction of GHG emission**

The project area is drained that caused changes in peat and vegetation and has turned the site into important GHG source.

#### **Literature cited:**

Vanclay F. 2003. International Principles for Social Impact Assessment, Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal, 21:1, 5-12.

Suursoo-Leidissoo hoiuala, Leidissoo looduskaitseala, Läänemaa Suursoo maastikukaitseala, Kiritse must-toonekure püsielupaikade ja Suursoo metsise püsielupaiga kaitsekorralduskava 2016-2025.



ESTONIA									
	INDICATORS								
	DIRECT					INDIRECT			
Units	Economic contribution	Ecosystem regulating services (GHG emissions, water quality, biodiversity)	Awareness raising	Scientific knowledge	Social capital	Ecosystem supporting services	Ecosystem provisioning services	Fire/flood prevention	Ecosystem cultural services
Stakeholder and Duty holder involvement			11		11				
Information boards/panels	0		0	0	0				
Employment (Individuals/companies hired by the project)	8								
Amount spent (€)	355,476.31								
Number of jobs (FTE and PTE)	8								
Number of events and conferences organised / participated			9	9	9				
Number of participants in Events / Conferences			1.075	1.075	1.075				
Number of hectares restored		0				0	0	0	0
GWP (tons of GWP equiv CO <sub>2</sub> -eq/yr)		9700,9t							
Number of Print media			8	8	8				
Number of Publications/Reports, promotional material produced			25	25	25				
Website - visits (to website in Estonian)			1.217	1.217	1.217				