

KOLI FORUM 2019

KOLI THESES



Wealth, health, and wellbeing from
the Nordic forest

Preface

In October 2019, the participants of Koli Forum, after having listened to the presentations and taken part in the discussions on the topic of *“Wealth, health, and wellbeing from the Nordic forests”*, and recognizing

- the role of forests and forest products in combatting climate change,
- the impact of global trends like population growth, urbanization, aging populations, etc. on the demand for products and services from forests,
- the need to secure biodiversity and prevent environmental pollution and degradation,
- the growing opportunities in bioeconomy and circular economy,
- the special features and values that the Nordic societies can offer, and the necessity to activate this region’s contribution in providing solutions to global challenges,

have formulated the Koli Theses as follows:

Substitution offers great potential

Forests offer climate benefits:

- ✓ carbon sinks in forests
- ✓ wood-based products storing carbon
- ✓ wood-based products substituting greenhouse gas-intensive materials.

Substitution effects of wood-based products are much more important than the net accumulation of carbon in forests.

Wood should be utilized so that the carbon is locked out of the atmosphere as long as economically viable and wood-based products to be recovered as carbon-neutral energy at the end of their life-cycle.



Forest-based, carbon-neutral solutions need to be scaled up

In order to be able to respond to global demand, the forest-based carbon-neutral solutions need to be scaled up.

- ✓ Solutions, where the best characteristics of different materials are combined, offer a means for scaling up.
- ✓ Public procurement can provide a boost for scaling up.

For sustainable bio-based investments, stable operation environment is a prerequisite. Policy coherence is necessary in order to avoid negative spillover effects.

New approaches, taking into account traditions and cultural aspects, are needed to raise consumer awareness on forest sector's climate mitigation potential.

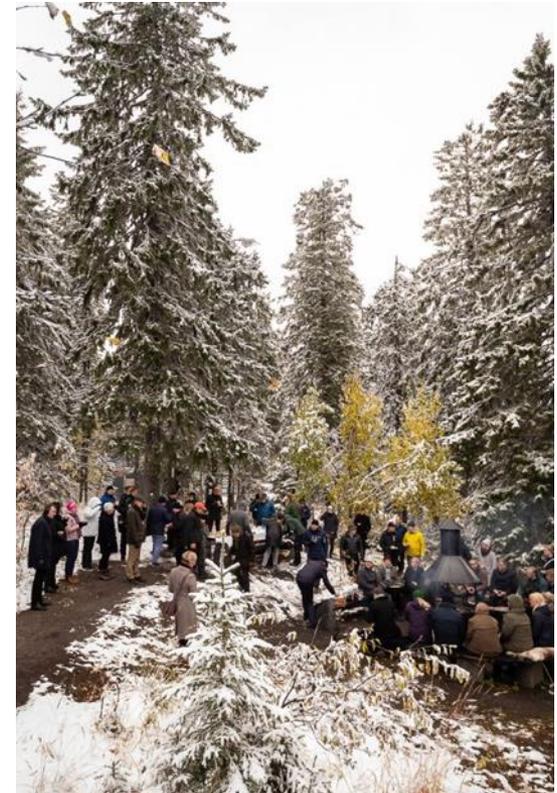
The above considerations need to be incorporated into the emerging, updated European Forest Strategy and in the European Green Deal.

Circular bio-based Europe requires funding for innovations

A large part of Europe's bio-based products (non-food) and solutions originate already today from forests. However, in many EU policies the role of forests as a provider of carbon-neutral solutions is not fully recognized.

Transition towards a truly carbon neutral and circular bio-based Europe requires innovations from the entire forest sector, including not only products and processes, but also services and social innovations.

Adequate financing is a prerequisite for sustainable bio-based innovations. **If new funding is not available, re-focusing of existing finance instruments towards climate smart solutions is the key.**



The EU initiative on sustainable finance is welcome

In order to meet the global climate targets, there is a need to speed up the transition to a circular and bio-based economy with the help of investments that support sustainability.

Therefore, we welcome the EU initiative on sustainable finance. It is, however, critical to realize that:

- ✓ **sustainability of the investments should be measured objectively**
- ✓ **inherent characteristics of each sector and member state need to be taken into account, and**
- ✓ **versatile benefits offered by the forest-based products and services need to be acknowledged.**



Collaboration would boost health benefits available from forests

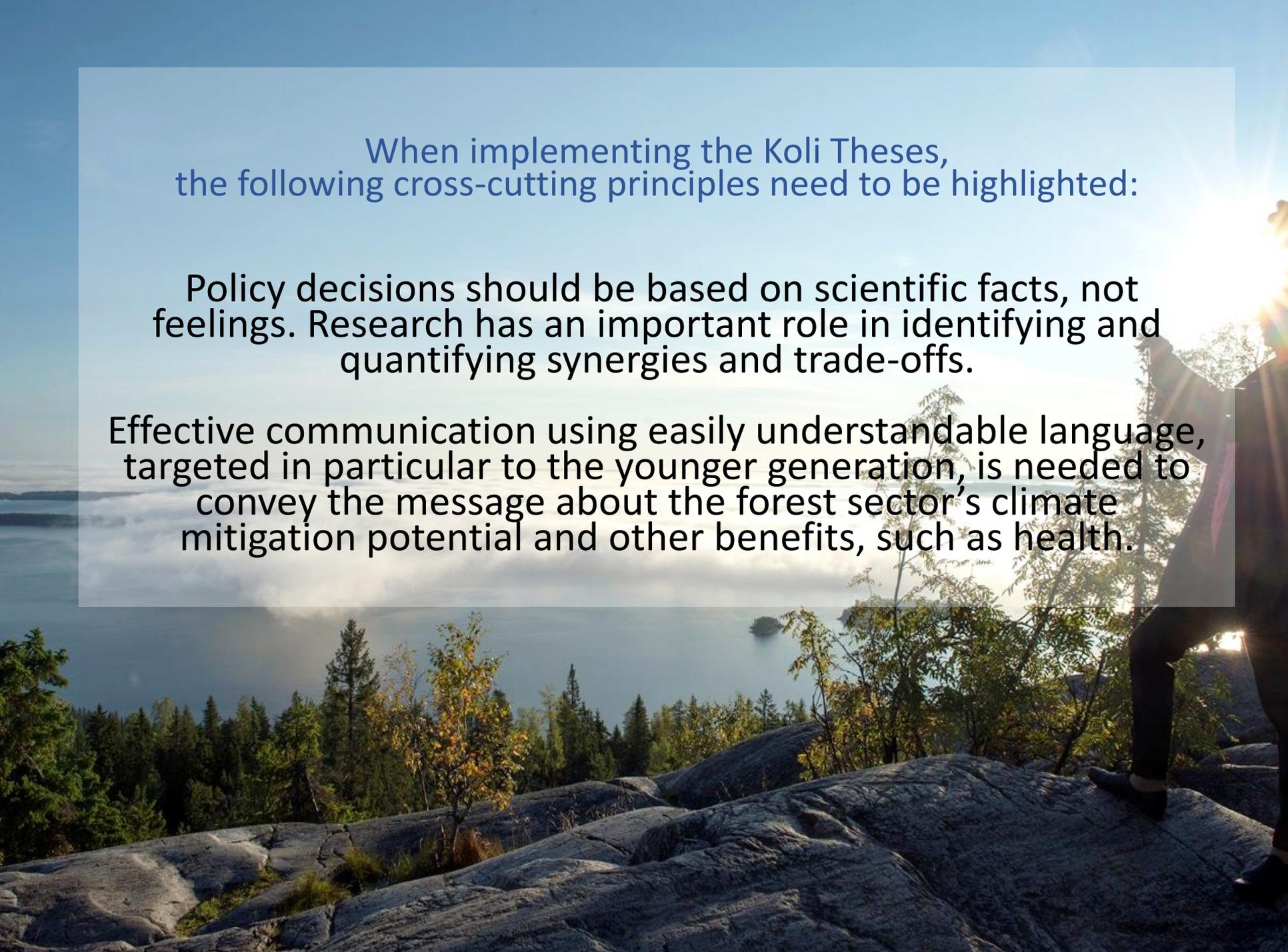
Health benefits offered by forests are becoming ever more valuable for the aging and urbanized societies.

In land-use planning, access to forests for all citizens should be safeguarded in and around towns and cities.

Collaboration platforms combining forestry and health sectors, tourism & recreation and nature conservation interests should be established.

Extension services and incentive schemes are needed to enhance the provision of health, recreation and biodiversity values from private forests.



A scenic landscape featuring a person standing on a large, grey rock in the foreground. The person is wearing a dark jacket and pants, and their right arm is raised. The background shows a dense forest of green and yellow trees, a body of water, and a bright sky with the sun low on the horizon, creating a lens flare effect. The text is overlaid on a semi-transparent white box in the upper half of the image.

When implementing the Koli Theses,
the following cross-cutting principles need to be highlighted:

Policy decisions should be based on scientific facts, not feelings. Research has an important role in identifying and quantifying synergies and trade-offs.

Effective communication using easily understandable language, targeted in particular to the younger generation, is needed to convey the message about the forest sector's climate mitigation potential and other benefits, such as health.

The Koli Verdict

Acknowledging the unique nature of cooperation between governments and institutions in the Nordic countries, we suggest to utilize the Nordic platforms to promote and foster the Koli Theses. These high-priority topics deserve to be taken into account in national and European level decision making and influencing.

The creative Koli spirit that contributed to insightful discussions and forward-looking policy recommendations, led also to the conclusion that this type of process is well worth continuing and strengthening.

Therefore, we also propose to initiate negotiations among the Nordic colleagues in order to consider options for **advancing and extending the Koli Forum to the Nordic level.**



For more information visit
www.koliforum.fi

ABOUT KOLI FORUM ASSOCIATION: Koli Forum is a discussion forum for global leaders. Topics of the Forum are related to natural resources and the bioeconomy from the availability of raw materials, their economic use and environmental aspects. Koli Forum has evolved into a trendsetting advisory forum in the fields of the bioeconomy and sustainable use of natural resources.

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