

## Letter of Commitment

21.04.2025 No 1-7/2025/2888

### *NordForsk project application „Adapting drainage systems for future climates to ensure forest production, water quality and biodiversity“*

To whom it may concern

The Estonian State Forest Management Centre (RMK) supports the research project application aimed to investigate the impacts of climate change-induced drought stress in drained forest ecosystems and the potential of adaptive drainage as a mitigation strategy to enhance forest resilience, productivity, and biodiversity.

According to RMK's Development Plan 2024-2028, a key strategic objective is to promote ecologically sustainable forest management in the context of a rapidly changing climate. One challenge is the increasing frequency and severity of drought events in drained forests, especially peatland forests. These changes threaten forest productivity, carbon sequestration potential, and the integrity of aquatic and terrestrial biodiversity.

The proposed research addresses a knowledge gap by seeking to elucidate the role of seasonal water availability as a limiting factor in tree growth and biodiversity within drained forest landscapes. In addition, the project aims to assess the effectiveness of adaptive drainage interventions – such as overflow dams and culvert regulators – in retaining water within forest drainage systems during critical periods. While such dual-regulation systems have been successfully used in agriculture, their applicability to forest management is largely unexplored.

This initiative directly supports RMK's strategic interest in developing adaptive management tools based on empirical evidence and ecological modelling. The findings will contribute to enhancing the adaptive capacity of Estonian state forests and ensure the long-term provision of ecosystem services under increasing climatic pressures.

RMK has committed to supporting the project by providing relevant research areas in state-owned forests, collaborating in field activities, construction design and construction work execution. We also welcome the project's international dimension and cross-border collaboration, which we believe will increase the applicability of the findings.

We are confident that the results of this research will offer a valuable contribution to both forest science and practice, providing a solid foundation for the development of climate-resilient forest management strategies in our region.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed digitally)

Mikk Marran  
Chairman of the Management Board