



# How to make the regional impact assessment, rural proofing, a routine part of the decision-making process of officials across the government, in all ministries?

Some ideas and examples from Estonia

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# Starting questions and lines of action



We, Aare and Taavi, work in tandem at the Estonian Ministry of Rural Affairs when the **rural proofing** related challenges and solutions are discussed in our ministry or in other ministries.

**How the better regulation rules with advisory and oversight activities may support the use of regional impact assessment (e.g. rural proofing) on the national level of policy-making?**

Three main lines of action:

## 1. The rules and guidelines

In **2021** the Central Government guidelines for the regulatory impact assessment of strategy documents, EU affairs and draft acts were supplemented with **rural proofing** issues (*Impact Assessment Checklist*, Ch. 9, e.g. the impact on city, rural and coastal areas). In **2022**, the **rural proofing toolbox** needs some **communications, training seminars, etc in all ministries**.

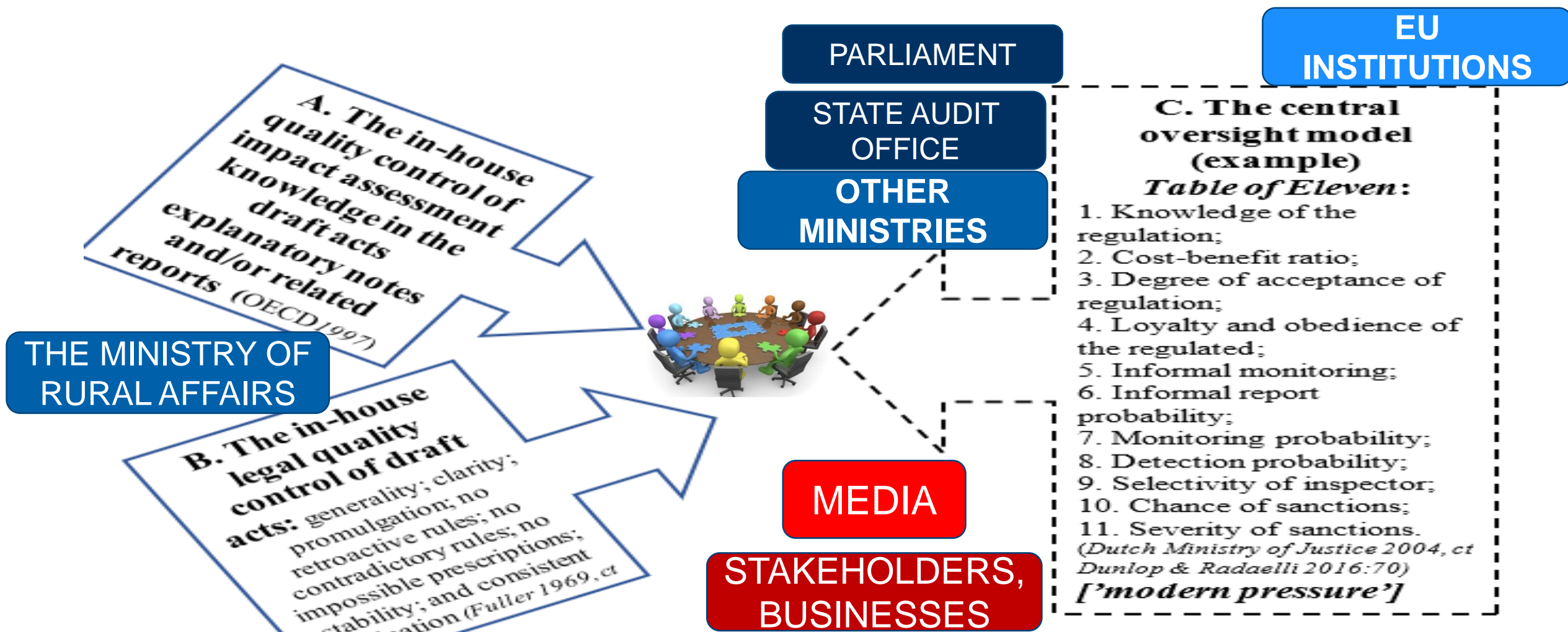
## 2. The oversight system

Based on the rules we have good opportunities in the inter-ministerial processes of **planning, coordination and approval of draft strategy documents and draft acts**, to draw attention to the lack of rural proofing knowledge, to consult, to block, etc.

## 3. Co-operation and advisory bodies

**Active participation** in the **policy-law-service design** of our and other ministries, when a policy initiative will have some impact on the well-being of people in rural and coastal areas. We both are the members of many **advisory bodies**.

# Example: How the oversight system and behavioural approach may support the better regulation, e.g. regional impact assessment / rural proofing ?! 😊



**Figure 7:** The quality control tools of draft acts and the behavioural approach of oversight. Compiled by A.Kasemets (2018, 2019).

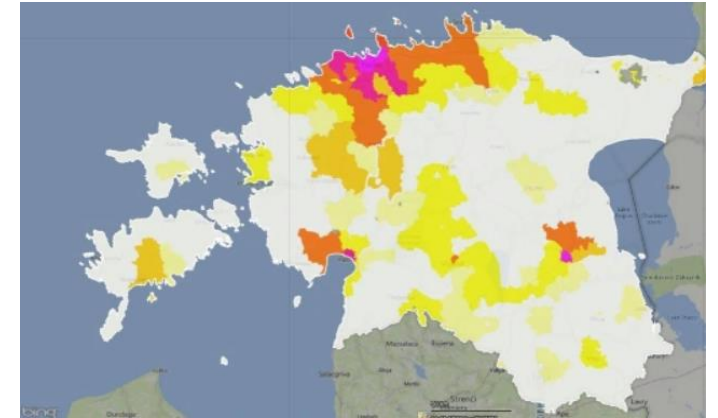
Figure on „modern behavioural pressure“: Aare Kasemets „How the oversight system and behavioural approach may support the institutionalisation of better regulation measures, e.g. simplification: the case of EU/Estonian draft legislation in food safety“ – Better Regulation Network conference, 4-5 April 2019, Prague.

# If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together

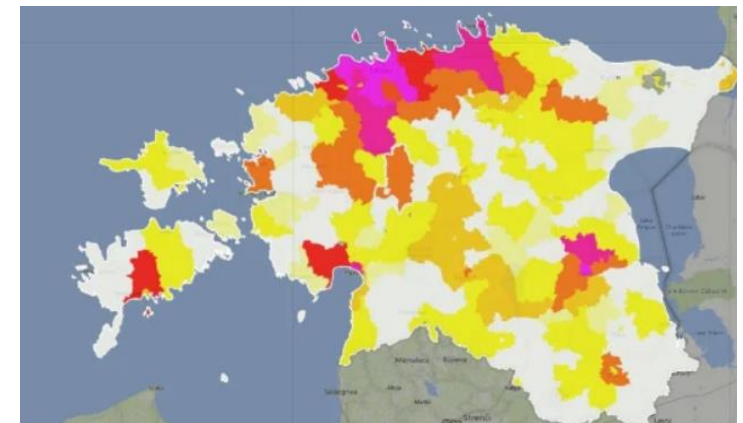
- Key point is other ministries, who are responsible for sectorial (social services, healthcare, transport, IT and so on) developments and their decisions and attitude towards rural and coastal areas. Our aim is to use the expertise that already are there in other ministries in specific fields in our advantage:

For example ministry of education knows about the situation of schools (inc rural schools) better than us. So it would be our aim to push them to start thinking about the schools in rural areas differently than schools in urban areas and to use us as, as a partner in this. So we can start the bilateral discussion and use their expertise in specific fields and our expertise in rural areas to assess possible impacts for schools in rural areas considering future development plans or regulations.

- When talking about rural proofing and the impact assessment for development plans and legal acts we wanted to understand is impact assessment for rural areas ignored in overall impact assessment and why it is ignored.



Mobile data usage in 10.03.2020, source Telia



Mobile data usage in 17.03.2020, source Telia

# What are the issues why evaluating the impact for rural areas are ignored?

Understand the problem....

**Rasmus is official, who evaluates that in the legislation, there is no impact, there is no impact for rural areas**

**PROFIIL:** MeM ametnik, kelle eesmärk on oma valdkonna probleemide lahendus leida ja kirjutab mõjuhindannusse enamasti "mõju regionaalarengule puudub".



**Kuidas mõjutavad teda kultuuriline keskkond ja sotsiaalsed suhted?**  
Näiteks: keegi ei kannu maski, kõik ütlevad kiirust. Sõbrad suitsetavad.

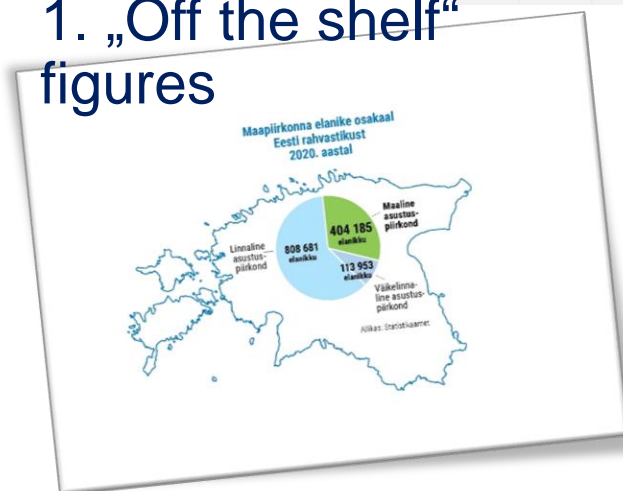
**Kuidas mõjutab teda füüsiline keskkond? Milliseid takistusi ja võimalusi see pakub?**  
Näiteks: pakendipruugi konteiner on kaugel ja alati täis; tal on jäänud, milles jooksma minna.

**Mida me soovime, et ta teeks? Kuidas saame teda mõjutada? Vajadused ja võimalused meie projektis:**

1. Et kõik teeksid sarnaselt mõjuhindannut "Maaelu kullastandard ametnikele"
2. Parameetrid võiks ette anda nt teenuse maksumus linnas/maal
3. Soovime, et juhtkond annaks omapoolse toetuse meie ideele.
4. Teave uuest meetodikast peab jõudma kõigile mõjuhindajateni.
5. Ajakriitilisi asju me mõjutada ei saa.
6. Olulised ajakohastatud näitajad maaelu kirjeldamiseks iga kord samad - tagaks selle, et ta järgmine kord juba teab, kust mida otsida.
7. Ütleme, millise täpsusega mõjusid hinnata soovime. Pigem soovime hinnangut, kas trend liigub ühes või teises suunas.
8. Oululised ajakohastatud näitajad maaelu kirjeldamiseks iga kord samad - tagaks selle, et ta järgmine kord juba teab, kust mida otsida.
9. Soovime, et kõik ametnikud mõtleksid, kas nende valdkonna tegevused mõjutavad elu maal.
10. Soovime kirjeldada, millal peaks ja millal ei peaks hindama mõju maaelule (sisetunde järgi praegu).
11. Soovime, et nt kaitsemünn näeks seoseid teede hoolduse ja maal elavate elanike vahel.
12. Kui on öeldud, et mõju on, siis minimaalselt peaks olema trend ära toodud.
13. Et oleks teada, kelle käest nõu küsida sh erinevates ministriumites.

...and offer solutions

1. „Off the shelf“ figures



2. Stakeholders and community leaders „(sädeinimesed = sparkplug person)<sup>1</sup>“



3. Annual reports



<sup>1</sup>a person who gives energy to an activity involving others



REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA  
MINISTRY OF RURAL AFFAIRS

**Thank you for your attention!**  
Hopefully you got some ideas for (y)our team! 😊



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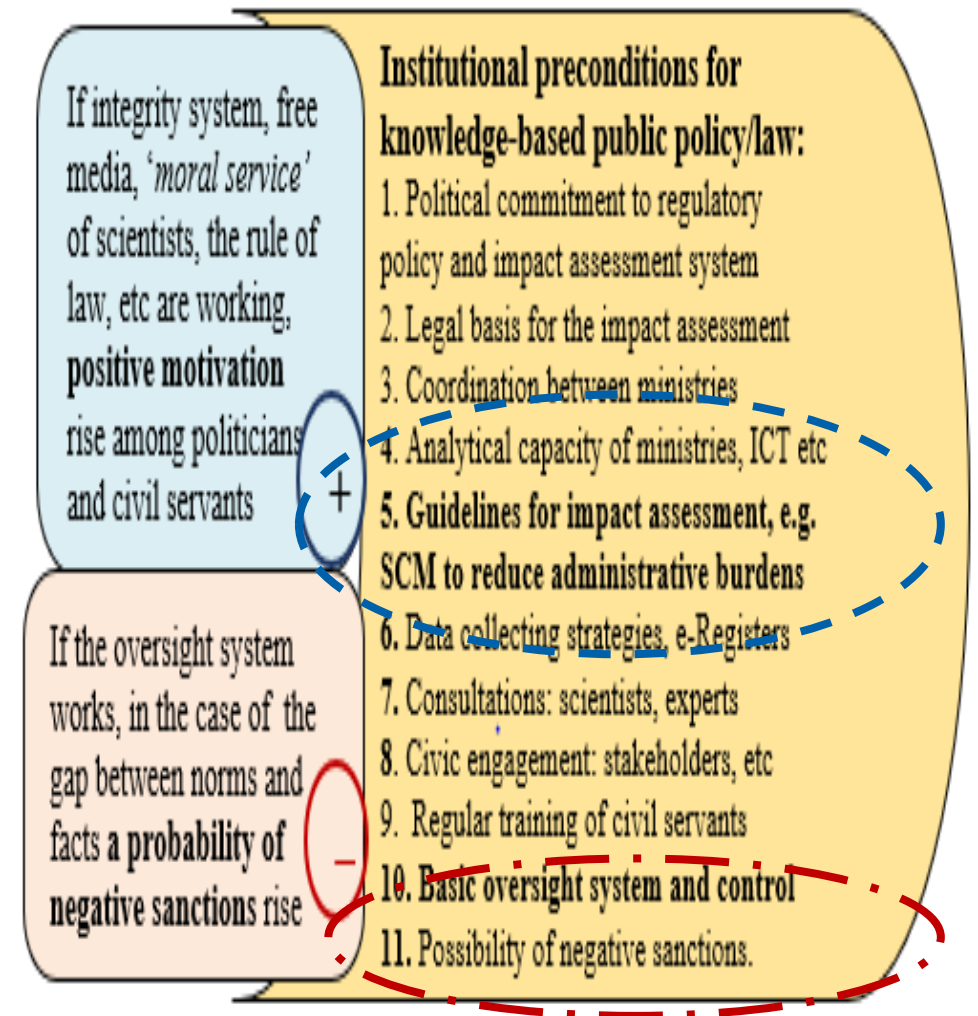
# Background information

**Slide 2.** Aare: in some of my academic studies the same question has been sharper - „**Why** regulatory reforms and better regulation initiatives in Estonia and other OECD/EU countries have frequently failed?“ The long list of unfulfilled institutional preconditions is usually starting from *political commitment* (see Fig. 6 and next slide).

**Slides 2-5:**

**We hope** that those better regulation **rules and guidelines with our, both consulting and oversight, activities** will support step by step the institutionalisation of rural proofing toolboxes in the working routines across the government, in all ministries.

In this deliberative inter-action, **the collection of data and local communities arguments** through the involvement of the LEADER networks, etc, is an important prerequisite for influencing the decision-making processes of other ministries and parliamentary committees.



**Figure 6:** by author (ed 2011, 2016a) on the basis of OECD recommendations 1995–2016 and the control of corruption model (Mungiu-Pippidi 2012). A.Kasemets 2018b

**Source:** Aare Kasemets (2018). Institutionalisation of better regulation principles in Estonian draft legislation: the rules of law-making, procedural democracy and political accountability between norms and facts – Journal The Theory and Practice of Legislation 6/1, 75-111.



# KEY IDEAS and DEFINITIONS

Due to multidisciplinary ‘competition’ around the policy- and law-making, there are a myriad of definitions. When appropriate, then we could use the definitions agreed on by inter-governmental organisations like OECD and EU.

**Better Regulation is an example of complex definitions including 7 subterms:**

- 1) **political commitment** on policy options
- 2) **regulatory impact assessment (RIA)** →
- 3) **consultations**
- 4) **simplification** →
- 5) access
- 6) supporting responsible structures
- 7) effective implementation of regulation.

**RIA** is a systematic process of identification and quantification of economic, social and environmental (+ **regional**) impacts likely to flow from adoption of a proposed regulation or a non-regulatory policy option under consideration. May be based on benefit-cost analysis, cost effectiveness analysis, risk analysis, SCM... (OECD 2004 + **idea to add ‘regional’, e.g. rural proofing**)

**Simplification:** ‘The EU aims to keep regulatory burdens to a minimum... Simplifying legislation means rigorously applying the principles of necessity and proportionality. The exercise involves the simplification, codification, recasting and consolidation of legal texts, as well as repealing obsolete provisions...’ (EUR-Lex: simplification).

\*European Commission Mandelkern report, 2001.



EUROPEAN COMMISSION



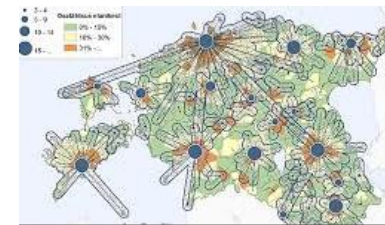
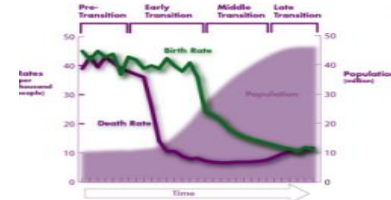
ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT





# The areas of mandatory regulatory impact assessment (EST)

1. **Socio-demographic impacts**, e.g. health, education, civil society, etc
2. **Economic impacts**, e.g. impact on consumers behaviour, small- and medium size enterprises, IT, agriculture, competition, administrative burdens, etc
3. **Environmental impacts**
4. **Regional / territorial impacts**, e.g. rural proofing
5. **Impacts on internal security and international cooperation**
6. **Administrative impacts**, e.g. impact on human resource management and work organization (state and local level), e.g. simplification of e-services
7. **Budgetary impacts** (state & local municipalities level)



## The better regulation rules and guidelines in Estonia:

„Code of Good Lawmaking and Regulatory Techniques“ (2011, §§ 1, 7, 42, 46-50, 63-65); „Impact Assessment Guideline“ (2012, 2021), „Code of conduct for civic engagement“ (2005, 2016) and „Impact Assessment Checklist“ (2012, 2021).

