

**Bending the Curve for Biodiversity: challenges and opportunities
for life science universities
&
Life science universities addressing
Knowledge Security**

To be held on 20 and 21 October 2022

at Vytautas Magnus University Agriculture Academy, Lithuania

The goal of the ICA's Rectors and Deans Forums

This annual ICA Forum for Rectors, Deans and senior management of agricultural and life science universities in Europe aims to provide these university decision makers from ICA's member universities with the opportunity to meet, to discuss current issues in the agricultural and life sciences and to exchange views on issues with relevant stakeholders in industry, government and NGOs.

This Forum will address two themes as outlined in paragraph A. On Thursday "**Bending the Curve for Biodiversity**" and on Friday morning "**Knowledge Security**".

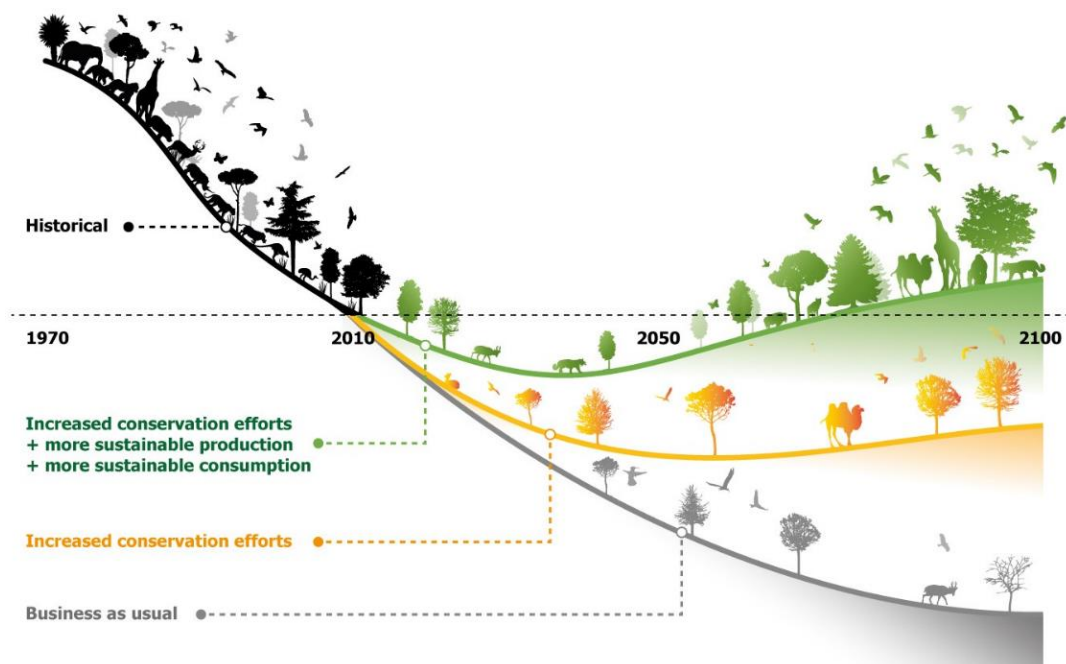
A Forum Foci

1 Bending the curve for biodiversity

Biodiversity loss is increasingly recognized as one of the most pressing challenges of our times as it threatens our own survival. In the words of Philipp Blom at the recent BOKU Featuring Future Conference 2022: we all live in a thin membrane encircling the globe and in that thin membrane all the species including us humans are interdependent.

Biodiversity is one part of the triangulation of challenges facing humanity, the other challenges being to feed an ever increasing world population and to achieve climate neutrality by 2050. The urgency to address the biodiversity crisis is increasingly visible on the global environmental agenda and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) plays a major role in articulating this.

The authors of the Nature paper (Leclère D, Obersteiner M, et alia. 2020. Nature **585**, 551) stress the need for an integrated strategy to bend the curve of terrestrial biodiversity decline and to reverse the global terrestrial biodiversity decline.



This artwork illustrates the main findings of the article, but does not intend to accurately represent its results (<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-020-2705-y>)

The IPBES and the **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change** (IPCC) in their joint Workshop Report Biodiversity and Climate Change (2021) recognise that climate change and biodiversity loss are interconnected in both scientific and policy-making circles, but in practice they are largely addressed separately. The report suggests that the research community dedicated to investigating the climate system is somewhat, but not completely, distinct from that which studies biodiversity. It stresses the need for biodiversity loss and climate change to be dealt together if the global climate and environmental ambitions are to be achieved.

The EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, published in 2020, aims to “bring nature back into our lives”. It picks up on one strand of the European Green Deal – protecting nature. The achievements of the strategy’s ambitions are linked in part to the EU Farm to Fork Strategy (another strand of the European Green Deal). The EU Biodiversity Strategy focuses on nature-based solutions to protect and restore nature. The need being to focus on developing land and water use systems so as to bend the curve against further biodiversity loss.

The Forum will address these challenges and discuss how life science universities can and do develop their education, research and innovation programmes and their engagement with society to contribute to the achievement of the EU Biodiversity Strategy and the wider global agenda as formulated by the IPBES and the IPCC.

2 Addressing Knowledge Security

Science has always been based on the idea and ideal of free exchange of information, results, scientists and students. Only by freely exchanging scientific ideas, the results of scientific research and scientists are we able to make progress in scientific understanding of the social and natural world; and hence to contribute to a better global society and planet. The European and global movement of Open Access publication, Open educational resources and FAIR data (as discussed during the ICA Forum 2021) pays tribute to that.

However, increasingly Life Sciences (and all) universities are confronted with developments and risks that endanger the idea of free exchange of science, research and scientists/students: Economic espionage (by private or state actors), dual use of university knowledge and technologies, cyber-attacks by criminals, unwanted influence of students and researchers, unethical and inappropriate use of research results, and foreign interference can no longer be ignored by (life science) universities. Hence there is a growing call by the media, by state authorities and the EU, by private-stakeholders, by university supervisory bodies as well as by scientists to develop activities and programs for what can be labelled “knowledge security”. This can conflict with university’s ideal of free exchange of information, research results and scientists. How to cope with that?

This Friday morning session will explore the security risks faced and experienced by life science universities. We will discuss programs and activities that have been developed by ICA members to handle these risks and outlooks towards the future.

B Expected Outcomes

The delegates will take back to their universities their reflections on:

1. the knowledge-based evidence that is needed to make effective and inclusive decisions for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity;
2. the approach to educating their students that will empower them as our future leaders to address and act to protect and enhance biodiversity.
3. Possible strategies and actions by life science universities to address knowledge security challenges.

C Target Audience

The forum is primarily aimed at Rectors, Presidents, Deans and Senior Management in agricultural and life science Universities. In addition, academic/faculty staff and degree programme coordinators are encouraged to participate.

D Forum Format

Each Session of the Forum theme will be addressed by keynote speakers followed by small round table breakout groups to discuss the issues raised, with a concluding report from the breakout groups of the issues raised in a plenary session.

E Programme

WEDNESDAY 19 October

Location: Vytautas Magnus university (VMU) in the centre of Kaunas: S. Daukanto str. 28

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| 16.15 | Coffee & Registration |
| 17.00 | ICA General Assembly |
| 18.30 | EU Biodiversity strategy - forward looking approach, today relevant more than ever. Virginijus Sinkevičius, European Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries at European Commission, Brussels, BE |

19.30 **Forum Welcome Reception & Walking Dinner following the ICA General Assembly**

THURSDAY 20 October

Location: Vytautas Magnus University Agriculture Academy (VMU AA), Studentų str. 11, Akademija, Kaunas District.

Session 1 Addressing biodiversity loss

- 8.00 Transfer by bus from hotels to Agriculture Academy of the Vytautas Magnus University
- 8.30 **Registration & welcome coffee**
- 9.00 **Welcome to the Forum**
Arthur Mol, President of ICA & Representative from Vytautas Magnus University
- 9.15 **Keynote: Biodiversity policy implementation in Lithuania: challenges and achievements**
Simonas Gentvilas, Minister of the Environment, Republic of Lithuania
- 9.45 **Keynote: Bending the curve of terrestrial biodiversity needs an integrated strategy**
David Leclère, International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA); Laxenburg; AT
- 10.15 **Keynote: The Economics of Biodiversity:**
Partha Dasgupta, University of Cambridge, UK
- 10.45 Coffee
- 11.15 **Keynote: Biodiversa+, the European biodiversity partnership: history, objectives and main achievements**
Claire Bléry, European Biodiversity Partnership (Biodiversa+), Paris, FR
- 11.45 Discussion
- 12.30 Lunch

Session 2 Nature based solutions in Agricultural and Forestry Systems to support the enhancement of biodiversity

- 13.30 **Keynote: Enhancement of biodiversity in agriculture arable and grassland systems**
Helen Sheridan, School of Agriculture and Food Science, University College Dublin, IE
- 14.00 **Keynote: Enhancement of biodiversity in forestry systems**

Bart Muys, Division of Forest, Nature and Landscape, Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences, KULeuven, BE

- 14.30 **Panel: Four short interventions from ICA members from different regions of Europe (10 mins each).** How my university engages with society through education and outreach to encourage engagement with and enhancement of biodiversity.
- 15.15 Coffee
- 15.45 **Breakout round table discussions groups**
- 16.15 **Plenary Report back**
- 16.45 **Closure**
- 19.30 Bus pick from hotels to go to Raudondvaris Castle
- 20.00 **Gala Dinner, Raudondvaris Castle**

FRIDAY 21 October

Session 3 Addressing Knowledge Security

- 8.00 Transfer by bus from hotels to Agriculture Academy of the Vytautas Magnus University
- 8.30 **Introduction: European knowledge security in a polarized world**
Arthur Mol, President of ICA & Rector Magnificus Wageningen University and Research, NL
- 8.50 **Knowledge security experiences and practice AgroParisTech**
Laurent Buisson, Directeur Général AgroParisTech, Paris, FR
- 9.05 **Knowledge security experiences and practices Estonian University of the Life Sciences**
Mait Klaassen, Rector Estonian University of Life Sciences, EE
- 9.20 Coffee & **Breakout round table discussions groups**
- 10.00 **Plenary Report back**
- 10.30 **Forum Closure**
Packed lunch available to pick up
- 11.00 **Depart for Vilnius Airport by bus** (the trip to Vilnius airport will take maximum of 2 hours)
- OR**
- 11.00 **Post Forum Tour "Biodiversity, history and cultural heritage Kaunas Region"**

There is no extra charge for this Tour, but must be booked on your registration form or reservation by email after registration to ICASecretariat@ica-europe.org The Tour is offered by the Agriculture Academy, Vytautas Magnus University

16.30 **Return to Kaunas**

Please note that "**Kaunas is the European Capital of Culture' 2022**". Information about the events can be found here <https://kaunas2022.eu/en/about-the-project/>

F Registration

Please register online for the ICA Forum at <https://www.ica-europe.info/registration-form>

For ICA members The Registration fee for ICA Members is 500 € for the first registration from a university, the fee for additional registrations from the same university is 450 €.

For non-ICA members the registration fee is 650 € and 600 € respectively. If a registered non-member's institution becomes a member of ICA in 2023 the membership subscription for 2023 will be reduced by 150 €.

The deadline for registration is Monday 10 October. Registration cannot be cancelled free of charge after 10 October.

The Registration fee includes:

All meals from the start of the Forum with the Reception on the evening of Wednesday 19 October until departure on the Friday.

Registration is managed by the ICA Secretariat. The ICA Secretariat will send you an invoice once the Secretariat has received your online registration form.

G Book your Hotel

Rooms have been reserved at several hotels. See the Forum website for details of how to book and the **deadline for booking** <https://www.ica-europe.info/book-your-hotel>

H Reaching and Leaving Kaunas

Guidance on travel to and from Kaunas is provided at <https://www.ica-europe.info/reaching-leaving-kaunas> if you need advice and support in managing your arrival to Kaunas from the Vilnius Airport You may contact the Local Organizing Committee at this email address rasa.pakeltiene@vdu.lt Those who express their need for support will be provided with a grouped transportation service

On the Friday morning bus transport will be provided from the Agriculture Academy to Vilnius Airport. The arrival time at Vilnius Airport will be no later than 13.00 Eastern European Time (UTC+2)

I Forum Organising Committee

Antanas Maziliauskas, Agriculture Academy, Vytautas Magnus University, **Julian Park**, University of Reading, **Simon Heath**, ICA Deputy Secretary General, and **Arthur Mol**, ICA President & Wageningen University and Research (WUR).