

# Assessment of the research institutes and funding reform\* - first impressions

\*In brief, "TULA-arviointi" in Finnish

19/09/2017 | Mari Hjelt  
Gaia Consulting Oy

# Assessment of the research institutes and funding reform\* - first impressions

\*In brief, "TULA-arviointi" in Finnish

19/09/2017 | Mari Hjelt  
Gaia Consulting Oy

# Contents

- Evaluation process in brief
- Key drivers of the reform
- First impressions: what has changed?

# 1. Evaluation process in brief

# 1. Evaluation process in brief

Timeframe: February 2017–November 2018

**Work Package 1: The first phase of the evaluation has focused on setting the scope for the evaluation and assessing major changes in the operating environment.**

The first impressions of the evaluation are based on the information derived from

- desk research and
- 48 interviews with
- Director Generals of state research institutes
- Civil servants at Ministries with steering roles
- Other experts

# 1. Evaluation process in brief

## Next steps

Work packages 2-6 will deal with the following topics:

- Success and impact of the implementation of the reform
- Operational efficiency of the reform
- Clarity and consistency of the reform
- Relevance of the reform
- Effectiveness and impact of research and the necessary preconditions for it
- Quality of research and related performance
- Relevance of the research, including targeted research regarding key future issues of Finnish
- society, the availability of and access to research, including potential changes in direction
- and priorities.

The methodology will include desk studies, regional workshops, a survey, interviews and international analysis.

## 2. Key drivers of the reform

## Key drivers of the reform

Decision makers need more high quality and multidisciplinary research offered in usable format

Societal challenges need to be dealt with in a more cross-sectoral manner

International competitiveness of Finnish research had been declining

Fragmentation of Finnish research system – need for critical mass and removal of sectoral barriers

Ministries' steering of research should be developed

Cooperation between companies and research organizations should be strengthened

Economic situation and Government's cut-offs since 2008/2009 had created pressure to get more from less

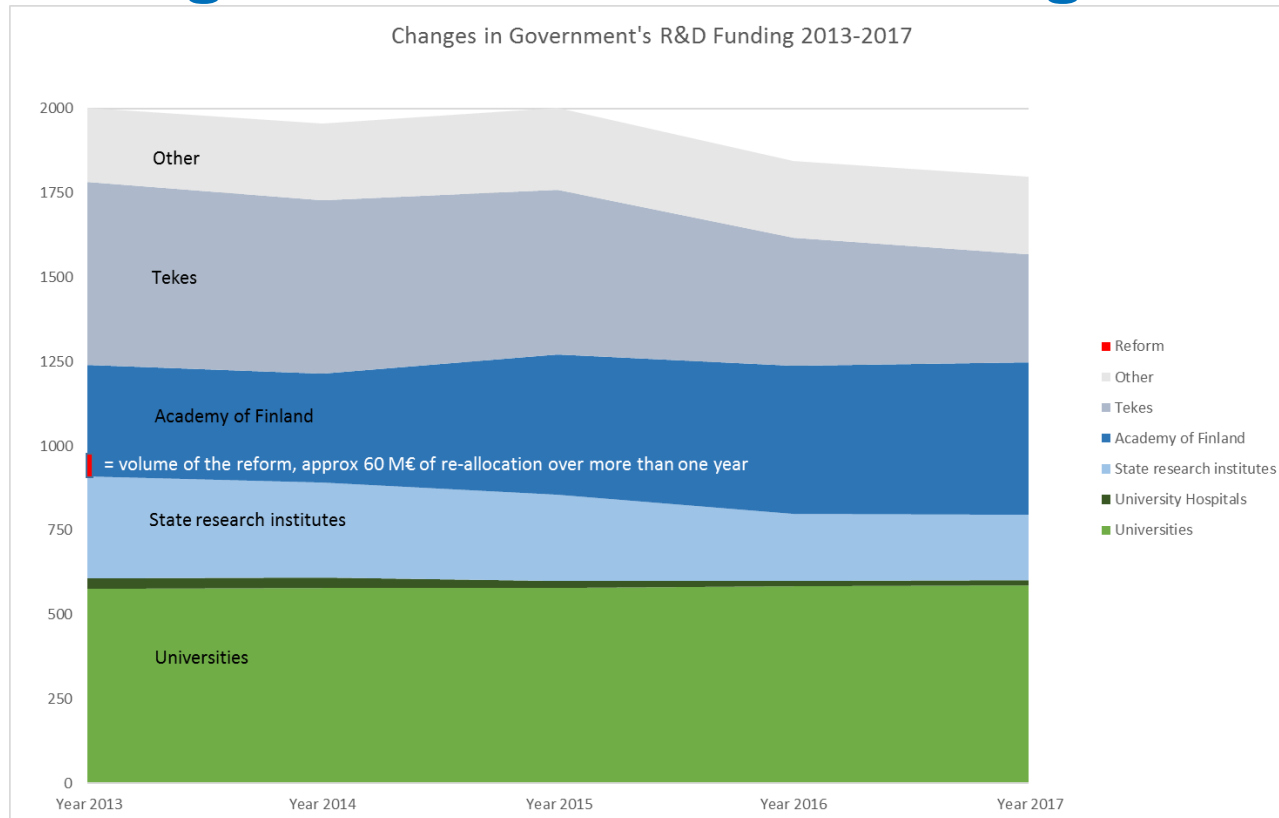
Research results in Finland are not used to their full potential

Transformation in ways of doing research



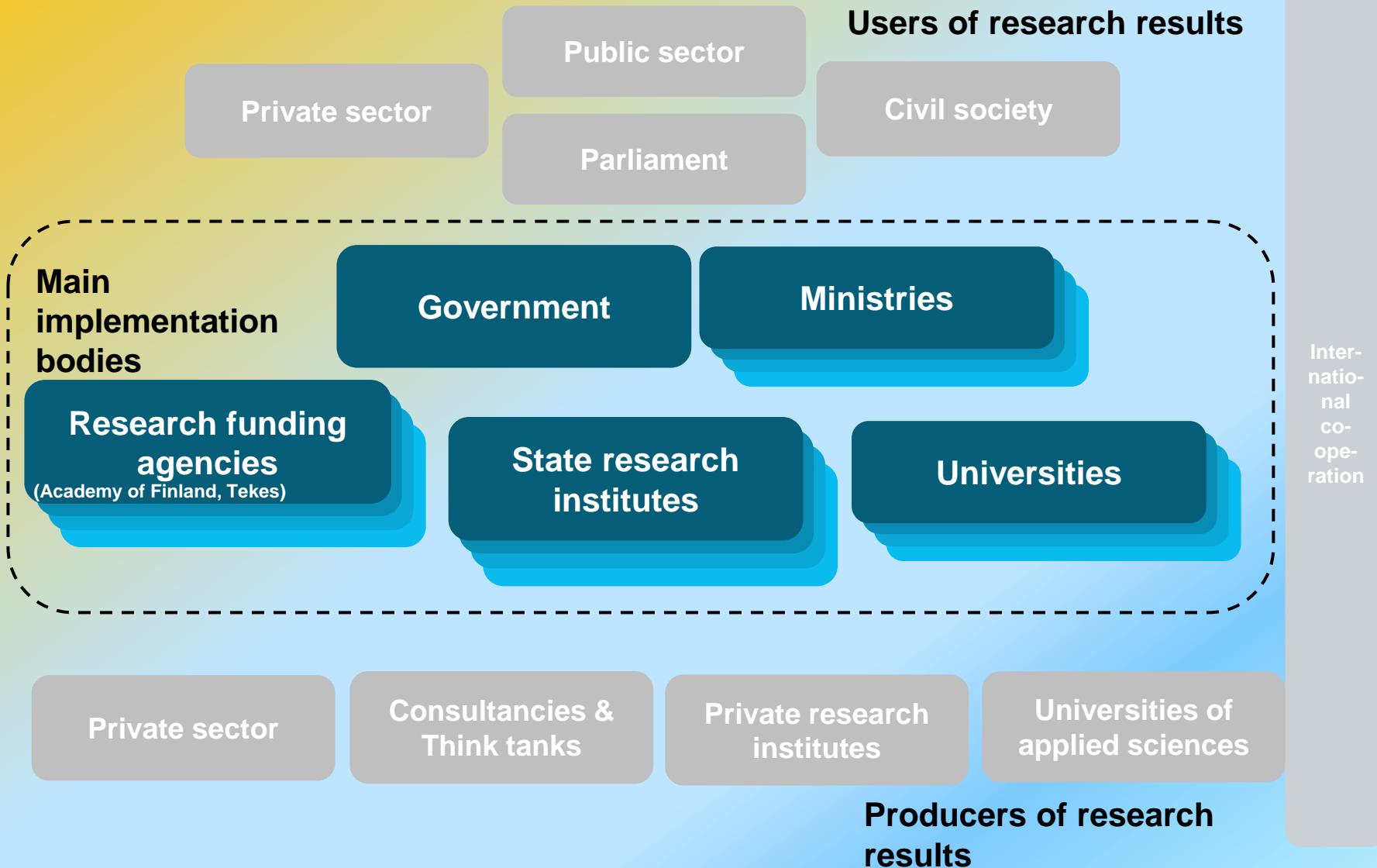
### **3. First impressions: what has changed?**

# Decrease in government R&D funding 2013-2017

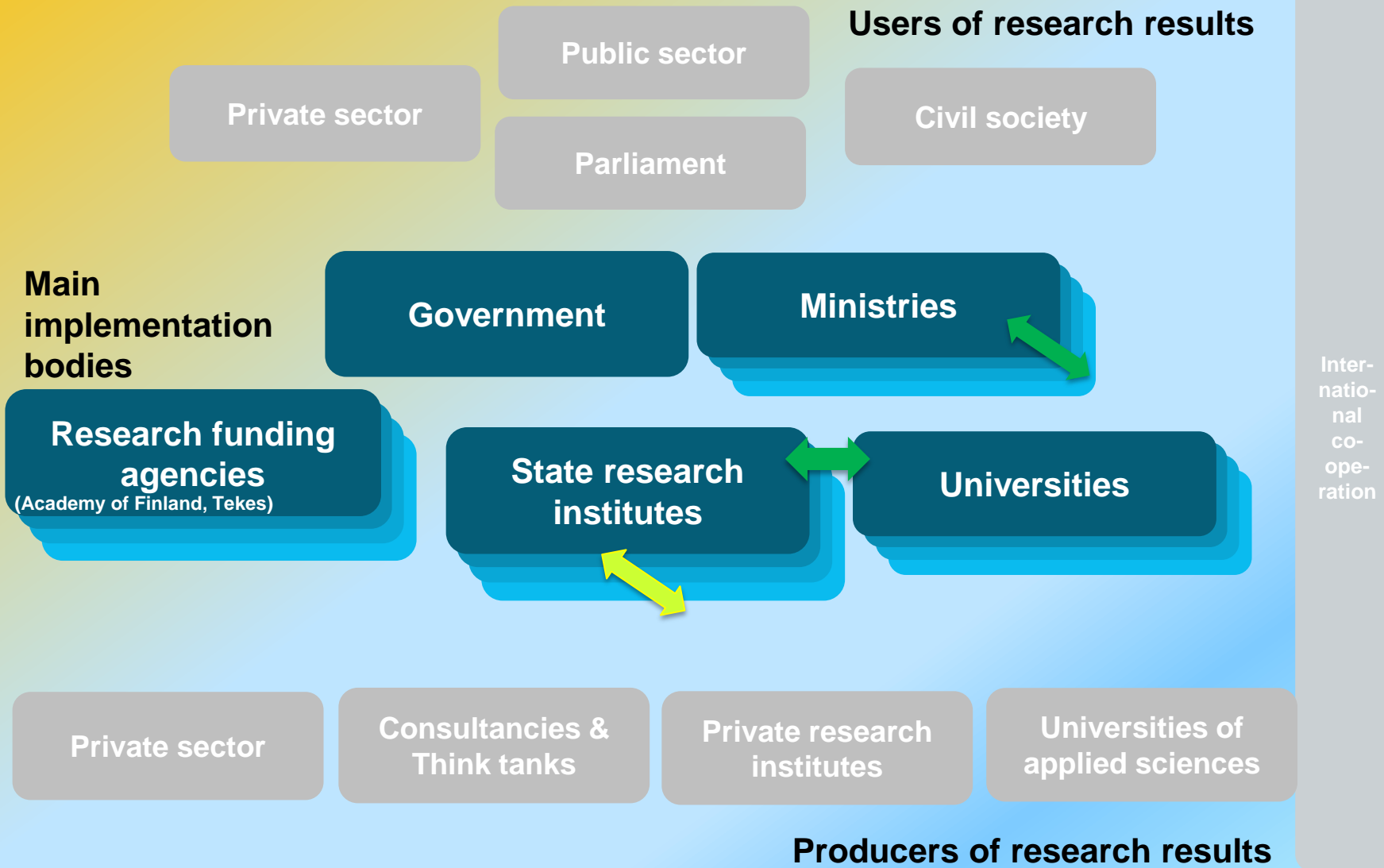


- Cut-offs external to the reform -> Strong effect on implementation
- Proportion of the reform only ca. 4 % of the Government's R&D funding
- Reform mainly focused on re-allocation of existing funds

# Main implementation bodies and stakeholders of the reform



# First overall impression - cooperation has improved in many ways



# Strategic level 1/3

GOVERNMENT'S ANALYSIS,  
ASSESSMENT AND RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

Parliament

**Governmental (policy) level:** lack of clear STI vision has implications – ministerial governmental strategic steering has been weak – has there been a joint understanding of main aims?

Government

Ministries

Research funding  
agencies

State research  
institutes



# Strategic level 2/3

GOVERNMENT'S ANALYSIS,  
ASSESSMENT AND RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

Parliament

Government

Research funding  
agencies

State research  
institutes

Ministries

**Ministry level:** Mixed messages – cooperation improved, but still weaknesses in strategic cooperation between ministries despite new funding instruments



# Strategic level 3/3

GOVERNMENT'S ANALYSIS,  
ASSESSMENT AND RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

Parliament

Government

Ministries

Research funding  
agencies  
(Academy of Finland, Tekes)

State research  
institutes

**Research Institute level:** strong strategic level changes and steering has been vital due to new structures and funding mechanisms – a lot of changes has taken place

## Operational changes slower than expected

New organisational  
structures

- Takes a long time to have new organizations ready and competitive – additional budget cut-offs did not help

New funding instruments

- Instruments start to be ready now after first years of funding rounds.

**Implementation plans not ready at start of reform in 2013!**



## **Willingness for renewal seen overall as a positive move , but...**

- Operational changes require experimentation, testing, motivation and engagement of stakeholders – as well as patience and time
- Structural and funding changes have forced the research institutes to change their operations, but they have had difficulties to "catch up" in a new situation.
- The internal processes and working methods of the ministries have not received enough attention or resources.

## Summary of first main impressions

Cooperation has improved



Weaknesses in strategic level  
follow-up



The mindset for using  
research as a strategic  
resource for decision making  
has improved. How much is  
this due to the reform?



Big structural changes  
insufficient



Operational changes forward  
slower than expected



# Thank you!

Further information: [katri.haila@ramboll.fi](mailto:katri.haila@ramboll.fi), [mari.hjelt@gaia.fi](mailto:mari.hjelt@gaia.fi)  
Evaluation Consortium: Ramboll Management Consulting Oy, Gaia Consulting Oy, University of Lapland and Tempo Economics Oy

