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ABSTRACT

Canada was an early adopter of the principles of sustainable forest management (SFM). One of the earliest steps was the establishment of a framework of criteria and indicators (C&I) for defining and assessing progress toward the achievement of SFM. However, this framework was developed before the potential consequences of climate change for forests and forest management were well understood. The current C&I assume a relatively stable climate. It is now known, however, that the climate of the future will be different from past and current climate. This change poses unprecedented challenges to forest management and may reduce the effectiveness of current C&I in defining and reporting on progress toward SFM. Decisions about how the existing C&I can be updated to account for climate change seem warranted. However, incorporating climate change into the C&I framework is not straightforward. Efforts to do so will ultimately require broad discussion and consultation at multiple scales on how progress toward SFM is to be defined and measured under a changing climate. This paper considers ways in which the C&I for SFM developed by the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers might be affected by climate change and examines options for updating them to account for climate change.

Key words: climate change, sustainable forest management, criteria and indicators, climate change impacts, adaptation, adaptive capacity, prospective indicators