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## ABSTRACT

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Enough is now known about climate change to conclude that it will increase the adaptability requirements of the Canadian forest sector. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has defined adaptive capacity as “The ability of a system to adjust to climate change (including climate variability and extremes) to moderate potential damages, to take advantage of opportunities, or to cope with the consequences.” This report presents an overview of assessment techniques, concepts, and approaches for describing and analyzing human adaptive capacity, and some general high-level options for enhancing it. One way of describing adaptive capacity is to identify and describe determinants or assets that contribute to it. In general terms, adaptive capacity determinants include human skills and knowledge about climate change, networks and partnerships, climate change science, and institutional capacity for adapting to the effects of climate change. Characterizing adaptive capacity may also involve describing processes and mechanisms used in mobilizing pertinent resources. There may also be instances where an understanding of the distribution of adaptive capacity among various stakeholders and interested parties is desired. A number of approaches can be used to obtain the information needed to describe adaptive capacity, including structured interviews, workshops, case histories, and the measurement and mapping of indicators. Methods of analyzing adaptive capacity include assessing requirements, assessing the degree to which current mobilization processes are efficient and effective, evaluating and assessing whether the distribution of adaptive capacity is equitable, and identifying barriers and system failures that may be impairing optimal investment in adaptive capacity. Options for enhancing adaptive capacity include investing in particular determinants, reducing barriers and constraints to rational investment in adaptive capacity, facilitating a more equitable distribution of pertinent resources, and modifying institutions and governance to enable adaptation where it is rational, feasible, and justified.

**Key words:** adaptability, adaptive capacity assessment, forest management systems, description, determinants, mobilization, analyzing adaptive capacity, requirements, deficits, enhancing adaptive capacity