

# Socio-Economic Considerations and Governance

**DIVERSE** is a Pan-Canadian research initiative dedicated to advancing forest management through innovative approaches that emphasize functional diversity and ecological connectivity. The research encompasses six interconnected themes that aim to enhance forest resilience and sustainable forest stewardship in the face of global changes.

## Theme 5 Goals & Objectives

Theme 5 will evaluate the socio-economic implications of implementing the Climate-Smart Forestry (CSF) and Functional Complex Networks (FCN) approaches by addressing the:

- 1) **Challenges and opportunities** associated with these approaches;
- 2) **Economic feasibility** of adopting new forest management strategies;
- 3) **Social acceptability** of alternative strategies and practices among stake-, land-, and rights-holders;
- 4) **Policy and regulatory modifications** needed for implementation of these approaches;
- 5) **Governance models** that foster the adoption of resilience-focused practices.

Researchers are analyzing how existing forest governance systems can either support or hinder innovation. The aim is to provide a deeper understanding of the feasibility, challenges, and implementation requirements for adopting alternative forest management approaches.

Moving from existing systems to new governance systems and forest management strategies requires consideration of their social and economic impacts, which affect the implementation of new approaches and new practices associated with CSF and FCN. Theme 5 will identify the opportunities, risks and barriers associated with these different approaches, empowering stake- and rights-holders to understand the consequences of these changes.

## Scientific Background

Effective forest management goes beyond ecosystem processes; it requires integrating social, economic, and regulatory factors to support achieving desired outcomes in the forest. Indigenous perspectives are particularly important, as past failures to respect their visions and rights have hindered alignment with Indigenous priorities and values. Growing demands for biodiversity protection and alternative forest uses emphasize the need for balanced trade-offs among competing forest values. Different forest governance systems play a critical role in reconciling these diverse interests, making it essential to evaluate how they address the challenges and opportunities presented by innovative management approaches.

## Methodology

Theme 5 will employ a multi-disciplinary approach that combines:

- Economic analysis of the different forest management strategies (CSF and FCN, in contrast to business as usual);
- Studies of stakeholders' and rightsholders' acceptability and expectations;
- Case studies to explore regulatory, financial, and governance contexts.

Researchers will collaborate with local partners to map regulatory systems across Canada, assess the financial implications of silviculture strategies, and provide rich contextual insights into the governance requirements for new management practices.

## Timeline



## Inter-Theme Links

- **Themes 1 and 2:** What are the economic and social considerations in introducing different tree species? What does the existing regulatory environment allow and not allow from a silvicultural perspective? Theme 3: How do complex networks in the forest fit into complex social and economic networks?
- **Theme 4:** What values get expressed on the landscape under different management strategies? What risks to those values exist?
- **Theme 6:** What are the economics of different silvicultural strategies? What is allowed in the regulatory environment?

## Project Personnel

Theme 5 is led by researchers from the University of British Columbia, with support from Université Laval, University of Winnipeg, and Université du Québec à Montréal.

Highly-Qualified Personnel (HQP): 1 PhD, 4 MSc, and 1 Post-Doctoral Fellow.

## Projected Deliverables

- Regional and local workshops to solicit feedback and insight from project Partners and stake-, rights-, and land-holders;
- Comparative analyses of the economic feasibility of CSF and FCN;
- Case studies highlighting governance and policy opportunities and constraints;
- Regulatory overview of each province, identifying what is and is not possible with forest practices;
- Guidance documents for forest management stakeholders across Canada;
- Major publications synthesizing findings and recommendations.