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China's Practices of Promoting the Legal Timber Supply by Involving Multiple Stakeholders in Sustainable Forest Management

Submitted by: China

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KOREA

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China's practices of Promoting the legal timber supply by involving multiple stakeholders in Sustainable Forest Management

July.28, 2025

Contents

- **China’s understanding on Sustainable Forest Management**
- **Stakeholders' involvement in promoting legal timber supply through Sustainable Forest Management**
- **China’s efforts in promoting legal timber supply through Sustainable Forest Management**

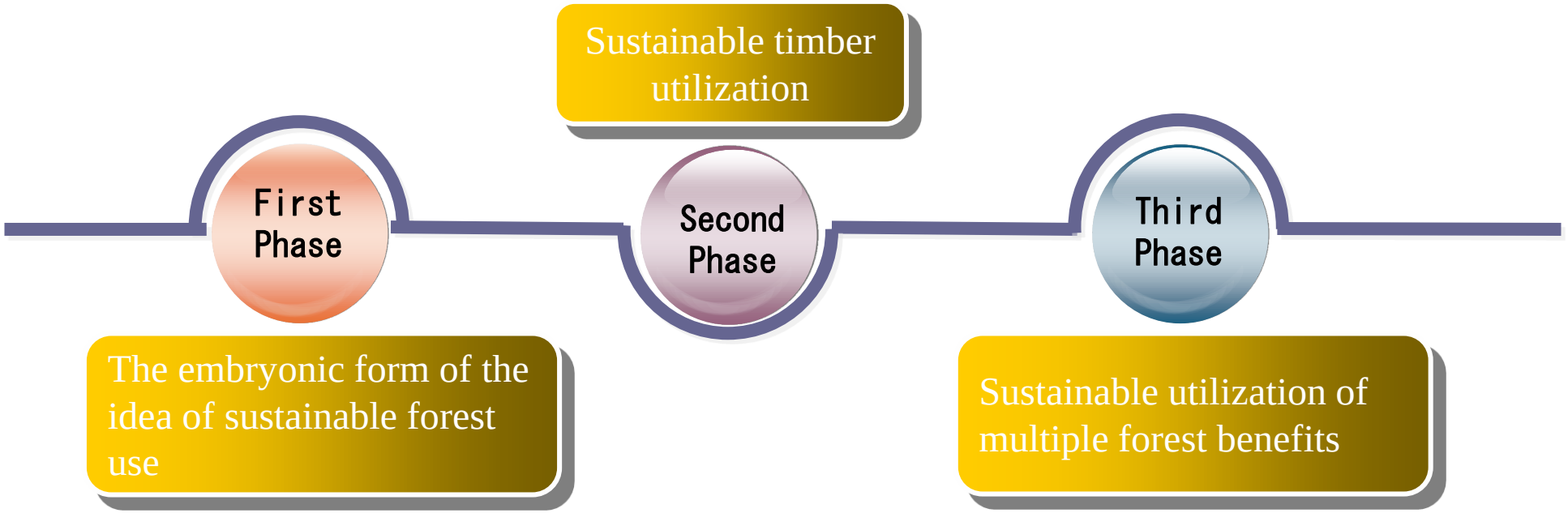
China’s understanding on Sustainable Forest Management

- **The thought on ecological civilization promoted by the Chinese government encompasses the following key messages :**
  - *Nature is the mother of life, and the foundations for survival and development of humanity. Man and nature form a community of life. Civilization thrives if ecology is good, and declines if ecology deteriorates.*
  - *To foster harmony between man and nature, China will act on the belief that lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets.*
  - *The concept of man and nature forming a community of life emphasizes the holistic relationship between humans and nature, with the primary goal of achieving harmony between them.*
- **China’s understanding of sustainable forest management is based on the above theoretical foundations.**

China's understanding on Sustainable Forest Management

- Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) is centered on achieving the sustainable use of forests to meet the growing ecological and material (forest product) needs of people, and it is an evolving concept.

- It can generally be divided into three phases :



China's understanding on Sustainable Forest Management

The policies and practices of sustainable forest management worldwide demonstrate that it is an inevitable trend to give full play to the multifunctionality of forests and shift from timber production to a balanced development of economic, social, and ecological benefits.

A fundamental requirement for sustainable management is ensuring that forest growth exceeds harvest levels. Standardized management and precision operations are the essential pathways to enhancing forest quality.

United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, 1992
the Declaration on the principles of forest management

The Montréal Process assesses the criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management.

1. Conservation of biodiversity
2. Maintenance of forest ecosystem productivity
3. Maintenance of forest ecosystem health and vitality
4. Conservation and maintenance of soil and water resources
5. Preservation of forests' role in the global carbon cycle
6. Fulfillment of diverse socio-economic needs
7. Legal, institutional, and economic framework safeguards

China’s understanding on Sustainable Forest Management

Currently, the concept of sustainable forest management varies due to differences in economic development levels and the understanding of forest functions across different economies and regions. People have provided diverse interpretations from various perspectives.

China believes that sustainable forest management refers to a scientific, systematic, and sustainable approach to forest cultivation, management and utilization. It involves protecting and restoring forest ecosystems through direct human intervention or auxiliary measures, promoting forest succession and enhancing forest productivity.

This ensures that forests achieve a healthy, stable, high-quality, and efficient state, fully supporting their provisioning, regulating, and cultural services. It generates comprehensive economic, social, and ecological benefits while meeting the needs of the current generation and safeguarding the rights of future generations to enjoy the same benefits.

The relationship among sustainable forest management, the timber industry, and legal timber supply

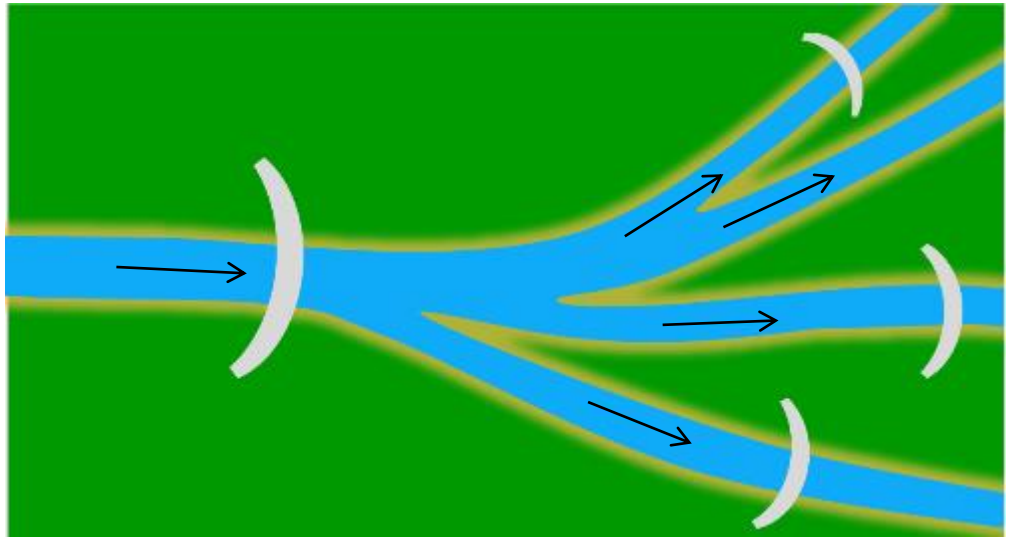
1. Sustainable forest management is the foundation for ensuring legal timber supply. Scientific cultivation increases timber reserves, and rational management enhances timber production, providing a reliable raw material base for the timber processing industry.

2. The forestry industry is the largest green economy sector, offering both ecological and economic benefits. Its development can, in turn, support the protection and management of forest resources.

3. Traditional timber industries rely on overharvesting, leading to ecological degradation, while modern forestry achieves sustainable utilization through classified management practices.

The relationship between SFM and ILGT

Combating illegal logging and associated trade requires collaborative efforts across the entire legal timber supply chain, involving both upstream and downstream economies. While downstream economies strengthen regulatory measures, enhancing forest resource management and sustainable utilization directly at the source, it will not only boost the supply of legal timber but also drive economic development in the region. This approach fosters community prosperity, motivating local residents to actively participate in the protection and management of forest resources. Ultimately, it creates a virtuous cycle where resource development and ecological conservation mutually reinforce each other.



Government guidance

- Establishing a Comprehensive Legal Framework:
  - *The revised Forest Law of the People's Republic of China*
  - *The Regulations on Prevention of Forest Fire*
  - *The Wildlife Protection Law of the People's Republic of China*
  - *The Prevention and Control of Desertification Law of the People's Republic of China, etc..*
  - These laws and regulations have formed a complete legal system for forest governance.
- Implementing Forest Classification Management: Different management and protection systems have been established for public welfare forests (forests of public interests) and commercial forests. For public welfare forests, strict protection measures have been enforced, and a forest ecological benefit compensation system was introduced. For commercial forests, operators are granted the right to manage their resources independently, provided that ecological integrity is maintained.

Government guidance

- Natural Forest Protection and Restoration Plan: An integral management approach is adopted for all natural forests and non-natural public welfare forests. Responsibilities for protection are fully assigned, and capabilities are continuously enhanced. Comprehensive measures, including tending, transformation, and promoting regeneration, are implemented to systematically restore forest ecosystems.

- Introducing the Forest Chief System (fully implemented in 2020, an institutional innovation to better guarantee the protection and management results by the Chinese government) by creating a five-tier responsibility system spanning provinces, cities, counties, townships, and villages, with main responsible officials at each level appointed as Forest Chiefs. Forest coverage, timber reserves, and other metrics are incorporated into government performance evaluations, ensuring accountability for forest resource protection and management at every level.

Technical and scientific support

- Formulating Plans and Standards: In 2002, China formulated and issued *the overal domestic Criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management*. In 2004, *the Guidelines for Regional Strategies in State Forest Resource Management* were introduced. In 2016, *the State Forest Management Plan (2016-2050)* was released. Efforts are also made to enhance the international recognition of CFCC (China Forest Certification) and PEFC (Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification), promoting green timber trade.

- Scientific Research and Development: Focused efforts are directed toward key areas such as tree breeding, carbon sink measurement, and biodiversity conservation technologies.

- Smart Forestry: Advanced technologies, including satellite remote sensing and drone monitoring, are applied to detect forest fires and pests (e.g., the pine wilt (*Bursaphelenchus xylophilus*) disease early warning system).

Economic Incentives and Social Participation

- Reform of the Forest Tenure System: The *separation of three rights* (ownership, contract rights, and management rights) for collective forests has been implemented, allowing more flexible management of commercial forests and permitting the use of forest assets as collateral for loans.

- Support for the Forestry Industry: Efforts have been made to develop under-forest economies (e.g., planting and breeding), eco-tourism, and timber and bamboo processing industries, contributing to rural revitalization (the forestry industry's output value exceeded 10.17 trillion yuan in 2024).

- Pilot Carbon Sink Trading Programs: Forestry carbon sink projects have been integrated into the state carbon emission trading market, with pilot programs in provinces such as Fujian and Guangdong Province.

Enterprise participation and economic incentives

- Enterprises have transitioned from single-focus afforestation to a diversified "ecological industrialization" model. Through rights integration, technological empowerment, and financial innovation, they have established a "forest protection–wealth creation–ecological reinvestment" cycle, achieving a win-win scenario for ecological conservation and economic benefits.

- Revitalizing Forest Resources for "Short-Term Support of Long-Term Goals": By selecting short-cycle, high-value under-forest crops, enterprises have overcome the bottleneck of long-term returns from timber production.

- Enterprises participate in carbon market trading and financing by developing carbon sink assets.

Enterprise participation and economic incentives

- Technological Empowerment and Digital Management:

- In Leizhou (Guangdong Provinc), enterprises have reduced the rotation period of *eucalyptus* from 10 years to 4–5 years through variety iteration, enhancing the economic efficiency of fast-growing forests.

- China Forestry Group Corporation has employed satellite remote sensing and ground sensors to build a "*Space–sky–surface" Integrated Monitoring System*, enabling real-time monitoring of fires, pests, and tree growth, reducing management costs by 30%.

Stakeholders' involvement in promoting legal timber supply through Sustainable Forest Management

International institutions

Field of application	Main international cooperating institutions	Typical project	Core contribution
Technical cooperation	GIZ、FAO	Promotion of Near Natural Forest Management Techniques	Increase the accumulation of the unit and the carbon sink capacity
Financial support	GEF、Climate Group	China's Sustainable Forest Management Project	Securing an additional $48 million in supporting funds
Standard setting	United Nations Forum on Forests	Forest Sustainable Management Demonstration Project	Establish 18 demonstration units covering 14 provinces and cities
Market mechanism	WB、Watershared	PES Model Localization Pilot Project	The compliance rate of community protection measures has reached 95%
Capacity building	APFNet	Pu'er Asia-Pacific Forestry Forum	Launch the Global Network for Sustainable Forest Management

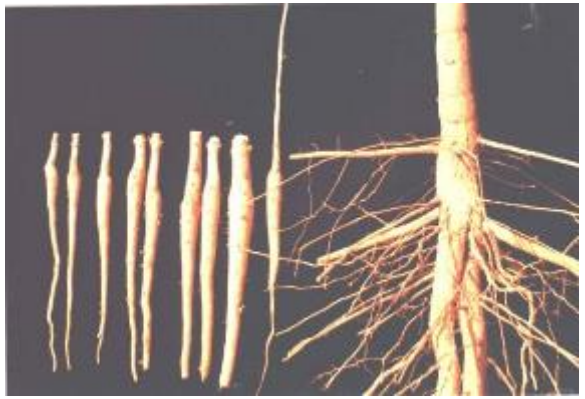
Stakeholders' involvement in promoting legal timber supply through Sustainable Forest Management

Taking the cultivation and management of large-diameter and precious timber in state reserve forests as an example:

Case 1: Cultivation Technology Model and Experience for Teak (*Tectona grandis L. f.*) Plantation Forests

Carried out in southern China, namely in Yunnan, Fujian and Guangdong provinces

Use high-quality seedlings


Stakeholders' involvement in promoting legal timber supply through Sustainable Forest Management

Utilize various advantages and advocate for joint implementation

Government (policy support, task assignment, infrastructure construction) + Research institutions/colleges (research and technological support)+ Enterprises (implementing afforestation) + Smallholders (providing forest land and labor through shareholding)

1） Conduct training and distribute the cultivation techniques for teak.

2) The research institution supports afforestation through experimental research and technology.

From left to right:
Teak pruning, fertilization, thinning and target tree management experimental demonstration forest

Stakeholders' involvement in promoting legal timber supply through Sustainable Forest Management

Optimize afforestation models for sustainable and efficient land use.

（1） Density Uniform Model: 3m × 3m

（2） Strip Afforestation Model: Plant 2 rows of teak per strip, with a spacing of 2m × 2m within the strip and a 6m gap between strips.

（3） Mixture by Group Model : Use two or more tree species, selecting suitable species for the site, and plant them in separate blocks to form a mixed forest.

Inter cropping and interplanting system :

（1） During the Young Forest Stage : Interplant crops such as peanuts, soybeans, pineapples, corn, and coffee between tree rows to increase forest land income.

（2） After forest maturity : Cultivate medicinal plants like Yizhi (*Alpinia oxyphylla Miq.*) and Katsumada Galangal Seed (*Alpinia katsumadai Hayata*) under the forest canopy to develop diversified and sustainable agroforestry practices.




Case 2: Near Natural Forest Management of valuable Tree Species in Guangxi Province

1. Financial Support: Establish research platforms with continuous funding over 20 years through project approvals to support the development of precious tree species and research on near natural forest management techniques.

2. International Cooperation: Promote the application and dissemination of related technological achievements on a global scale through international collaboration.

3. Collaboration Between Research Institutions and Enterprises: Conduct technical training and facilitate the widespread adoption of forestry technologies through partnerships between research institutions and enterprises.

Stakeholders' involvement in promoting legal timber supply through Sustainable Forest Management

4. Active Participation on smallholders: Encourage smallholders to actively engage in the popularization and application of forestry technologies by aligning with policies such as collective forest reform and rural revitalization. It not only benefit smallholders but also addresses the employment of rural idle labor, contributing to sustainable development.

Large-diameter Timber Cultivation demonstration forest of *Castanopsis hystrix*

Demonstration Forest for Naturalization of *Pinus massoniana*

Eucalyptus - Tropical Valuable Tree Species Mixed Forest Demonstration Area

China's efforts in promoting legal timber supply through Sustainable Forest Management

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Between 2000 and 2017, global vegetation coverage increased consistently, leading to a greener Earth, with China contributing 25% of the global greening.

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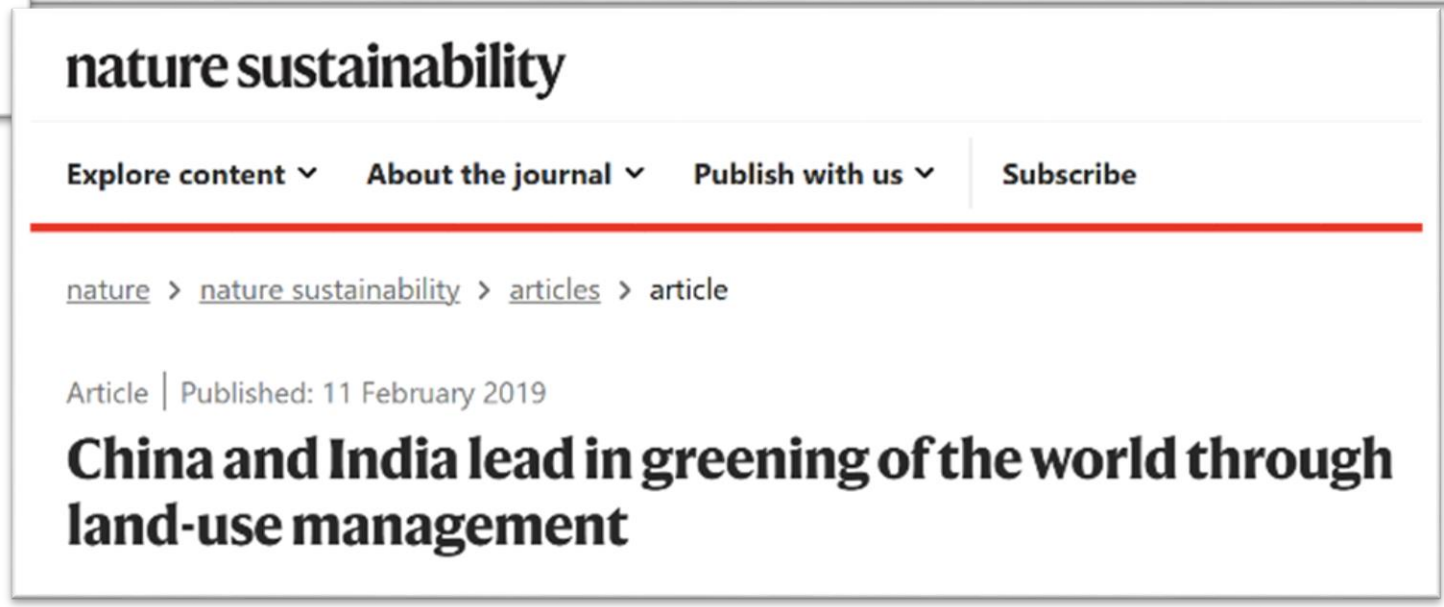

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China's efforts in promoting legal timber supply through Sustainable Forest Management

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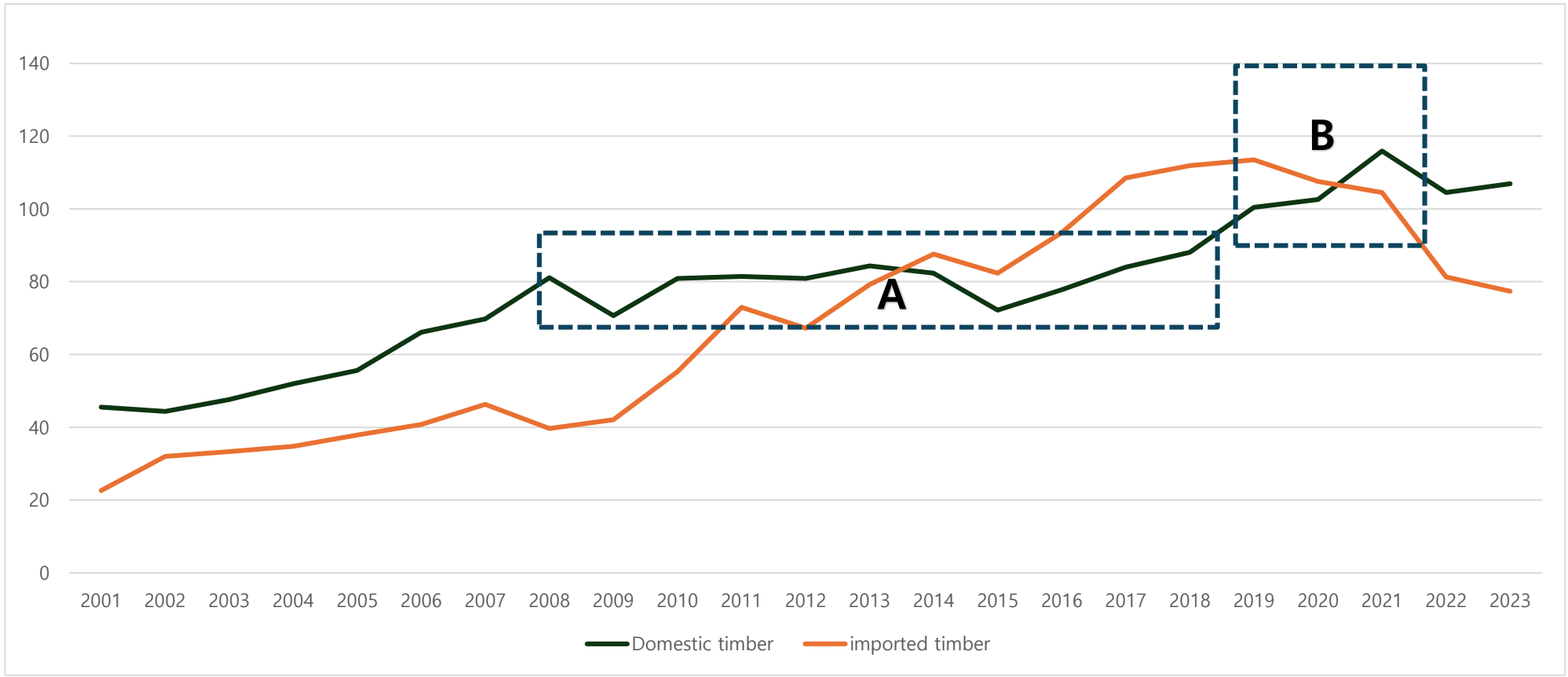
Changes in domestic and imported timber (million m^3)



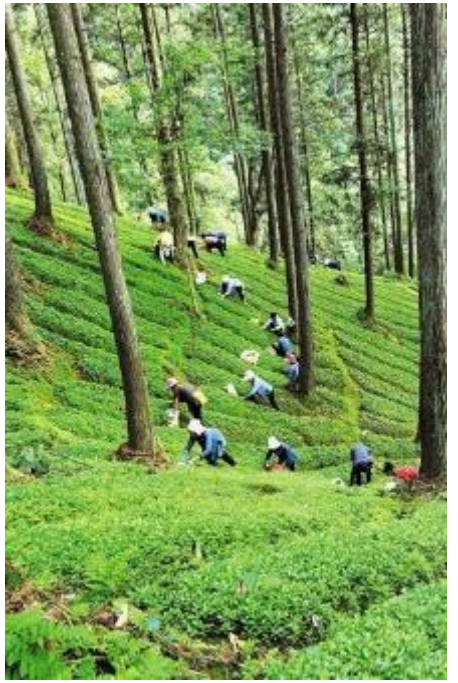
China's efforts in promoting legal timber supply through Sustainable Forest Management

Direct income

The total area is over 672.62 million ha, the timber output is over 150 million m^3 , the average annual growth rate of forest stock is 11 m^3/ha, which is 9 times the average annual growth rate of forests in China.

Diversified industries

Promote the development of under-forest economy, forest tourism, forest health-care.



Employment and rural revitalization

Over 2700 processing enterprises benefited and 3.6 million job opportunities created in the past decade.

Thanks！

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