

**Abstract 8: Sustainable Forestry as an Alternative to the Logging Ban: Findings from Policy Experiments. Author: Zhao Yaqiao, Center for Community Development Studies (CDS).**

In 1998, the Chinese government banned logging in most of upland China. Although originally inspired by overcutting on public lands, the ban was extended to collective forests – which constitute some 60 percent of all forests in China – without due process and without compensation to the millions of collective forest owners, in contradiction to Chinese land law. This paper begins with an overview of the logging ban and its implementation, presenting data on the extent and known socio-economic impact on communities. It then presents the known evidence of cases where provincial authorities have allowed ‘policy experiments’, exemptions to the ban. The paper focuses on a particular experiment in Shigu Township, Lijiang County, Yunnan Province. In this case, it describes the history of collective forest management in the area, community rules and governance structure, how the logging ban has affected the attitudes and incentives of the communities to manage their forests, and the new rules being piloted in the context of the ‘policy experiment.’ The paper then describes how this ‘experiment’ came to be allowed by government forestry officials, and current plans to extend the ‘experiment’ to other areas – with provincial support. The paper examines the implementation of the logging ban from the perspectives of the community and the provincial forestry department and proposes an alternative regulatory scheme to the Ban to encourage sustainable collective forest management. The paper also includes a reflection on the role of policy experiments in designing and refining government policy, and suggests steps to establish a more conducive environment for policy experimentation in China. The paper concludes with a set of recommendations for the consideration of Chinese government authorities on an alternative regulatory scheme to the logging ban and steps towards encouraging more policy experiments in China.