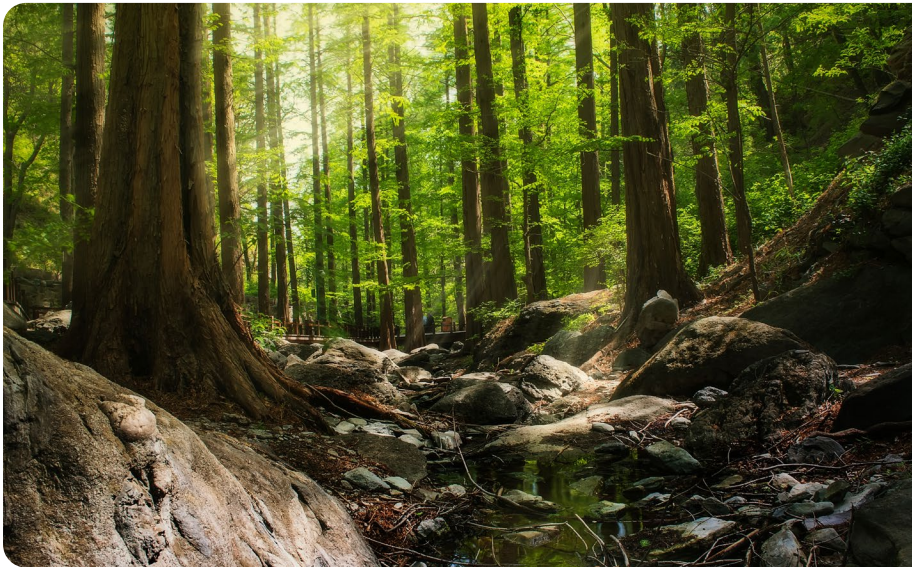


# Chinese National Forest Stewardship Standard pilot test



## The background

Thousands of small forest owners in China want to use FSC certification but are being held back by a specific requirement of the Chinese National Forest Stewardship Standard (NFSS).

This barrier is related to the International Generic Indicator 6.5.5 which requires certificate holders to set aside 10 per cent of their forest as a conservation area.

This is a big ask of smallholders, many of which own less than two hectares of land which are often scattered in different places.

“If approved, this approach could be important for thousands of smallholders – not only in China but across Asia Pacific.”

## What we are doing

Rather than merely build in exemptions for these smallholders, FSC China has been working on developing a series of alternative arrangements so that forest owners can meet the conditions of the NFSS in full, without having to meet the burdensome 10 per cent rule.

With the support of the New Approaches team, FSC China has presented a pilot test that is looking at four scenarios.

The first option is, rather than setting aside specific areas, forest owners can meet the 10 per cent rule by including local partners who can integrate their conservation land in the scope of FSC certification.

The second option is for forest owners to work with local partners – but rather than include them in the scope of certification, a series of activities and targets are also set with a key focus on conservation (e.g. remediation of water courses carried out by local authorities and communities). Whether the activities

have been carried out and goals met would have to be demonstrated to auditors.

The third option is enabling forest owners to make a financial contribution to activity that might be carried out across different forest biomes to compensate for what they are not able to achieve on their own land. This would involve using another FSC solution, the Ecosystem Services Procedure.

The final option is to build in exemptions for smallholders where all other options are not feasible.

## Key features

- The alternative scenarios enable for **flexibility in the system**, with smallholders able to work with local partners and neighbours to overcome existing certification barriers.
- But this isn't just about China. The learnings and results of the project could be **easily applied in other parts of the world**, particularly across the Asia-Pacific region.

## Current progress and next steps

FSC China and the standard development group has worked hard to build suitable alternatives for smallholders to meet the requirements of Indicator 6.5.5 of the NFSS.

The process of renewing the Chinese NFSS will start in 2020, where both the learnings from this pilot test, as well as additional FSC methodologies, such as risk-based approaches where a set of indicators might be exempted or audited only once during the five year cycles in small forest owners setting, will be already incorporated.

## Reference documents

- FSC-POL-01-001 FSC Policy for Pilot Tests of Draft FSC Standards
- FSC-STD-CHN-01-2016 Chinese National Forest Stewardship Standard (NFSS)
- FSC-STD-30-005 FSC Standard for Group Entities in Forest Management Groups
- FSC-STD-20-007 Forest Management Evaluations

> [Process weblink](#)