

**New Strategic Communication Instruments in the Sustainable Development
Context: a Case Study of the Belt and Road Initiative**

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The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is a global development strategy unveiled by Chinese leader Xi Jinping in 2013 and adopted by the Chinese government. Now it is a more than 1 trillion USD project involving 152 countries and international organizations and aimed to establish new infrastructure links, strengthen investments and trade ties between Asia, Europe, and Africa.

Due to the fact, that BRI significantly affects the environment of almost the entire Eurasian region, it should be developed in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) - the United Nation's framework for global development cooperation. In this regard, several important research questions have arisen:

- 1) What aspects of SDGs could be useful for the development of BRI? In what way BRI could be useful for promoting and achieving SDGs?
- 2) How to connect SDGs and BRI, how to implement SDGs in BRI?
- 3) How to communicate - what instruments could be the most optimal?

The scientific research on these issues despite the high level of its importance still has not yet been carried out. There are scientific papers on SDGs, papers on BRI, but there is no research on SDGs and BRI interaction.

BRI is likely to have a profound impact on sustainability aspects in target countries. For the SDGs Agenda, BRI presents an ambitious initiative in one of the most important regions in the world for sustainable development. Although BRI is not explicitly an SDGs initiative, it embodies many of the same principles that are needed for SDGs implementation: long term planning, cooperation between states, and the development of public-private partnerships. BRI presents an opportunity in which the UN Environment can help recipient countries use BRI investments to achieve SDGs. The countries could receive BRI investments to help them establish the conditions that will ensure that the investments are green. The greening of the BRI directly contributes to UN Environment's medium-term strategy.

For BRI, the SDG agenda provides much-needed guidance on the social and environmental aspects of the projects being considered. China is pushing a national agenda for environmental sustainability and has issued several guidelines for the more effective implementation of environmental regulations, standardization, and best practice. In 2019, Xi Jinping stated that BRI must be green and sustainable [3]. UN Environment's efforts could stimulate BRI to be greener.

From a social perspective, there is a lack of communication about the important role of BRI in sustainable development [1]. One of the instruments for increasing sustainability communication on BRI is the BRI International Green Development Coalition [3]. The Coalition was launched in April 2019 during the Second BRI Forum for International Cooperation. It is an open and voluntary international network that brings together the environmental expertise of all partners (current composition is 134 members) to ensure that BRI brings long-term green and sustainable development to all concerned countries.

The Coalition aims to integrate environmental sustainability, international standards, and best practices, across the five priorities of the BRI: policy coordination, infrastructure, trade,

financial integration, and cultural exchanges. The Coalition will provide a platform for policy dialogue and communication for sharing green development concepts and policies; forge a joint research network. Besides, it will serve as a platform for sharing knowledge and data, related to environmental protection; capacity building on environmental management and sustainable infrastructure development, causing environmental awareness.

In 2018, the Green BRI Data and Analysis Platform was launched. The Platform provides information and analysis via a new collaborative online platform. It will enhance collaboration between different groups working on different parts of the problem and creates a transparent distribution channel for these efforts. This will allow governments, researchers, financial institutions, and civil society to share and use data on BRI. By bringing together existing and new datasets, it will provide unparalleled capabilities for understanding potential environmental risks and environmental impacts facing BRI projects, so that financial institutions, companies, and policymakers in China and around the world can minimize risks and maximize societal benefits with accurate information.

The Coalition and the Platform could effectively develop and promote communication about the role of BRI in "greening" economy and sustainable development. With the help of this communication instruments, the UN SDGs agenda and BRI could be connected, and as a result, a new model of sustainable development and green finance could be developed. This model will include a combination of the global consensus of the SDGs, point to the necessity of a greener and sustainable world, and the successful development policies and financing strategies of China. In addition, a blueprint for similar regional initiatives and their communication instruments could be created.

This is the first study of the use of these new communication instruments, the first analysis of its effective features and functions, as well as an analysis of the problems encountered in the process of working with greening communication resources. The author performs a comparative analysis of the new sustainability communication instruments, assessment of their resource openness and check interactivity (feedback). The leading research method was the questionnaire created by the author for 30 experts-respondents in the field, which made it possible to identify the specifics of using the Coalition and Platform, determine their effectiveness.

The paper identifies the possibilities of using these instruments taking into account problem areas in BRI development and SDGs implementation; identifies the optimal BRI communication parameters within the SDGs framework.

Источники и литература

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