

# Chapter 4

## China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and Its Implications for Sustainable Development Goals: A Public Policy Perspective

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This chapter analyzes China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and its potential to help accomplish the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set by the United Nations. It examines how the BRI has affected public policy, international collaboration, and the Sustainable Development Goals. This chapter provides a comprehensive analysis of BRI's plans and projects, as well as their compatibility with the 17 SDGs. This chapter examines the development of China's public policy, the lessons learned, and the potential barriers to achieving the SDGs. Finally, it provides policy recommendations, stressing the significance of grasping the nexus between government action, international initiatives, and long-term sustainability.*

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Chinese President Xi Jinping first announced the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in 2013. It is a global development strategy with lofty goals. This initiative establishes connections between Asia, Africa, and Europe, the initiative hopes to promote economic growth, regional cooperation, and infrastructure development (Zreik, 2021a). To date, close to 138 countries, or around two-thirds of the world's population, have joined the initiative (Shakib et al., 2022). Thus, the BRI is an essential element in the development of international economies and infrastructures.

At the same time, nations around the world are trying to accomplish the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a series of 17 interconnected global objectives created in 2015 (Stead, 2019). By 2030, these objectives hope to have made progress on a wide range of pressing global problems,

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including as poverty and inequality and climate change and environmental degradation. The SDGs are the world's consensus on what a sustainable, egalitarian, and prosperous future should look like. They offer a guide for countries to implement significant change and act as a global rallying cry for cooperation (Leal Filho et al., 2019).

With its immense scale and influence, the BRI might play a significant role in achieving the SDGs in this context. This connection, however, is far from simple, as it depends on a nuanced balancing act between public policy, international economic strategy, and sustainable development concerns. The purpose of this chapter is to investigate and shed light on this connection. This chapter seeks to determine how the goals of a major international economic cooperation project might match with and support sustainable development goals through a thorough analysis of the BRI and its implications for the SDGs.

This chapter begins a deep dive into the connections between China's BRI and the SDGs set forth by the United Nations. The focus is on the BRI and how public policy, global economic strategy, and sustainable development all interact with one another. The major goal is to identify ways in which the BRI may contribute to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, which are a collection of goals spanning economic development, environmental protection, and other areas of concern.

The chapter opens with a comprehensive summary of the BRI, discussing its background, goals, core initiatives, and major projects. The seventeen SDGs and their relationship to the BRI are then discussed in detail. After that, the chapter gets into the BRI's and SDGs' complex relationship to one another. The chapter details the potential benefits and drawbacks of the BRI in terms of achieving the SDGs, particularly in regards to the promotion of clean energy, infrastructure, innovation, and industry.

Later in the chapter, China's public policy is analyzed critically in light of the BRI and the SDGs. This research investigates the link between policymaking and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. In the parts that follow, we'll look at how the BRI contributes to global sustainable development by highlighting the initiative's potential to facilitate knowledge sharing and technological innovation while also posing some unique obstacles, especially for the developing countries involved.

To ensure the greatest possible impact of the BRI on global SDG initiatives, this chapter finishes with a set of policy recommendations. Public policy, global projects like the BRI, and sustainable development all interact in complex ways, and this chapter highlights that fact. Therefore, the goal of this chapter is to serve as a resource for a wide range of audiences, including policymakers, corporations, NGOs, and academics.

## **2. BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE (BRI) OVERVIEW**

### **2.1. Origin and Objectives**

To increase regional connectivity and stimulate economic growth, Chinese President Xi Jinping announced the Belt and Road Initiative in 2013. The initiative gets its name and concept from the ancient trading route known as the Silk Road, which served as a conduit for the free flow of products, ideas, and information between East and West (Rippa, 2020).

The BRI is an ambitious plan to re-route traffic between Asia, Africa, and Europe via a system of land and sea links. The "Belt" is the Silk Road Economic Belt, through which the initiative plans to build a land corridor from China via Central Asia and Eastern Europe to the western part of Europe. The "Road," in contrast to the common usage of the name, alludes to the 21st century Maritime Silk

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