

Green Belt and Road? The Roles of Chinese NGOs

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Despite the fact that China has pledged to ensure that the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) will be in line with the environmental objectives set out in the BRI Forum in Beijing in May 2017, some observers worry that the initiative will contribute to increased stress on the natural environment. These observers are not only questioning the strength of the commitment to engage in sustainable development investment practices under the BRI, but also the ability of BRI stakeholders to implement, enforce, monitor, and ensure that a green thread runs throughout the BRI. Thus, civil society organizations both in China and in BRI countries are beginning to focus their attention on the BRI. They could potentially play several roles in this ambitious undertaking. This paper presents a map and analysis of approvals that Chinese NGOs have received thus far to facilitate and monitor sustainable investment and development practices under the BRI umbrella. It provides an overview of the different roles that Chinese NGOs play in these processes and their engagement with local NGOs in various BRI countries, and discusses the opportunities and obstacles to effective NGO engagement under the Green BRI.