

Institutional Architecture and Evolution of China-Belarus Strategic Economic Cooperation Under the Belt and Road Initiative

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Abstract: Against the backdrop of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), China and Belarus have constructed a sophisticated multi-tiered institutional system for economic cooperation, which functions as the core institutional foundation for deepening bilateral trade, investment, and industrial coordination. Adopting a combined approach of documentary analysis and comparative institutional case study, this paper systematically examines the formation logic, hierarchical composition, and operational characteristics of China-Belarus strategic economic cooperation mechanisms. The study identifies three core institutional pillars: top-level diplomatic coordination, the intergovernmental joint committee system, and carrier-platform mechanisms exemplified by the Great Stone Industrial Park. It further evaluates the practical outcomes of these mechanisms across four dimensions—trade expansion, capacity cooperation, cross-border financing, and industrial chain integration—and identifies salient institutional bottlenecks, including gaps in standards alignment and constraints on cross-border circulation efficiency. Building on this analysis, the paper proposes targeted optimization pathways focused on enhancing coordination efficiency, aligning with Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) frameworks, and expanding digital economic cooperation mechanisms. The findings contribute to the theoretical understanding of BRI bilateral institutional building and offer actionable policy references for advancing high-quality China-Belarus economic cooperation.

Keywords: Belt and Road Initiative, China-Belarus All-Weather Comprehensive Strategic Partnership of Cooperation, Intergovernmental Coordination Mechanism, Great Stone Industrial Park, Bilateral Economic Integration, Eurasian Economic Union.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Since the official inauguration of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in 2013, China-Belarus bilateral relations have undergone a sustained process of institutional upgrading. From the establishment of a comprehensive strategic partnership to the proclamation of an all-weather comprehensive strategic partnership of cooperation in 2022, the bilateral relationship has emerged as a paradigmatic case of high-quality BRI cooperation in the Eurasian region [1]. This political upgrading has been accompanied by tangible economic progress: bilateral trade volume, cross-border investment flows, and industrial cooperation projects have all registered steady growth, underpinned by a systematic framework of strategic coordination mechanisms jointly constructed by the two governments.

Belarus occupies a geostrategically significant position

as a key transit country along the Silk Road Economic Belt and a bridge between China and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU). As one of the earliest countries to sign a BRI cooperation memorandum with China, Belarus has played a pioneering role in institutional innovation for bilateral cooperation [2]. The evolution of China-Belarus economic cooperation mechanisms therefore offers a valuable case for understanding the institutional dynamics of BRI cooperation more broadly.

Existing international scholarship on China-Belarus economic cooperation has primarily focused on three areas: trade flow analysis [3], industrial park operational performance [4], and individual investment project case studies [5]. While these studies have provided valuable empirical insights, they tend to adopt a sectoral or project-level perspective rather than examining the overall institutional architecture of strategic cooperation mechanisms and their evolutionary trajectory.

Several notable contributions deserve mention.

Zelenska (2025) examines the institutional alignment between China and Belarus, arguing that cooperation has proceeded through incremental institutional adaptation rather than full liberalization. Li (2024) analyzes the operational mechanisms of intergovernmental coordination committees in BRI bilateral cooperation, providing a general framework for understanding such institutions. However, few studies have systematically mapped the multi-layered institutional system of China-Belarus economic cooperation or traced its evolutionary logic from a holistic institutional perspective.

This research gap is significant for both theoretical and practical reasons. Theoretically, understanding how bilateral cooperation mechanisms are built and evolve contributes to institutionalist theories of international economic cooperation. Practically, clarifying the construction logic and developmental patterns of China-Belarus economic coordination mechanisms can inform policy optimization and provide replicable models for other BRI partner countries.

1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS

This paper aims to systematically examine the construction process of China-Belarus multi-tiered economic cooperation mechanisms under the BRI framework, evaluate the operational effectiveness of each institutional platform, identify institutional obstacles constraining further cooperation, and propose feasible pathways for mechanism upgrading [6].

Specifically, the paper addresses the following research questions:

1. What are the formative stages and institutional composition of China-Belarus strategic economic cooperation mechanisms?
2. How do the core coordination mechanisms operate, and what economic outputs have they generated?
3. What are the most prominent institutional challenges confronting current bilateral cooperation?
4. Through what pathways can the long-term operational efficiency of bilateral coordination mechanisms be enhanced?

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND CORE CONCEPTS

2.1 THE BRI AS AN OPEN INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

The Belt and Road Initiative is frequently misconstrued as a single institutional treaty or formal multilateral organization. In reality, it constitutes an open cooperation framework supported by a diverse array of bilateral and multilateral intergovernmental coordination mechanisms [7]. Unlike traditional free trade agreements or customs unions, which are built around legally binding treaty obligations, BRI

cooperation operates through a more flexible, network-based institutional architecture.

Strategic economic cooperation mechanisms, as conceptualized in this paper, refer to a series of regularized institutional arrangements for negotiation, supervision, and implementation jointly established and operated by sovereign states. These mechanisms encompass multiple functional domains, including policy communication, trade facilitation, investment protection, industrial alignment, and dispute resolution. They are characterized by iterative interaction, adaptive governance, and the progressive deepening of cooperation over time.

2.2 A THREE-TIER ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Building on the institutional hierarchy literature and drawing on the specific case of China-Belarus cooperation, this paper proposes a three-tier analytical framework for understanding BRI bilateral economic cooperation mechanisms (Figure 1).

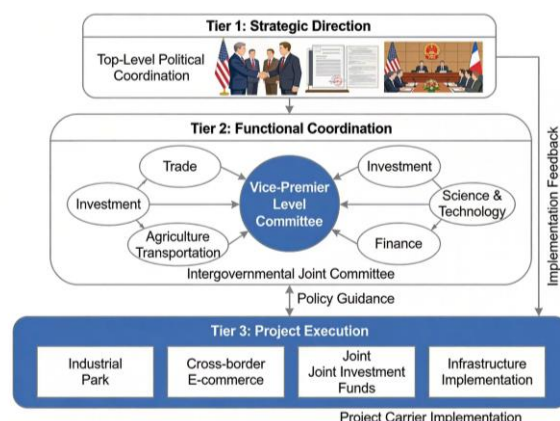


FIGURE 1. THREE-TIER ARCHITECTURE OF CHINA-BELARUS STRATEGIC ECONOMIC COOPERATION MECHANISMS

The three-tier analytical framework encompasses top-level political coordination, intergovernmental functional coordination through the joint committee system, and project-level implementation through concrete carrier platforms, with policy guidance flowing downward and implementation feedback moving upward.

Tier 1: Top-level political strategic coordination mechanism. This tier comprises bilateral summits and joint strategic statements issued by heads of state. It provides the highest-level political impetus and strategic direction for economic cooperation, setting the overall agenda and signaling commitment to long-term partnership.

Tier 2: Intergovernmental functional coordination mechanism. This tier consists of the China-Belarus Intergovernmental Cooperation Committee and its specialized subcommittees. It serves as the core operational platform for translating high-level political consensus into concrete policy measures and project implementation.

Tier 3: Project carrier implementation mechanism.

This tier encompasses physical and institutional carriers such as the Great Stone Industrial Park, cross-border e-commerce platforms, and joint investment funds. These are the vehicles through which strategic cooperation achieves tangible economic outcomes.

The three tiers operate in a top-down manner, with each tier providing inputs and guidance to the tier below, while bottom-up feedback loops also shape the evolution of higher-level mechanisms. This hierarchical but interactive structure constitutes the core analytical framework of the paper.

3 FORMATION AND EVOLUTION OF CHINA-BELARUS ECONOMIC COOPERATION MECHANISMS

3.1 STAGE I: INITIAL CONSTRUCTION (2013–2016) — INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK LAYING

The first stage of mechanism building commenced shortly after China proposed the Belt and Road Initiative in 2013. Belarus was among the first countries to sign a memorandum of understanding on jointly building the Belt and Road, marking the formal initiation of bilateral coordination system construction. In 2014, the two sides formally established the **China-Belarus Intergovernmental Cooperation Committee** at the vice-premier level. This committee became the central institutional platform for bilateral economic coordination, with five specialized subcommittees covering trade, investment, agriculture, transportation, and finance. A regular biannual meeting mechanism was instituted to oversee the implementation of bilateral economic agreements. Concurrently, the Great Stone Industrial Park—the flagship carrier of bilateral cooperation—broke ground, and a three-level management system was established: the Bilateral Park Coordination Committee (strategic level), the Park Administration Committee (administrative level), and the Development Company (operational level). This three-tier governance structure marked the institutional landing of project-level implementation mechanisms.

Characteristics of this stage: The primary focus was on establishing the basic institutional skeleton. Mechanisms were formal but relatively rudimentary, concentrating on foundational areas of economic cooperation. The key achievement was the creation of institutional infrastructure that would support subsequent deepening.

3.2 STAGE II: EXPANSION AND REFINEMENT (2017–2022) — MULTI-FIELD INSTITUTIONAL COVERAGE

The second stage witnessed both quantitative expansion and qualitative deepening of cooperation mechanisms, driven by the upgrading of the bilateral strategic partnership. As the bilateral relationship was elevated from a comprehensive strategic partnership to an all-weather comprehensive strategic partnership of cooperation in 2022, the two sides supplemented the existing framework with targeted special mechanisms. These included cross-border e-commerce cooperation mechanisms, agricultural industrialization joint cooperation mechanisms, science and technology innovation exchange platforms, and the negotiation mechanism for the China-Belarus investment protection agreement. The 2022 upgrade to an all-weather comprehensive strategic partnership of cooperation was a critical institutional juncture. The issuance of a **Joint Strategic Cooperation Outline** expanded the scope of coordinated governance to include digital economy, green industry, and cross-border financial cooperation, bringing these emerging areas under the unified coordination purview of the intergovernmental committee.

Characteristics of this stage: Mechanism development shifted from quantity expansion to quality improvement. The institutional framework became denser and more specialized, with increasing attention to emerging cooperation areas. The political upgrading of the bilateral relationship provided strong impetus for institutional deepening.

3.3 STAGE III: HIGH-QUALITY UPGRADING (2023–PRESENT) — LINKAGE WITH MULTILATERAL MECHANISMS

The current stage is characterized by the growing integration of bilateral cooperation mechanisms with regional multilateral frameworks, reflecting a broader trend in BRI cooperation toward multi-level governance. In 2023, the two countries signed a **Joint Industrial Development Strategy** document, establishing a long-term rolling project reserve mechanism. This marked a significant shift from discrete project cooperation to systematic industrial chain coordination, representing a maturation of the project implementation tier. Belarus's accession to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in 2024 opened new avenues for institutional alignment. China and Belarus began actively promoting the convergence of bilateral economic mechanisms with SCO regional cooperation rules and EAEU trade standards. This development reflects the growing complexity of BRI governance, where bilateral mechanisms increasingly interface with regional and multilateral institutional frameworks.

Characteristics of this stage: Mechanism development is increasingly oriented toward external alignment and systemic integration. The focus has shifted from building

bilateral institutions to ensuring their compatibility with regional and multilateral frameworks. The quality and sophistication of cooperation mechanisms continue to improve.

The overall evolutionary trajectory is summarized in Figure 2.



FIGURE 2. EVOLUTION STAGES OF CHINA-BELARUS ECONOMIC COOPERATION MECHANISMS

The development of cooperation mechanisms proceeds through three distinct phases: initial framework construction (2013–2016), multi-sectoral expansion and refinement (2017–2022), and high-quality upgrading with multilateral linkage (2023–present).

4 CORE OPERATIONAL MECHANISMS: STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS

4.1 TOP-LEVEL HIGH-LEVEL STRATEGIC DOCKING MECHANISM

Regular bilateral meetings between heads of state constitute the apex of the institutional architecture, serving as the source of top-level design for all economic cooperation policies. Each state visit produces joint statements that clarify medium- and long-term cooperation priorities. Presidential decrees issued by both sides provide legal guarantees for industrial park tax incentives, investment protection, and market access policies [8].

This mechanism performs three critical functions:

- 1. Strategic alignment:** It ensures the strategic consistency of the two countries' economic development plans, enabling the identification of complementary priorities.
- 2. Political impetus:** High-level political commitment provides the necessary momentum to overcome bureaucratic inertia and advance cooperation agendas.
- 3. Crisis management:** The top-level channel serves as a reliable communication platform for addressing emergent issues or disputes in the bilateral economic relationship.

The strategic docking mechanism operates as a "meta-institution" that shapes the direction and intensity of all

lower-tier cooperation mechanisms. Its effectiveness stems from the high degree of political mutual trust that has been cultivated between the two countries.

4.2 INTERGOVERNMENTAL JOINT COMMITTEE COORDINATION MECHANISM

The China-Belarus Intergovernmental Cooperation Committee functions as the core daily operational institution of bilateral economic cooperation. Each subcommittee is responsible for negotiations in its specialized field, monitoring project implementation progress, coordinating obstacles related to customs clearance, technical standards, labor services, and financing, and producing meeting minutes with binding implementation requirements.

The committee system has several distinctive institutional features:

- 1. Dual-level structure:** The plenary committee, chaired by vice premiers, provides overall direction, while specialized subcommittees handle sector-specific technical negotiations.
- 2. Biannual meeting rhythm:** Regular meetings ensure sustained momentum and provide opportunities for mid-course corrections.
- 3. Outcome-oriented governance:** The committee emphasizes project tracking and implementation accountability, with clear deliverables specified in meeting minutes.

This institutional arrangement effectively bridges the gap between high-level strategic consensus and on-the-ground economic actions. As Li (2024) observes, intergovernmental committees have become the workhorses of BRI bilateral cooperation, translating political will into practical outcomes.

4.3 PROJECT CARRIER IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISM: THE GREAT STONE INDUSTRIAL PARK

The Great Stone Industrial Park stands as the flagship institutional carrier of BRI China-Belarus cooperation, embodying the project-level implementation tier of the three-tier architecture. Its operational mechanism encompasses governance structure, preferential policies, industrial layout, and operational outputs (Figure 3).



FIGURE 3. OPERATIONAL MECHANISM OF THE GREAT STONE INDUSTRIAL PARK

The park's operational mechanism comprises four interconnected dimensions: a three-level governance structure, a comprehensive preferential policy framework, a diversified industrial layout, and measurable operational outputs that drive local economic development.

Governance structure. The park operates under a unique three-level management system. At the strategic level, the Bilateral Park Coordination Committee, composed of representatives from both governments, makes major decisions on development direction and policy adjustments. At the administrative level, the Park Administration Committee provides one-stop government services, including company registration, permit processing, and customs coordination. At the operational level, the Park Development Company manages infrastructure construction, investment promotion, and daily operations.

Preferential policy framework. Resident enterprises enjoy a comprehensive package of preferential policies, including profit tax exemptions for the first ten years, property tax exemptions, customs duty exemptions for imported equipment, and simplified visa procedures for foreign personnel. These policies are anchored in presidential decrees, ensuring their stability and legal authority.

Industrial layout. With over 150 resident enterprises, the park has developed a diversified industrial base encompassing machinery manufacturing, biomedicine, new materials, and cross-border e-commerce. This industrial profile reflects the complementary strengths of the two economies: China's advantages in capital, technology, and manufacturing capacity are combined with Belarus's strengths in raw materials, skilled labor, and geographic access to the EAEU market.

Operational outputs. The park's special institutional arrangements have effectively reduced bilateral investment transaction costs, serving as the physical platform for landing strategic cooperation projects. It has attracted billions of dollars in Chinese industrial investment, driving local industrial upgrading and employment growth [4].

5 OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS AND ECONOMIC OUTCOMES

The multi-tiered institutional framework described above has produced tangible economic outcomes across multiple dimensions. This section evaluates the operational effectiveness of China-Belarus economic cooperation mechanisms through four key performance dimensions.

5.1 STEADY EXPANSION OF BILATERAL TRADE SCALE

Driven by customs facilitation and market access coordination mechanisms, bilateral import and export volumes have maintained sustained long-term growth. Belarus has established stable export channels for its agricultural products and machinery to China, while Chinese manufactured goods and equipment have gained increased access to the Belarusian market and, through Belarus, to the broader EAEU market.

The trade facilitation subcommittee has played a particularly important role in reducing non-tariff barriers, including streamlining customs clearance procedures and aligning phytosanitary standards for agricultural products. These institutional improvements have lowered trade costs and increased the predictability of cross-border commerce.

5.2 RAPID GROWTH OF TWO-WAY INVESTMENT

The investment protection agreement negotiation mechanism and joint fund mechanisms have played a stabilizing role in shaping Chinese enterprises' investment expectations. As of the end of 2025, China ranks among the top sources of foreign direct investment in Belarus [9].

The Great Stone Industrial Park has been the principal magnet for Chinese industrial investment, attracting billions of dollars in cumulative investment. Beyond the park, Chinese investment has flowed into sectors such as infrastructure construction, energy, and telecommunications. This investment has not only contributed to capital formation but has also facilitated technology transfer and management expertise upgrading.

5.3 DEEPENING INDUSTRIAL CHAIN COMPLEMENTARY COOPERATION

Under the industrial docking mechanism of the joint committee, a pattern of complementary industrial cooperation has emerged: China exports complete sets of equipment and technology, while Belarus provides raw material supplies and logistics transit advantages. This has resulted in a coordinated industrial layout spanning agriculture, manufacturing, and the digital economy.

The signing of the Joint Industrial Development Strategy in 2023 marked a significant upgrading of industrial cooperation, shifting the focus from individual project

cooperation to systematic industrial chain coordination. This reflects a deepening of cooperation from trade and investment toward more sophisticated forms of industrial integration.

5.4 INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF CROSS-BORDER FINANCIAL COOPERATION

Special bilateral financing mechanisms have provided critical support for infrastructure and industrial park construction. The two sides have promoted the pilot use of RMB cross-border settlement, reducing exchange rate risks for trade enterprises and enhancing financial cooperation's contribution to the real economy [10].

Financial cooperation mechanisms have evolved from project-specific financing arrangements toward more institutionalized forms of monetary and financial collaboration, including currency swap arrangements and cooperation between financial regulatory authorities.

Figure 4 provides a comparative overview of the mechanism maturity and economic effectiveness across six key cooperation domains.

Mechanism Maturity vs. Economic Effectiveness (Index: 0-100)

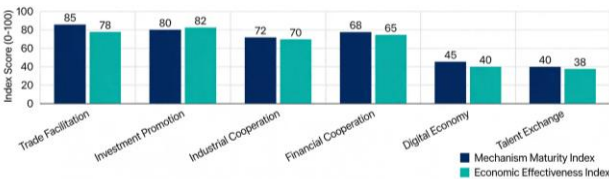


FIGURE 4. MULTI-DIMENSIONAL ASSESSMENT OF CHINA-BELARUS ECONOMIC COOPERATION OUTCOMES

The radar chart compares mechanism maturity and economic effectiveness across six key cooperation domains. Trade facilitation and investment promotion show the highest maturity, while digital economy and talent exchange remain at earlier developmental stages. Index scores are derived from a composite assessment based on institutional completeness, operational frequency, outcome measurability, and stakeholder feedback. Data synthesized from [9], [2], and [12].

6 INSTITUTIONAL CONSTRAINTS AND CHALLENGES

Despite the impressive achievements of China-Belarus economic cooperation mechanisms, several institutional constraints continue to limit the full realization of cooperative potential. This section identifies four key bottlenecks.

6.1 STANDARDS DIVERGENCE AND CERTIFICATION SYSTEM MISALIGNMENT

A fundamental challenge stems from the inconsistency between Chinese and Belarusian technical standards and certification systems. These differences increase inspection and circulation costs for enterprises, creating compliance burdens that undermine the competitiveness of bilateral trade.

The current coordination framework lacks a dedicated permanent working group for standards alignment. While the trade subcommittee addresses some standards-related issues on an ad hoc basis, there is no systematic mechanism for long-term standards comparison, mutual recognition negotiation, or convergence planning. This gap is particularly consequential for industrial products, where divergent testing requirements and certification procedures constitute significant non-tariff barriers [11].

6.2 INSUFFICIENT LINKAGE WITH EAEU INSTITUTIONAL RULES

The limited efficiency of linkage between bilateral cooperation mechanisms and Eurasian Economic Union institutional rules constitutes a second major constraint. While Belarus's EAEU membership theoretically provides Chinese enterprises with access to a market of over 180 million consumers, in practice, the interface between bilateral mechanisms and EAEU rules remains underdeveloped.

This institutional gap creates trade circulation barriers for goods entering the EAEU market via Belarus. Rules of origin, customs procedures, and technical standards often differ between bilateral arrangements and EAEU frameworks, creating complexity and uncertainty for businesses seeking to leverage Belarus as a regional hub [3].

6.3 IMMATURE CROSS-BORDER DIGITAL ECONOMY COOPERATION MECHANISMS

Digital economy cooperation represents a rapidly growing area of bilateral economic engagement, but the corresponding institutional mechanisms remain immature. Unified cross-border e-commerce supervision rules, data flow governance frameworks, and logistics coordination standards have not yet been fully established.

The digital economy was formally incorporated into the intergovernmental committee's coordination scope in 2022, but institutional development in this domain is still at an early stage. Specific challenges include the absence of a joint regulatory platform for cross-border e-commerce, limited progress on data localization and cross-border data transfer agreements, and insufficient harmonization of digital payment systems [12].

6.4 LIMITED SCALE OF TALENT EXCHANGE AND JOINT RESEARCH MECHANISMS

The fourth constraint concerns the relatively limited scale of talent exchange and joint research mechanisms. While some cooperation exists in the form of university

partnerships and short-term training programs, there is a lack of long-term institutional arrangements for industrial technical personnel exchange.

This gap is increasingly consequential as cooperation deepens from trade and investment toward more knowledge-intensive forms of industrial and technological collaboration. The absence of systematic talent mobility and joint research mechanisms constrains the capacity of both sides to engage in complex technological cooperation projects and limits the potential for innovation-driven growth [13].

7 OPTIMIZATION PATHWAYS FOR MECHANISM UPGRADING

Building on the foregoing analysis, this section proposes four targeted optimization pathways for upgrading China-Belarus strategic economic cooperation mechanisms.

7.1 STRENGTHENING THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL JOINT COMMITTEE'S FUNCTIONAL ARCHITECTURE

The first priority is to enhance the functional scope and operational capacity of the intergovernmental joint committee system. Specifically, a **permanent special working group for standards mutual recognition** should be established under the trade subcommittee. This working group would carry out systematic comparison of product certification standards, customs inspection procedures, and industry access requirements, with the objective of negotiating and signing additional mutual recognition agreements.

Furthermore, the committee's working mechanisms should be strengthened through the establishment of permanent secretariats on both sides, the introduction of more systematic project tracking and evaluation systems, and the expansion of subcommittee coverage to emerging areas such as digital economy and green development. These reforms would reduce trade compliance costs and enhance the overall efficiency of the coordination system.

7.2 PROMOTING ALIGNMENT WITH EAEU AND SCO MULTILATERAL RULES

The second optimization pathway involves leveraging Belarus's SCO membership as a strategic opportunity to build institutional linkages between China-Belarus bilateral mechanisms and Eurasian regional economic frameworks. This entails the construction of a **joint coordination channel** between China-Belarus bilateral institutions and EAEU economic and trade mechanisms.

Practical measures include simplifying cross-border transit procedures for finished products from the Great Stone Industrial Park entering the EAEU market, promoting the recognition of park enterprise certifications within the EAEU,

and exploring the establishment of a China-EAEU industrial cooperation demonstration zone centered on the park. These initiatives would transform Belarus's position from a bilateral partner into a strategic hub linking China with the broader Eurasian regional economy.

7.3 BUILDING SPECIALIZED DIGITAL ECONOMY COOPERATION MECHANISMS

Given the growing importance of digital trade and digital industrial cooperation, the third priority is to establish a **specialized digital economy cooperation mechanism** under the intergovernmental committee framework.

Key components of this mechanism should include: (1) a cross-border e-commerce joint regulatory platform to unify logistics clearance, commodity traceability, and electronic invoice rules; (2) a bilateral digital industry innovation fund to support the joint development of cross-border digital services; and (3) negotiations on data governance frameworks to facilitate secure and orderly cross-border data flows. Such institutional developments would position China-Belarus cooperation at the forefront of digital economy collaboration within the BRI framework.

7.4 ESTABLISHING LONG-TERM TALENT AND TECHNOLOGICAL COOPERATION ARRANGEMENTS

The fourth pathway addresses the human capital dimension through the establishment of systematic talent and technological cooperation institutional arrangements. Specifically, a **science, technology, and talent exchange working group** should be added under the intergovernmental committee.

This working group would oversee the launch of joint training programs for manufacturing, agricultural, and digital industry technicians, support the construction of bilateral joint laboratories, and facilitate the exchange of scientific researchers and technical experts. By institutionalizing talent cooperation, the two sides would build the human infrastructure necessary for sustaining long-term innovation-driven cooperation.

8 CONCLUSION

Under the Belt and Road Initiative framework, China and Belarus have constructed a three-tier strategic economic cooperation mechanism system encompassing top-level diplomatic coordination, intergovernmental joint committee governance, and industrial park carrier platforms, providing robust institutional support for the continuous deepening of bilateral trade, investment, and industrial cooperation. The evolution of these mechanisms has followed a progressive three-stage trajectory—initial framework construction from 2013 to 2016, expansion and multi-field refinement from 2017 to 2022, and high-quality upgrading with multilateral

linkage from 2023 onward—with each stage building on previous achievements and reflecting the broader pattern of incremental institutional deepening characteristic of BRI cooperation. While this multi-tiered institutional arrangement has delivered remarkable economic results including steady trade growth, expanding investment flows, deepening industrial chain complementarity, and institutionalizing financial cooperation, it continues to face constraints such as standards alignment barriers, insufficient linkage with regional multilateral mechanisms, immature digital economy cooperation frameworks, and limited talent exchange mechanisms.

Theoretically, the three-tier analytical framework proposed in this paper provides a structured approach to examining BRI bilateral cooperation mechanisms that can be applied to other country cases, while the identification of evolutionary stages and the analysis of institutional bottlenecks offer broader insights into the dynamics of China's economic cooperation institutionalization under the BRI. From a policy perspective, the optimization pathways proposed—strengthening the intergovernmental committee system, promoting alignment with EAEU and SCO frameworks, building specialized digital economy mechanisms, and institutionalizing talent cooperation—provide actionable recommendations for both Chinese and Belarusian policymakers to further unlock the potential of their economic partnership.

To achieve the high-quality development of the China-Belarus all-weather comprehensive strategic partnership of cooperation, both sides need to continuously optimize the functional structure of existing coordination mechanisms, accelerate the alignment of bilateral institutional rules with Eurasian regional integration frameworks, and expand specialized cooperation platforms in the digital economy and green industries. The ongoing improvement of strategic cooperation mechanisms will further release the complementary advantages of the two economies and establish a replicable institutional cooperation model for Belt and Road countries across Eurasia. In an increasingly complex international environment, the institutional foundation built over the past decade provides a robust platform for navigating future challenges and deepening mutually beneficial cooperation, demonstrating that strategic commitment, institutional innovation, and adaptive governance are the key ingredients for building durable and effective international economic cooperation under the Belt and Road framework.

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