

## Internationalization and Postprint Strategies for Chinese Scientific Journals

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### Abstract

China has become a major science and technology power with significant global influence. The internationalization of scientific journals constitutes an important manifestation of China's scientific and technological competitiveness and cultural soft power, serving not only to showcase China's scientific and technological achievements to the world, but also to facilitate international academic exchanges and cooperation, thereby promoting scientific research and technological innovation in China and worldwide. This article proposes strategies and approaches for the internationalization of Chinese scientific journals from eight dimensions: integrating scientific journal internationalization into the overarching framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, providing flexible export policies and channels for scientific journals to "go global", accelerating open access publishing of Chinese scientific journals, constructing international publishing and dissemination platforms for Chinese scientific journals, actively establishing English-language scientific journals, vigorously translating and introducing Chinese scientific journals, strengthening the recruitment and cultivation of international journal management professionals, and enhancing the operation and management of Chinese scientific journals, with the aim of fostering the prosperous development of Chinese scientific journals and augmenting China's scientific and technological competitiveness and cultural soft power.

### Full Text

## Strategies and Tactics of Internationalization of Chinese STM Journals

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## Abstract

China has become a major country with significant influence in science and technology. The internationalization of Chinese STM journals represents an important manifestation of China's scientific competitiveness and cultural soft power. These journals not only showcase China's scientific and technological achievements to the world but also promote international academic exchange and cooperation, thereby advancing scientific research and technological innovation both in China and globally. This paper proposes strategies and tactics for the internationalization of Chinese STM journals across eight dimensions: integrating journal internationalization into the overall Belt and Road Initiative framework; providing flexible export policies and channels; accelerating open access publishing; developing indigenous international publishing and dissemination platforms; actively launching more English-language STM journals; translating and introducing Chinese STM journals to international audiences; strengthening the recruitment and cultivation of international publishing talent; and enhancing the operation and management of STM journals. These recommendations aim to promote the prosperity and development of Chinese STM journals and strengthen China's scientific competitiveness and cultural soft power.

**Keywords:** STM journal, internationalization, strategy and tactic, The Belt and Road, open access, business operation and management, journal platform

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## Introduction

On May 17, 2016, General Secretary Xi Jinping emphasized at the Symposium on Philosophy and Social Sciences: "We must strengthen cultural confidence, for it is a more fundamental, profound, and enduring force." On October 18, 2017, the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China called for "telling China's stories well, presenting a true, multi-dimensional, and comprehensive image of China, and enhancing the country's cultural soft power." On November 14, 2018, the Fifth Meeting of the Central Committee for Comprehensively Deepening Reform reviewed and adopted the *Opinions on Deepening the Cultivation of World-Class STM Journals* and the *Opinions on Strengthening and Improving Publishing Work*, stressing that "STM journals inherit human civilization, assemble scientific discoveries, and lead scientific development, directly

reflecting national scientific competitiveness and cultural soft power, with the goal of building world-class STM journals.”

China has become a major country with significant influence in science and technology. As an important component of national scientific competitiveness and cultural soft power, STM journals are closely related to the nation’s social, economic, and cultural development. They constitute an important part of global academic achievements and represent valuable human knowledge and cultural heritage. To build world-class STM journals, China must not only tell Chinese stories well domestically through Chinese-language journals but also tell these stories to the world through foreign-language journals. The internationalization of STM journals serves as a crucial manifestation of China’s scientific competitiveness and cultural soft power, demonstrating China’s scientific achievements to the world while facilitating international academic exchange and cooperation to advance scientific research and technological innovation globally. To this end, we must strengthen cultural confidence and promote Chinese STM journals globally, shouldering the responsibilities and commitments befitting a major country in both science and culture.

In recent years, as international academic exchanges have become increasingly active, barriers to international communication have been broken down. Major foreign STM journals and databases have become essential collections in Chinese libraries and important channels for researchers to access information. While the “bringing in” of international journals has been realized, the “going out” of Chinese STM journals remains a formidable challenge. This is not merely a language issue but rather a lack of national strategy, top-level planning, and concrete implementation tactics. Chinese STM journals face numerous problems in export policies and channels, open access publishing, publishing and dissemination platforms, English journal creation, Chinese journal translation, talent development, and operational management—issues that are particularly incompatible with the national Belt and Road Initiative environment. Although the China Association for Science and Technology has implemented the “International Impact Enhancement Plan for Chinese STM Journals” for many years, which has significantly promoted journal internationalization, it still fails to meet China’s urgent needs. The “going out” of STM journals should be elevated as a national strategy and tactic, demanding high-level attention from all sectors of society.

## **1. Integrating STM Journal Internationalization into the Belt and Road Initiative Framework**

The Belt and Road Initiative represents a new national vision for cooperative development. In March 2015, the National Development and Reform Commission, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Ministry of Commerce jointly issued the *Vision and Actions on Jointly Building Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road*, emphasizing the need to “extensively carry out cultural exchanges, academic interactions, talent cooperation, media cooperation, and

exchanges among youth and women, laying a solid public opinion foundation for deepening bilateral and multilateral cooperation.” STM journals serve as important platforms and carriers for “cultural exchanges” and “academic interactions” and should receive greater emphasis and development during Belt and Road implementation. The “Silk Road Book Publishing Project” is the only major project in China’s press and publishing industry included in the national Belt and Road tasks, yet it currently lacks specific programs for STM journals.

A specialized STM journal publishing and dissemination project should be established to integrate Chinese journal internationalization into the Belt and Road framework. This would support the creation or co-organization of STM journals related to Belt and Road themes and countries, organize journal exhibitions and academic activities in Belt and Road nations, and donate or exchange Chinese STM journals and databases with major libraries in these countries. As a declaration and manifestation of China’s scientific competitiveness and cultural soft power, STM journals must adopt an international perspective and global orientation, playing an important role in Belt and Road construction.

## 2. Providing Flexible Export Policies and Channels for STM Journals

STM journals serve as important cultural ambassadors in export activities. For years, China has imported numerous foreign STM journals and databases, but exports of Chinese journals remain severely imbalanced compared to imports—a situation incompatible with China’s status as a major scientific and journal publishing power. China must adjust and optimize its policies and funding support for journal exports to open flexible channels for STM journals to “go out.”

### (1) Formulate export policies encouraging STM journals to go global.

According to the *Notice on Continuing Preferential Value-Added Tax Policies for Cultural and Propaganda Products* (Caishui [2018] No. 53) and the *Notice on Continuing Preferential VAT and Business Tax Policies for Cultural and Propaganda Products* (Caishui [2013] No. 87), from January 1, 2013, to December 31, 2020, journals enjoy a 100% or 50% VAT refund during the publishing process, with most STM journals receiving the 50% refund. However, China lacks explicit tax exemption policies for journal exports, whereas developed countries like Germany and the Netherlands exempt exports from VAT. From a national strategic perspective, China should implement substantial tax reduction policies for journal exports to expand export scale and enhance international influence.

### (2) Establish diverse export and exchange channels for STM journals.

Chinese import-export companies should strengthen cooperation with foreign publishers or agents to lower export thresholds, break down barriers, and disseminate Chinese STM journals more conveniently, widely, and effectively, making them essential collections in foreign libraries and databases. Chinese libraries and journals should establish stable exchange relationships with foreign counterparts or donate journals to important overseas libraries, creating more

pathways for Chinese STM journals to “go out.”

**(3) Encourage participation in international book fairs.** International book fairs serve as crucial platforms for international publishing trade and cultural exchange, playing a significant role in promoting global publishing trade[1]. At the national level, China should leverage these platforms to increase international visibility for Chinese STM journals, break down cooperation barriers with international publishers and distributors, and accelerate the global expansion of outstanding journals. In 2017, Chinese journals made their first collective appearance at the Frankfurt Book Fair, generating positive feedback . Journal publishing enterprises should be encouraged to actively participate in and organize international book exhibitions in other countries to expand trade regions.

**(4) Improve China’s international book and journal fairs.** Under government financial support, the London Book Fair and Seoul Book Fair have rapidly developed into important channels for their countries’ publishing exports[1]. At the national level, China should host more international book and journal fairs like the Beijing International Book Fair (which has been held for 25 sessions). This requires increased funding to build a sound platform for China’s publishing exports, vigorously disseminating diverse and inclusive cultural products (including journals), reducing trade barriers, and promoting export trade and publishing cooperation.

**(5) Encourage STM journals to participate in international academic activities.** Special funds should be established to encourage journals and editors to participate in international professional academic conferences and exhibitions, enabling direct engagement with end users (authors and readers) for promotion and marketing. This will build positive journal images and influence among international author and reader communities, better promoting the academic content and value of Chinese STM journals.

### 3. Accelerating Open Access Publishing in Chinese STM Journals

Open access (OA) publishing is a mechanism advocated by the international academic and publishing communities to break market monopolies, providing free access for readers worldwide. Although Chinese STM journals have made considerable progress in OA publishing in recent years, overall advancement remains difficult. OA publishing helps break monopolies, offering global readers free reading, downloading, and utilization opportunities, thereby enhancing the visibility and influence of Chinese STM journals. OA publishing represents an important model and development direction for journal publishing and a crucial means for Chinese STM journals to “go out.”

**(1) Seize opportunities and adapt to international OA trends.** Following the EU’s “OA 2020” initiative, in September 2018, major research funding agencies from 11 European countries including France, the UK, the Netherlands, and Italy jointly signed Plan S, stipulating that from January 1, 2020, all research results from projects funded by these agencies must be published

in fully open access journals or platforms. Chinese STM journals should seize this opportunity, adapt to international publishing trends, actively promote OA publishing, and accelerate the global dissemination of Chinese research achievements to enhance international influence.

**(2) Promote the launch of high-level OA journals.** In terms of publishing policies and funding, China should increase support for launching high-level, high-quality OA journals, enabling outstanding Chinese research achievements to be published in domestic Chinese or English OA journals. Particularly in basic and traditional advantageous disciplines, journals should adopt OA as their publishing model from inception to enhance dissemination breadth and effectiveness.

**(3) Accelerate the transformation of traditional journals to OA.** Traditional journals are characterized by print subscriptions. However, as reader needs and behaviors change, print reading is rapidly being replaced by online access. Authors hope for rapid publication, while readers seek convenient access. Therefore, STM journals should accelerate the transition from print subscription to OA publishing, moving from partial to full OA to meet author and reader needs.

**(4) Build a national-level OA publishing platform.** In the 1990s, to meet the development needs of Japanese STM journals and showcase Japan's scientific achievements to the world, the Japan Science and Technology Agency established the J-STAGE platform. This platform focuses on promoting the digital publishing of Japanese STM journals and accelerating the immediate international dissemination of domestic research achievements[2]. The Chinese Academy of Sciences established the "CAS Open Access Journal Platform (CAS-OAJ)" in October 2010, but its influence remains limited due to various constraints. China can learn from Japan's experience by building a national STM journal OA publishing platform at the state level to openly display Chinese academic achievements and cultural products to the world.

#### **4. Building Indigenous International Publishing and Dissemination Platforms**

In recent years, with the implementation of the "International Impact Enhancement Plan for Chinese STM Journals," the influence of English-language Chinese journals has improved significantly. However, most English journals still choose to cooperate with foreign publishers[3]—a strategy known as "borrowing a boat to go to sea." In the early stages of English journal development, leveraging the influence and dissemination power of international publishers helped Chinese journals avoid detours, explore paths to integrate into mainstream international academic exchange channels, and rapidly achieve international publishing and dissemination, thereby enhancing their international status. This approach has made indispensable contributions, but it is only a temporary measure that cannot be relied upon permanently to achieve true international dis-

course power.

To safeguard the autonomy and information security of Chinese academic achievements, China urgently needs to build an international publishing and dissemination platform with independent intellectual property rights, moving from “borrowing a boat” to “building a boat.” This represents a current and future national strategy and action for Chinese STM journal development[4]. In the development and international competition of STM journals, the platform is core, challenging, and key to internationalization. Without our own platform, Chinese STM journal internationalization will inevitably be constrained by others and struggle to achieve genuine development. Some domestic institutions have made beneficial explorations in building international publishing and dissemination platforms. For example, the SciEngine platform independently developed by *Science China* Press was officially launched in 2016 as China’s first STM journal service platform integrating full-process digital publishing and international dissemination[5]. It achieves seamless internal integration with submission and peer-review systems and automatic external integration with international academic search engines and third-party platforms, enabling real-time bidirectional flow of content resources and various application data to achieve rapid, high-quality publishing and accurate, timely distribution, thereby enhancing content discoverability. Overall, China’s STM journal publishing and dissemination platforms started late and still need to address many issues to achieve international influence and academic recognition, particularly regarding national policy support and participation from outstanding domestic STM journals.

## 5. Actively Launching More English-Language STM Journals

With rapid scientific and technological development, reading academic literature to understand the latest developments and publishing academic papers to advance international exchange have become essential pathways for scientific progress. As the world’s primary language, English facilitates better communication between Chinese scholars and the international community and promotes the dissemination of Chinese research achievements. By the end of 2017, mainland China had only 330 English-language journals[6], including 197 SCI-indexed journals[7], far fewer than the 2,974 SCI journals in the English-native United States or 607 in non-English-native Germany. Over the past 30 years, most of China’s important research achievements have been first published in foreign journals[7]. In 2016, Chinese scholars published over 322,400 SCI papers, but only 22,400 appeared in Chinese SCI journals, with 300,000 published in foreign SCI journals[8]. In 2017, China newly approved only 25 English-language STM journals, compared with 12 in both 2016 and 2015—far from meeting the demands of China’s rapid scientific development. The development of Chinese STM journals fails to match the progress of national scientific research, service capabilities, and the expectations of scientific workers, nor does it fulfill its due social responsibilities[7]. Vigorously launching English-language STM journals

is imperative.

**(1) Further implement the “International Impact Enhancement Plan for Chinese STM Journals.”** Since 2013, the China Association for Science and Technology, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Education, former State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television, Chinese Academy of Sciences, and Chinese Academy of Engineering have jointly implemented this plan, allocating special funds to support English-language Chinese journals in enhancing international impact and launching new English journals representing China’s cutting-edge, advantageous, or discipline-gap-filling fields. Most funded journals have improved their academic standards and international visibility to varying degrees[9], with significantly greater impact growth than non-funded journals[10]. Therefore, the plan should be further advanced with increased support for existing English journals and the launch of additional ones, helping Chinese English-language journals align with international academic norms.

**(2) Align with first-class discipline construction to help English journals gain more international discourse power.** The 19th Party Congress report states that China should “accelerate the construction of first-class universities and first-class disciplines.” STM journal development depends on disciplinary development while also guiding disciplinary direction and promoting talent cultivation and growth, making its role in discipline construction significant[11]. Aligning with first-class discipline construction requirements, China should launch high-level, high-quality English journals in discipline-gap-filling fields to lead disciplinary development. Simultaneously, leveraging the advantageous disciplines and academic teams in universities and research institutes will create better development environments and spaces for Chinese English-language journals, achieving interactive development between journals and disciplines.

**(3) Increase English journal supply.** Relevant state departments should implement more proactive and effective policies for English-language STM journals, encouraging and supporting qualified universities, research institutes, and enterprises to sponsor or co-sponsor more high-quality English journals in basic and traditional advantageous disciplines, blank disciplines, and emerging fields based on national scientific innovation and discipline construction needs. Procedures for launching new journals and changing journal languages (from Chinese to English or Chinese-English bilingual) should be simplified to maintain sustainable balance and development between Chinese and English journals, creating favorable conditions for Chinese STM journals to “go out.”

## **6. Translating and Introducing Chinese STM Journals Internationally**

Chinese-language STM journals have a glorious history. Major academic achievements such as the total synthesis of crystalline bovine insulin, male

sterility in rice, high-temperature iron-based superconductivity, and China's first Nobel Prize in science for artemisinin were all published in Chinese STM journals and recognized worldwide[7]. As Chinese occupies an increasingly important position globally, Chinese-language journals should fully leverage their platform role, being rooted domestically while facing the world, developing distinctive features to serve as platforms for Chinese scientists to showcase achievements, windows for exchanging with Western scientific communities, venues for publishing cutting-edge results, and media for science communication and popularization. While ensuring that a considerable number of excellent achievements are first published in Chinese to serve domestic needs, China should promote the international dissemination of these achievements, enabling Chinese scholars' voices published in China to be heard and influence global researchers to follow Chinese scientific research and Chinese-language journals.

Meanwhile, Chinese-language STM journals should enhance international dissemination methods to spread the essence of Chinese academic thought and achievements, allowing the international academic community and society to listen to China's voice. Three approaches can be adopted:

**(1) Write detailed English abstracts.** Transform short English abstracts into structured long abstracts to facilitate better understanding of article content. English abstract writing should conform to international publishing norms, highlighting research innovations and conclusions to help the international academic community understand China's research progress.

**(2) Join international databases.** Actively and proactively apply for inclusion in various important international databases to broaden dissemination channels and enhance the international communication power of Chinese-language journals.

**(3) Publish full translations.** Select outstanding original research achievements for full English translation and bilingual publishing[12]; publish English annual volumes of journals, or have academic societies jointly publish English annual volumes in their disciplinary fields to 集中 ly release important academic achievements, proactively disseminating and showcasing significant research results to the world through international languages.

## 7. Strengthening the Recruitment and Cultivation of International Publishing Talent

The "going out" of STM journals is a massive undertaking requiring participation and support from all sides, with international publishing talent being most critical. The topic selection, editing, production, and dissemination of English-language journals all require high-level professionals who understand disciplines, specialties, foreign languages, and technology. The internationalization of Chinese-language journals requires international talent with broad global perspectives, strong disciplinary backgrounds, cross-cultural communication skills, language proficiency, information processing capabilities, and keen

judgment. To achieve internationalization and build world-class STM journals, China must first cultivate a cohort of high-quality international publishing talent.

**(1) Emphasize the recruitment of international publishing talent.** Strengthen the selection of international journal talent by not only recruiting Chinese scholars with overseas experience and international publishing expertise but also absorbing foreign publishing professionals with excellent qualifications and capabilities. Develop talent incentive measures to attract more researchers with professional backgrounds to join editorial teams full-time or part-time, strengthening publishing capacity.

**(2) Develop strategic international publishing talent cultivation plans.** Strengthen talent cultivation based on the long-term development needs of STM journals by developing strategic training programs. Talent cultivation should not only meet current needs but also adapt to international journal industry development trends and future needs. Establish special funds for targeted training to enhance English language proficiency, international market operation capabilities, and knowledge of international laws and regulations, enabling talent to play leading and critical roles in the “going out” process.

**(3) Effectively combine talent cultivation with personal career development.** While focusing on recruiting and cultivating international talent, attention must also be paid to editors’ personal career development. Editorial staff should grow and develop together with journals and the publishing enterprise, improving compensation and working conditions, enhancing professional pride and cohesion, and elevating the social status and influence of the editing and publishing profession.

## **8. Enhancing the Operation and Management of Chinese STM Journals**

Strengthening operation and management not only creates a favorable development environment for STM journals but also directly affects their survival and sustainable development. As Academician Lu Jiayi, former President of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, stated, “STM journal work is both the tail and the head of the dragon” for scientific research. The *Opinions on Deepening the Cultivation of World-Class STM Journals* and the *Opinions on Strengthening and Improving Publishing Work*, adopted by the Central Committee for Comprehensively Deepening Reform, herald the arrival of a “spring” for Chinese STM journals. Chinese government departments, academia, and the publishing community have the responsibility and obligation to disseminate Chinese research achievements globally, demonstrating the commitments and missions of a major country and enabling the world to better understand, engage with, and appreciate China.

**(1) Fully leverage government roles in journal management.** The Chinese government has always attached importance to STM journal management.

In March 2018, the Party Central Committee announced the *Plan on Deepening the Reform of Party and State Institutions*, making major adjustments to State Council components and directly affiliated agencies, transferring some functions of the former State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television to the Publicity Department of the CPC Central Committee, which will further promote the healthy development of China's journal industry. Attention should be paid to formulating and improving policies tailored to STM journal characteristics, development patterns, and national scientific development needs, optimizing journal approval systems, improving management process monitoring, and strengthening penalties for violations. The unique roles of the China Association for Science and Technology and other departments in STM journal operation and management should be fully utilized.

**(2) Encourage Chinese STM journal publishing enterprises to establish overseas branches.** For global markets, localized teams and experience are crucial. Well-known international publishers have branches or offices in key regions to expand partnership networks and broaden dissemination of publishing achievements. At the national level, China should provide more policy and fiscal support for publishing enterprises to establish overseas branches, helping them participate in and win a place in international publishing market competition.

**(3) Strengthen cooperation between Chinese STM journal publishing enterprises and foreign distributors.** Explore establishing joint ventures with international publishing institutions or agents for overseas markets, sharing investment and risks. Use copyright trade to promote Chinese STM journals overseas, expand international marketing and promotional channels, and deliver more high-quality journals worldwide, establishing the international status and influence of Chinese STM journals. Promoting Chinese STM journals globally requires not only strength but also necessary promotion and publicity.

## Conclusion

For scientific research, the role of STM journals is irreplaceable. The 40 years of achievements in China's scientific development since reform and opening up have also created our cultural confidence. We need to carry this cultural confidence forward through the international exchange of STM journals, allowing the world to experience the charm of Chinese STM journals, the charm of Chinese scientific development, and the charm of Chinese culture.

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## Notes

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