Postprint on the Strategy for Developing Economic Management Database Resources for Belt and Road Countries

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Abstract

[Purpose/Significance] The construction of economic management databases for countries along the "Belt and Road" is urgently needed to serve the economic development of these countries and advance the "Belt and Road" Initiative. [Methods/Process] Thirty-three thematic databases on the "Belt and Road" were selected as survey subjects. Web-based research methods were employed to obtain information on their resource domains, sources, types, languages, participating countries, and other aspects, which were then analyzed. [Results/Conclusion] The survey identifies deficiencies in the current construction of "Belt and Road" thematic databases, primarily: inconsistent classification of resource domains, relatively monolithic resource source channels, insufficient variety of resource types, limited number of databases supporting multiple languages, and inadequate participation by countries along the route in the construction of thematic database resources. Strategies for resource construction of economic management databases for "Belt and Road" countries are explored from five dimensions: resource domain, resource source, resource type, language, and country.

Full Text

Resource Construction Strategy for the Economic Management Database of Countries Along "the Belt and Road"

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Abstract: *[Purpose/Significance]* There is an urgent need to construct an economic management database for countries along "the Belt and Road" to serve their economic development and advance the Belt and Road Initiative. *[Method/Process]* This study selected 33 thematic databases on "the Belt and

Road" as survey objects, using web-based research methods to obtain and analyze information regarding their resource domains, sources, types, languages, and participating countries. *[Result/Conclusion]* The investigation revealed current deficiencies in the construction of thematic databases on "the Belt and Road," including inconsistent domain classification, relatively single-source channels, insufficient resource type diversity, limited multilingual support, and minimal participation by countries along the route in database construction. This paper discusses resource construction strategies for the economic management database of Belt and Road countries from five dimensions: resource domain, source, type, language, and country participation.

Keywords: resource construction; economic management database; "the Belt and Road"

1 Introduction

Since its proposal, the Belt and Road Initiative has attracted significant international attention. As the number of participating countries and cooperation scope continues to expand, user demand for Belt and Road information resources has surged. Government agencies, enterprises, universities, and research institutes have leveraged their distinctive advantages to build thematic databases on "the Belt and Road" to support economic development along the route. However, existing databases have different emphases: the official Belt and Road website focuses on policies, reports, and news; Peking University's Belt and Road Data Analysis Platform primarily collects political, economic, cultural, scientific, and diplomatic information; while the Belt and Road Statistics Database and Xinhua Silk Road concentrate on economic statistics and management data. Apart from a few economics-oriented databases like the Belt and Road Statistics Database and Xinhua Silk Road, most are comprehensive databases. As noted in the thematic article "Investigation and Development Analysis of Thematic Databases on 'the Belt and Road'," no specialized economic management database for the Belt and Road currently exists. Overall, existing thematic databases collect scattered resources with limited breadth and depth, failing to provide specialized services for accessing economic management information resources. Moreover, there is currently no domestic research specifically addressing resource construction for a Belt and Road economic management database.

Based on this context, we conducted web-based research on 33 thematic databases to understand current resource construction status in terms of domain, source, type, language, and participating countries. This analysis identifies existing deficiencies and proposes resource construction strategies for a Belt and Road economic management database across these five dimensions.

2 Literature Review

We review domestic literature from two perspectives: Belt and Road information resource construction and economic management database development.

2.1 Research on Belt and Road Information Resource Construction

Information resource integration represents a crucial aspect of Belt and Road resource construction, facing challenges from diverse sources, multiple languages, complex formats, and large temporal-spatial spans. Addressing researchers' literature needs for country-specific or regional studies, Guan Zhiying proposed that university libraries should systematically and scalably collect literature on China's neighboring countries [1]. Yan Dan et al. investigated the Belt and Road official website, Research and Decision Support Platform, Belt and Road Database, and Full-text Database, suggesting that university libraries should leverage their resource foundations and advantages to excavate and integrate various information resources from multiple sources, constructing a comprehensive information resource system [2]. Yan Dan et al. further recommended that libraries build multilingual, interdisciplinary, and multi-source Belt and Road information resource systems, actively expanding collection channels and particularly integrating primary materials and open access resources from government departments, universities, professional institutions, and mainstream media websites in various countries [3]. Ding Botao identified problems in current Belt and Road information resource development, including insufficient attention, single data sources, low development levels, and weak organizational support, proposing countermeasures based on international organizations' and multinational corporations' experiences [4].

Information service platform construction provides support for Belt and Road resource development. Zhang Zhan proposed building a Belt and Road information service sub-platform cluster based on personalized information needs to address fragmentation, low quality, and information asymmetry [5]. Yu Shiyang et al. introduced data collection approaches and types for Belt and Road resources, elaborating on the construction 思路, basic architecture, and core content modules of a comprehensive Belt and Road database, proposing specific solutions to data collection challenges [6]. Guo Dongmei et al. suggested establishing a Belt and Road ecological and environmental protection big data service platform to promote connectivity and information sharing [7].

2.2 Research on Economic Management Database Construction

Scholars have primarily studied macroeconomic and microeconomic databases. Zhao Han discussed quarterly macroeconomic database construction from perspectives of sample selection, processing methods, economic implications, and seasonal adjustment methods [8]. Addressing the scattered and heterogeneous nature of current macroeconomic information, Ma Xiaowei resolved data heterogeneity, naming inconsistencies, and structural differences from architectural,

integration process, and rule perspectives to optimize macroeconomic monitoring and forecasting systems [9]. Jiao Hao et al. noted that foreign database construction features continuously optimized survey modules, improved user-friendliness, clear "cloud-based" trends, comprehensive professional database development, and rigorous research methods, providing valuable experience for China's economic management micro-database construction and utilization [10]. Shao Lixia et al., based on comprehensive analysis of global marine economic development characteristics, elaborated the overall framework of a marine economic database and designed construction plans and professional functions for a marine economic information platform [11]. Micro-enterprise data plays a pivotal role in corporate behavior research; Xiao Liping et al. introduced the data structure of China's Industrial Enterprise Database, its integration with other micro-data, and data processing, systematically reviewing its applications in corporate economic behavior research [12].

Existing research primarily addresses Belt and Road information resource integration and development, information service platform construction, and macro/microeconomic databases. However, few studies specifically focus on Belt and Road economic management database construction. Currently, no specialized Belt and Road economic management database exists. To meet user information needs in Belt and Road countries and promote their economic development, constructing such a database is imperative. Therefore, we investigate current thematic database construction from resource domain, source, type, language, and participating country perspectives to guide economic management database development.

3 Deficiencies in Current Belt and Road Thematic Database Resource Construction

We surveyed 33 Belt and Road thematic databases (see specific list in Table 1 of the thematic article "Investigation and Development Analysis of Thematic Databases on 'the Belt and Road' "), analyzing resource domain, source, type, language, and participating countries to reveal current deficiencies.

3.1 Inconsistent Resource Domain Classification

Many databases classify resource domains according to their own characteristics. For instance, the Belt and Road Research and Decision Support Platform divides socioeconomic development indicators into 18 categories: national economic accounting, population and employment, trade, poverty, external debt, private sector, official development assistance, tourism, public sector, social security implementation, balance of payments, government finance, monetary finance, infrastructure, education, health, energy production and use, and environment [13]. The RESSET Macroeconomic Database covers economy, investment, population, employment, and other domains, with 27 data modules including national economic accounting, population, employment and wages, fixed asset

investment, domestic trade, foreign economic trade, energy, finance, interest rates, price indices, economic climate indices, people's livelihood, urban profiles, administrative divisions and environment, agriculture, industry, construction, real estate development investment, transportation and postal services, wholesale and retail, accommodation and catering, tourism, finance, securities and insurance, education, science and technology, culture and sports, health and other social services [14]. The DRCnet Statistical Database's macroeconomic sub-database includes 11 categories: macroeconomy, product output, industrial statistics, price statistics, population and employment, fiscal taxation, state-owned assets, residents' life, regional economy, key industries, and enterprise rankings [15].

These inconsistent classification standards create user inconvenience when retrieving the same type of resources across different databases. Therefore, existing classification standards should be integrated with characteristics of economic management data resources to establish unified domain classification for better database construction and user experience.

3.2 Relatively Single-Source Channels

Current database resources primarily originate from domestic or institutional sources, with limited collection from Belt and Road countries themselves [4], resulting in single-source channels. For example, the Belt and Road Database is supported by the Social Sciences Academic Press, relying on the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences' research strength and achievements [16]; the Belt and Road Statistics Database is supported by CEInet Data Co., Ltd., building upon its existing resources [17]; Xinhua Silk Road is supported by Xinhua News Agency, leveraging its global news information network [18]; and EBSCO's Belt and Road full-text database is supported by the U.S. EBSCO company, integrating its full-text journal resources in minor languages [2]. Given the numerous Belt and Road countries and vast information resources scattered across different departments, organizations, and institutions, ensuring completeness and richness requires collecting and organizing economic management data from diverse countries and organizations.

3.3 Insufficient Resource Type Diversity

Digital resources can be categorized by content type into data, news, reports, policies and regulations, papers, monographs, newspapers, yearbooks, reference books, patents, etc. By presentation format, they can be divided into text, charts, images, audio, video, documents, etc.

Among the surveyed databases, 24 (73%) provide data resources; 20 (61%) provide news and academic updates; 18 (55%) provide country situation reports, business environment reports, industry reports, and investment guides; 14 (42%) provide policy and regulation resources; and only 7 (21%) provide paper resources. Monographs, newspapers, yearbooks, reference books, and patent

literature are rarely provided, with only a few databases offering such resources. Regarding presentation formats (surveying 26 accessible databases), all 26 use text; 21 (81%) use images; 19 (73%) use charts; 9 (35%) use documents; and only 6 (23%) use video, such as the "Shared Silk Road" column on the official Belt and Road website. Some databases employ knowledge graphs and audio, like the Hubei Belt and Road Public Service Platform's enterprise relationship knowledge graphs and VR platform features.

Thematic databases primarily provide data, news, reports, and policy resources, with low coverage of papers, monographs, newspapers, yearbooks, and reference books. Presentation formats focus on text, images, charts, and documents, with limited audio, video, and graph resources.

3.4 Limited Multilingual Database Support

By February 2020, China had signed 200 Belt and Road cooperation documents with 138 countries and 30 international organizations [19], involving over 50 official languages. However, only 30% of surveyed databases support more than two languages, and merely four databases support multiple languages. Chinese is the most covered language (32 databases), followed by English (13 databases). Russian, Arabic, and French appear as options in some databases, with the official Belt and Road website covering all six UN official languages. A few databases also cover Italian, German, and other languages. Twenty databases support only Chinese, while three support only English. Six databases support both Chinese and English, and four support three or more languages including Chinese and English. The scarcity of multilingual databases limits accessibility for diverse users.

3.5 Minimal Participation by Belt and Road Countries

As the initiator and practitioner of the Belt and Road Initiative, China hosts most existing databases. Construction methods include exclusive development (e.g., Belt and Road Statistics Database, Xinhua Silk Road, Wind Belt and Road Database), collaborative development (e.g., Belt and Road Big Database & Silk Road Information Network, Belt and Road Research and Decision Support Platform, Peking University Belt and Road Data Analysis Platform), and open collaborative development (e.g., official Belt and Road website, Belt and Road Standards Information Platform, Belt and Road Economic Information Sharing Platform). Few foreign information resources specifically target Belt and Road research, with the most comprehensive being EBSCO's full-text database covering 65 countries [2]. Overall, Belt and Road countries have minimal participation in thematic database construction.

4 Multidimensional Resource Construction Strategies for Belt and Road Economic Management Database

We propose resource construction strategies across five dimensions to meet user needs for domain-specific, authoritative, diverse-type, multilingual resources and collaborative participation.

4.1 Domain Dimension: Meeting User Needs Across Economic Management Fields

4.1.1 Basis for Determining Economic Management Domains No unified standard exists for classifying economic management domains. Different organizations adopt different schemes to guide economic activities. The National Bureau of Statistics divides indicators into comprehensive, population, national economic accounting, employment and wages, prices, people's livelihood, finance, resources and environment, energy, fixed asset investment, foreign trade, agriculture, industry, construction, wholesale and retail, transportation, postal services and software, accommodation, catering and tourism, real estate, finance, science and technology, education, health and social services, culture and sports, public management, social security, urban-rural and regional development, and special administrative regions [20]. The OECD provides data on general statistics, agriculture and fisheries, population, economic forecasts, education and training, finance, health, industry and services, information and communication technology, international trade and balance of payments, labor, national accounts, productivity, prices and purchasing power, taxation and market regulation, science and technology and patents, social protection and welfare, and transportation [21]. The WTO's trade and tariff data includes merchandise trade, services trade, tariffs, non-tariff measures, global value chains, and trade maps [22]. The UN Statistics Division covers basic economic statistics, energy, industry, national accounts, tourism, and trade [23].

China's *National Economic Industry Classification* (GB/T 4754-2017) divides the economy into 20 categories including agriculture, mining, manufacturing, utilities, construction, wholesale and retail, and finance [24]. The *Chinese Library Classification* (5th edition) categorizes economics into economics, world economic overview, economic history, economic geography, economic planning and management, agricultural economy, industrial economy, transportation economy, postal economy, trade economy, and fiscal finance [25]. The *Chinese Thesaurus* classifies economic concepts into general economic concepts, policies, political economy, economic thought history, Chinese economic history, foreign economic history, world economy and international economic relations, economic planning and statistics, accounting, industrial economy, agricultural economy, construction economy, transportation economy, petroleum and mining economy, commercial economy, foreign trade, fiscal finance, labor economy, population, economic geography, and economic literature [26].

4.1.2 Proposed Domain Classification for Economic Management Database Drawing from the *National Economic Industry Classification*, international economic organizations, and the *Chinese Library Classification*, combined with existing economic management databases, we propose classifying Belt and Road economic management database resources into: national economic accounting, statistics, economic indices, price indices, population and employment, people's livelihood, finance, banking, international trade, urban profiles, resources and environment, energy, enterprises, industry, agriculture, information industry, construction, transportation and postal services, real estate, tourism, accommodation and catering, industry and services, science and technology, industrial parks, case studies, social services, public management, social security, and others.

4.2 Source Dimension: Meeting User Demand for Authoritative Resources

Belt and Road economic management database construction must ensure content authority, completeness, and accuracy. Given uneven information quality, authoritative sources such as official departments and organizations should be selected. The collection process should gather domestic and international economic management data from diverse sources to ensure completeness. Belt and Road information resources are scattered across countries and must be integrated into a unified platform to support cooperation and mutual economic benefits.

Based on information storage organizations, sources include: government agencies (national statistics bureaus, customs, commerce ministries, transportation departments), international organizations (OECD, WTO, UN Statistics Division, IMF), research institutions and universities, enterprises, databases, authoritative media, think tanks, and the internet [6]. These provide business data, statistical data, internet data, and other data [6].

4.2.1 Business Data Collected via web scraping from customs authorities, the "Going Out" public service platform, and the Belt and Road Research and Decision Support Platform. Examples include customs statistics from the General Administration of Customs [27], foreign investment, contracting, labor cooperation, aid, policies, and related information from the "Going Out" platform [28], and project bidding and investment data from the Research and Decision Support Platform [13].

4.2.2 Statistical Data Collected via web scraping from domestic government websites (National Bureau of Statistics, Customs, Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, Ministry of Transport) and international organizations. This includes macroeconomic data, foreign investment and trade statistics, index data, and yearbooks from the National Bureau of Statistics [20]; import-export trade information

from Customs [27]; trade and economic cooperation statistics from the Ministry of Commerce [29]; tourism economic data from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism [30]; agricultural product trade data from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs [31]; transportation statistics from the Ministry of Transport [32]; and macroeconomic data from the OECD, UN Trade Database, WTO, and UN Statistics Division [21-23].

4.2.3 Internet Data Primarily obtained through web crawlers from authoritative media websites, think tanks, and official sites providing open access resources. Examples include news from Guangming Daily and People's Daily; research reports, papers, and monographs from think tanks like the Renmin University Chongyang Financial Research Institute [34] and Belt and Road 100-Person Forum [35]; economic and trade data from official websites; and other relevant resources.

4.2.4 Other Data Obtained through self-construction, sharing, exchange, or purchase from research institutions, leading enterprises, and databases. This includes economic survey reports, papers, and monographs from universities; production, sales, and investment information from industry-leading enterprises; and resources such as country risk assessments, trade investment reports, business environment reports, investment guides, cases, regulations, industrial parks, projects, news, and policy interpretations from existing Belt and Road databases [13, 36]. Additional data on policies, population, environment, and industrial economy can be purchased from Gale, ABI, IEEE, and other databases [37].

4.3 Type Dimension: Meeting User Demand for Diverse Resource Types

4.3.1 Configuring Multiple Resource Types for Diverse Users Belt and Road databases primarily serve government, enterprise, and research users, each with diverse and complex information needs, requiring rich and varied resource types. Based on our survey and characteristics of economic management databases, the proposed database should include: policies and regulations, statistical data, index data, research and technical reports, news, journals and newspapers, dissertations, monographs, yearbooks, important reference books, patents, and standards. Government users require policies, statistics, patents, standards, reports, and yearbooks for decision-making. Enterprise users need policies, patents, standards, and reference books for production and investment decisions. Research users require policies, statistics, indices, patents, journals, dissertations, monographs, and yearbooks for academic research.

4.3.2 Selecting Appropriate Resource Presentation Formats Current Belt and Road databases offer limited presentation formats. Since different user groups have varying format preferences, databases should provide appropriate

formats based on resource characteristics and service objectives. Text and documents primarily include planning texts, policy documents, research reports, and legal literature. Images, charts, and graphics mainly contain spatial geographic information, infrastructure data, project materials, and scanned documents. Audio, video, and graph resources include various economic management multimedia materials. Selecting suitable presentation formats will optimize service effectiveness.

4.4 Language Dimension: Meeting Multilingual User Needs

With over 50 official languages across Belt and Road countries, language ecosystems are complex. Our survey found that only the official Belt and Road website covers all six UN official languages, while only 10 databases support more than two languages and merely four are truly multilingual. To better serve Belt and Road countries and regions, the proposed economic management database should cover as many languages as possible. In the initial construction phase, priority should be given to widely used languages such as Chinese, English, Spanish, French, Arabic, and Russian, gradually expanding language coverage as the Initiative progresses to ensure sustainable development.

4.5 Country Dimension: Meeting Collaborative Resource Construction Needs

The official Belt and Road website states it "fully embraces open cooperation and welcomes participation from all regions and countries along the route in website construction" [36], indicating that collaborative construction will be essential. Belt and Road economic management database development requires joint efforts from participating countries, as shared construction and benefits ensure long-term viability. Different countries have unique economic characteristics and specialized resources. To effectively utilize these resources, Belt and Road countries must be engaged in database construction. For countries with low informatization levels, international funds and assistance projects can help improve their data collection and processing capabilities while encouraging participation in information resource sharing and database development [4].

Conclusion

Through web-based investigation of 33 Belt and Road thematic databases, we analyzed resource domain, source, type, language, and participating country dimensions, identifying issues including inconsistent domain classification, single-source channels, insufficient resource types, limited multilingual support, and minimal participation by Belt and Road countries. We subsequently proposed resource construction strategies across these five dimensions to meet user needs for domain-specific, authoritative, diverse-type, multilingual resources and collaborative participation. These strategies will advance database construction to better serve economic development in Belt and Road countries and promote the

Belt and Road Initiative.

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Author Contributions:
Si Li: Conceived research ideas, designed methodology, revised final manuscript
Guo Caiqiang: Drafted initial manuscript and revisions
Li Juan: Investigated and analyzed database construction status

Note: Figure translations are in progress. See original paper for figures.