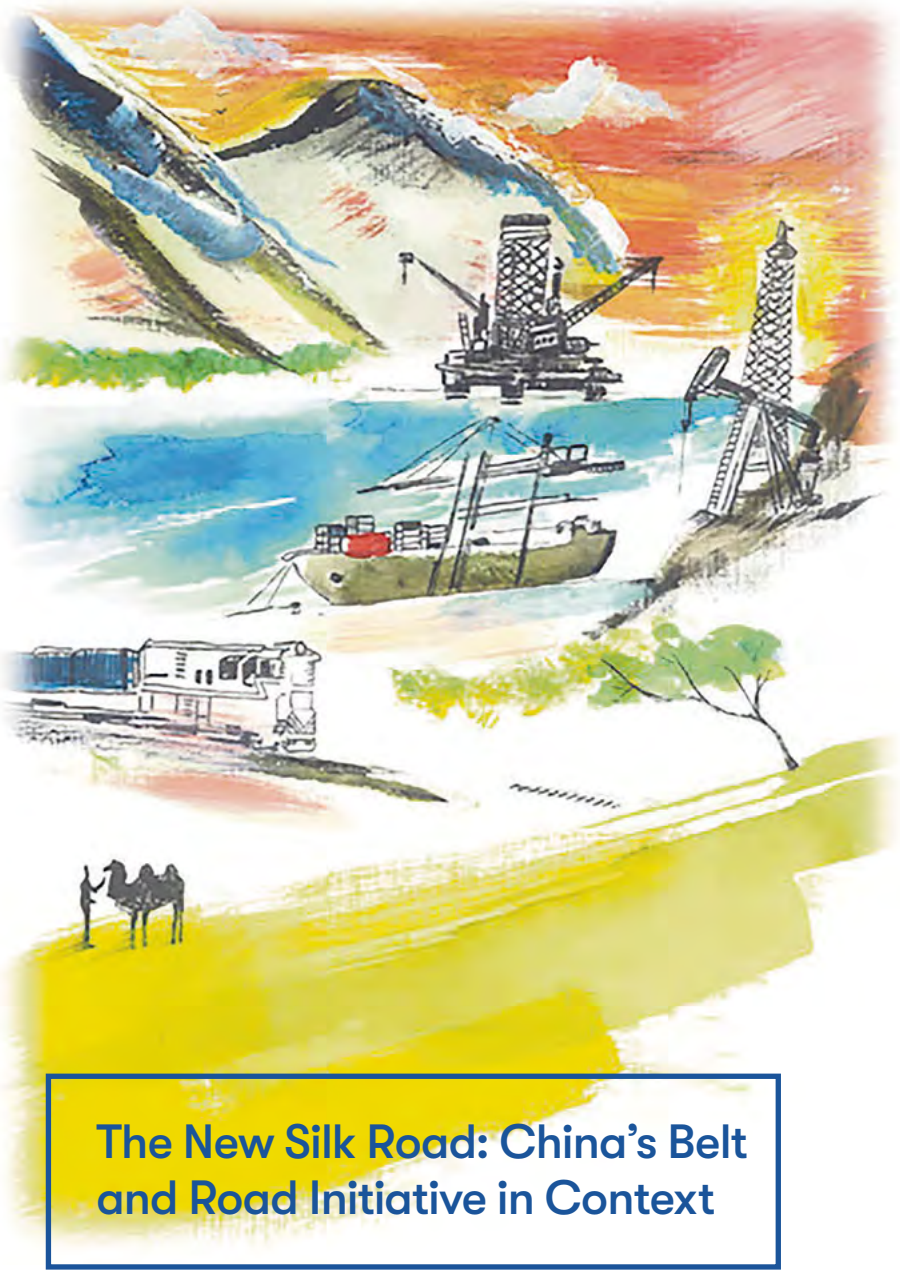
Supported Programmes at IIAS

The International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) supports, initiates, and engages in different types of interdisciplinary programmes and international networks. All of the IIAS initiatives are collaborative by nature, drawing from the institute's exceptional range of academic and professional networks. In this spread, colleagues from four affiliated programmes introduce their diverse research agendas and ongoing activities.



The New Silk Road: China's Belt and Road Initiative in Context

This interdisciplinary research programme is aimed at the study of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) of the Chinese government, with special attention given to the impact of the 'New Silk Road' on countries, regions and peoples outside of China. In addition to research and collaborations, the programme also maintains an electronic library of online resources meant to promote advanced teaching on the BRI and to offer starting points for student essays and theses.

In January 2023, IIAS began supporting a three-year project entitled the Silk Road Virtual Museum, which showcases the art and culture of the regions that lay on the historical trade routes between Europe and Asia.

Richard Griffiths, Coordinator
www.iias.asia/programmes/newsilkroad
www.silkroadvirtualmuseum.com

Above: 'The New Silk Road'. (Illustration by Luke Sky)

IIAS – The Global Network of Knowledge and Connectivity

Mehdi Amineh

In 1956, the Dutch historian Jan Romein anticipated that the end of European Empires and Asian resistance against it would end in the unanticipated 'unification of the world'. The founding of IIAS and its blossoming since then has substantiated his foresight.

The title of my contribution summarizes why IIAS has become so important in my scientific work. The organization, or better the worldwide network among scholars, facilitated me to design and realize six joint research projects between about 20 national and foreign universities and research centers from Asia, Africa, Australia, and Latin and South America. These projects related to Central Eurasia and the Middle East and North Africa between 2002 and 2007; comparative studies on European Union Energy Security and China; the Geopolitical economy of the Belt and Road Initiative between 2006 and 2021; and recently, the EU-China Energy Transition Challenges (2022-present).

The Energy Programme Asia (EPA), which I founded in 2006, has taken a central role in the realization of these joint research projects and publication of their results in ten books and around 81 articles in several peer-reviewed journals. A selection of publications include: (1) *Central Eurasia in Global Politics, Conflict, Security, and Development* (2003-2005); (2) *Greater Middle East in Global Politics: Social Science Perspective on the Changing Geography of World Politics* (2007); (3) *The Globalization of Energy, the European Union and China* (2010); (4) *Secure Oil and Alternative Energy: The Geopolitics of Energy Paths of China and the European Union* (2012); (5) *Transnationalization of Chinese National Oil Companies and the European Union Energy Security* (2014); (6) *Geopolitical Economy of Energy and Environment: China and the European Union* (2017); and (7) *The China-led Belt and Road Initiative and its Reflections: The Crisis of Hegemony and Changing Global Orders* (2022).

These joint research projects were financed by various national and international funds, including the Royal Netherlands Academy of the Arts and Sciences (KNAW), the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), the Dutch Research Council (NWO), the Macau Foundation, and the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS).

The sixth and current joint research project is between EPA-IIAS and the Institute of European Studies of Macau in cooperation with the School of Government and International Affairs of Durham University. It is titled *Energy Transition Challenges: Comparing China and the European Union*. It started in September 2022 to study: (1) the approaches of China and the European Union to fossil fuel supply security, their policies regarding the transition to renewable energy, and the challenges associated with moving to a clean energy-based economy; (2) China's BRI activities in the energy and infrastructure sectors of selected countries and regions in Europe (EU and Central and East Europe), Asia (China, West, Central, and South Asia), Africa (Egypt and Morocco), and South America (Brazil); and (3) the related geopolitical and geoeconomic risks and challenges.

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Above: Collage reflecting the complex links between fossil fuels, energy consumption, economic growth, energy scarcity, environmental disaster, and the need to develop a renewable/green energy system. (Illustration by Sandra van Morde)