

# Research on Guangxi Port Construction under the Background of “One Belt and One Road”

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**Abstract:** Guangxi port, as a “golden channel” between China and Asean, has contributed to the service and promotion of economic development in Guangxi and the ASEAN region. For example, in the “13th Five-Year Plan” development period, the relevant departments of China and Guangxi government put forward a series of important policies to promote the self-development of the Guangxi port. The Guangxi port has entered a new period of development. This paper proposes feasible development suggestions from the development characteristics of Guangxi port, the role of Guangxi port in the construction of “One Belt and One Road” and the future development of Guangxi port.

**Keywords:** Guangxi; port; One Belt and One Road

## 1. Development Characteristics of Guangxi port

This port has seven characteristics: long history, complete form, continuous growth of port operations, convenient and unimpeded port, clear channel function, rapid development of border industries, and enrichment of preferential policies<sup>[4]</sup>. Since the port of Longzhou became the first land port opened to the outside world in 1885, the port of Guangxi has been more than 1,000 years old up to now. At present, Guangxi has 11 highway ports, 6 seaport ports, 3 aviation ports, 4 inland river ports, and 1 railroad port. It has formed a full range of sea, land and air, and inland ports, and an all-round, three-dimensional cross-sector open pattern. Between Guangxi and ASEAN, we are also advancing the pattern of external exchanges that can support each other and support both sea and land routes. Every year, over 9 million merchants and over 400,000 vehicles or ships achieve entry and exit from the port, and the commodities up to 25 billion US dollars and more than 100 kinds import and export to Vietnam and other Asean countries<sup>[5]</sup>. Last year, the port’s import and export cargo volume was approximately 10,788 million tons, with a value of 386.64 billion yuan<sup>1</sup>.

With the support of multiple national preferential policies, such as national key open and development experimental zones, open cities along the border, western development, border comprehensive bonded zones, border finance comprehensive reform pilot zones, border economic cooperation zones, and cross-border economic cooperation zones, the Guangxi port has entered the golden period of development.

## 2. The Role of Guangxi Ports in the “One Belt and One Road” Construction

### 2.1. Guangxi port is an important transportation hub and cargo transit center in the construction of the “One Belt and One Road”

Guangxi is the only ethnic autonomous region in China that is both coastal and bordered. Special geographical advantages and geographical advantages make Guangxi port an important transportation hub and cargo transit center for Southeast Asia. During the “Thirteenth Five-Year Plan” period, Guangxi will backwardly rely on the major coastal ports in the Beibu Gulf, and the destination will be the opening of the ocean bus in Asean, improve the transaction cooperation network between China and ASEAN port cities, and establish a smooth and stable sea route with ASEAN. We will attach importance to the border areas, strengthen the connection with Vietnam’s railways, highways, bridges, and key ports, and make the bottleneck traffic areas smooth, and establish more convenient and efficient land transportation lines. Taking the airport of Nanning and Guilin as an effective carrier to make Asean’s routes and flights more denser, so that all major cities in the southwest and south-central can stop and transit to ASEAN countries to establish more convenient and smooth air transport lines. We will strive to achieve a total of 300 million tons of imports and exports at the ports of the region by 2020, and the value of freight transportation will also reach 150 billion US dollars. The number of visitors will reach more than 20 million and the inbound and outbound containers will reach 3 million TEU. By 2030, the above-mentioned port operation indicators will have doubled.<sup>[6]</sup>

## **2.2. Construction of the Guangxi port economic belt drives the national economic development of the “One Belt and One Road”**

As an important gateway of China opening to Southeast Asia, the Guangxi port is the meeting point for connecting domestic and international markets. The industries directly or indirectly related to it have become the focus of Guangxi's development. Since the “Twelfth Five-Year Plan”, Guangxi has been striving to establish a cooperation zone and a high-end platform for border and cross-border economic development, to improve and develop the industries with border characteristics, and to develop a single-access economy into a port economy that allows processing and diversification of development. Its border industries have expanded and advanced. Guangxi's border attaches great importance to the improvement and perfection of the trade between the bordering people, reforms the new model of mutual market, and explores the establishment of a mutual-benefit support group for trade, and uses the operating methods of mutual market and processing to promote the import goods to be processed, and increases the industrial chain and added value, so that the local people can benefit from it. “In 2017, Guangxi's foreign trade import and export reached 386.63 billion yuan, which increased by 22.6%. And the processing trade grew rapidly, its import and export accounted for 80.43 billion yuan, which increased by 25.5%, accounting for 20.8% of the total value of Guangxi's foreign trade over the same period. The import and export of small-scale trade at the border reached 83.63 billion yuan, which increase by 5.8%. “<sup>[7]</sup> During the “13th Five-Year Plan” period, Guangxi will actively participate in the “One Belt and One Road” key projects, including the participation in the construction of international economic corridor, the construction of Dongxing and Pingxiang key open development pilot areas, the construction of international cooperation parks and cross-border (border) economic cooperation zones with Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore, Brunei, Cambodia and other countries, the cooperation of science and education and culture and the construction of regional financial centers and so on. With the comprehensive advancement of the “One Belt and One Road”, the construction of the upgraded version of the China-ASEAN Free Trade Area continues to deepen. As an open frontier zone, Guangxi port will also usher in greater opportunities for development.

## **2.3. The Guangxi port is a “bridgehead” where China cooperates with the “One Belt and One Road” countries**

In order to give full play to the role of the Guangxi port as an important node for China-ASEAN interconnection, Guangxi actively explores ways to set up joint inspection

and supervision methods with the countries of the “One Belt and One Road”, carry out innovative international cooperation and expect to conduct a “two-state one-inspection” new way for cross-border customs cooperation. At present, the construction of Qinzhou Industrial Park in China and Malaysia is proceeding in full swing, and the “two-state one-inspection” clearance model is expected to be realized in May 2018<sup>[8]</sup>. By then, innovative “cooperation inspections, one release”, “same office work and same field inspection”, and “e-ports joint operation” and other customs business models will provide meaningful reference for the “One Belt and One Road” countries. In addition, China and Vietnam have cooperated in strengthening the enforcement of customs clearance at international and domestic ports and achieved certain results. The four provinces on the border between Guangxi and Vietnam have cooperated to promote the relative establishment of ports and set the unified clearance time for customs, making the exchange of ports more convenient and safe, realizing efficient intercommunication, preventing risks and smuggling, and conducting joint research and training. They have explored passengers together to achieve better joint transit and port visas, including new types of visas such as transit-free visas.<sup>[9]</sup> It explores multilateral cooperation among countries linked to the One Belt One Road policy, liaises and coordinates with ASEAN countries' port function control units, promotes multinational cross-regional customs clearance and coordinated system facilitating transportation, enabling multi-modal transport realize the one-off declaration and inspection at the point of destination (ie, exit), and allowing direct release of the situation where the change-over site can maintain its seal. It cooperates with relevant ports of Guangdong, Hong Kong, and Macao for customs clearance matters, and increases cross-border cargo circulation efficiency. Based on the customs integration of Pan-Zhu 4 provinces (ie, Guangdong, Fujian, Guangxi and Hainan), it perfects the system of customs clearance cooperation with the southwest and south-central provinces and cities, and innovates and transforms the integrated business model across administrative regions to achieve the requirements of notification, inspection and release. Through pragmatic cooperation in all aspects, the efficiency of cross-border customs clearance of goods, personnel, and information in Guangxi has been greatly improved, providing reference for port reform and transnational cooperation in the “One Belt and One Road” countries.

## **3. Future Development of Guangxi port**

According to the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region People's Government's Opinions on Further Strengthening the Port Work under the New Situation, Guangxi will strengthen the construction of Guangxi ports from the aspects of “optimizing the layout and realizing orderly opening of ports, increasing investment to promote the

construction of basic and supporting facilities, conducting reform and innovation to improve the efficiency of customs clearance services, highlighting features and vigorously developing the port economy, strengthening safeguard measures and forming a joint development force<sup>[10]</sup>.

### 3.1. Optimize the layout and realize the orderly opening of ports

It should scientifically plan the opening layout of ports, upgrade the ports opening at borders, increase the level of opening up, and increase the opening speed of ports such as inland rivers and aviation. In November 2016, eight major ports have been included in the “13th Five-Year Plan” for the Development of National Ports, namely the newly opened Shuolong Port, the expandable opened Beihai Airlines, and expandable opened Beihai, Qinzhou, Fangchenggang, Guigang, Zhangzhou, Liuzhou and other ports. In 2017, the State Council agreed to expand the opening of Shuikou Highway Port. At present, “Guangxi has opened 25 ports, 19 ports are in first class passed the examination and approval of the State Council, 6 ports are in second class and 26 ports are in the crossroads between China and Vietnam. The number of open ports is only slightly lower than Guangdong and Heilongjiang provinces, and the water transportation has been formed in a large scale. In the border area of the port, there are multiple ports such as railways and highways that are open to the public, which can achieve full coverage of all types of ports in cities and tourism, building a comprehensive, multi-layer and three-dimensional open port pattern”<sup>[11]</sup>.

### 3.2. Increase investment to promote the construction of basic and supporting facilities

It should improve the port infrastructure and supporting facilities, enhance the technical level of professional inspection facilities, quickly push forward the construction of the service platform for public resources under the leadership of the local government, and promote cross-border interconnection and interoperability. In 2018, the General Office of the Guangxi Autonomous Regional Government issued The Work Plan of Guangxi Accelerating the Construction of the South-China Channel for China-Singapore Interconnection (2018-2020). “At the end of this year, it will initially form a land-based cooperation network between Beibu Gulf and major cities in the west, actively strive for national support policies and strive to build the south-China channel into a new international land and sea trade channel connecting China and ASEAN with the shortest time, best service and best price. According to the phased objectives set out in the work plan, before the end of 2018, the Beibu Gulf Port - Chongqing train and Beibu Gulf Port - Singapore, Beibu Gulf Port - Hong Kong freighters will be opened; the

container throughput of Beibuwan Port will exceed 3 million TEUs per year; more than five inland dry ports will be built in the western part of China, initially forming a land-based cooperation network between Beibu Gulf and major cities in the west. By the end of 2020, Beibuwan Port Multimodal Transport Base, Nanning Integrated Logistics Base and Pingxiang Cross-border Logistics Base will be completed; the sea-rail combined transport train and Beibu Gulf freighter will be normalized and operated on a large scale; the container throughput of Beibuwan Port will exceed 5 million TEUs per year, which will become a container trunk port and a regional international shipping center, laying the foundation for 10 million TEUs in 2025.”<sup>[12]</sup>

### 3.3. Reform and innovation to improve the efficiency of customs clearance services

In 2017, Nanning Customs fully implemented the national customs clearance integration reform and implemented a series of reform measures to promote the implementation of national policies. For example, “in-depth implementation of the reform of ‘distribution service’, continuous deepening of the ‘three-way’ customs reform, implementation of the national customs integration reform, realization of the “one third contraction of the cargo clearance time”, the steady carrying out of customs integration reform for Beibu Gulf Customs, the increasing of the “Internet + Customs” reform intensity, and the full promotion the customs cooperation in the construction of China-Singaporean southbound channel.” [13] The above measures have greatly promoted the import and export of Guangxi’s foreign trade. “Since the start of the reform on July 1, 2017, the Nanning Customs District has cumulatively applied for 54348 votes for import declaration and 75,254 votes for export declaration in national customs clearance integration, accounting for 100% and 54.3% of the total import and export declarations after the start of the reform. Smooth operation and the efficiency of customs clearance of goods have been greatly improved. The clearance time for Guangxi’s first vote under the integrated customs clearance mode is only 13 seconds.”<sup>[14]</sup>

### 3.4. Highlight features and vigorously develop the port economy

It will focus on promoting the development of the characteristic industries in the border, promote the joint promotion of the port cities, cultivate the economic development zone of the golden waterway, and strengthen the promotion of the airport economy. Since 2016, it has explored the industrial development strategy of “Borderrside Trade + Landing Processing” at Guangxi port. “In 2017, the small-frontier trade volume at the border was 83.63 billion yuan, and the trade between people living on the border was 63.35 billion yuan.”<sup>2</sup> “The volume of

import and export of the small-frontier trade at the border and the import and export of the trade people living on the border are all ranked first in China.”<sup>[15]</sup>

### 3.5. Strengthen safeguard measures to form a joint development force

It should innovate the port opening management mechanism, increase policy support, optimize the inspection of human resources allocation, improve the construction of the legal system at the port, and strengthen organizational leadership and work coordination. 2017 Nanning Customs promoted the reform of ‘opening, management and service’, optimized the internal approval of the customs, established “one window” of 15 customs administrative approvals in the customs area, and launched the “customs administrative approval online processing platform”. The customs declaration applied coverage data of “single window” standard edition reached 100%, achieving the goal “one third contraction of the cargo clearance time” successfully.”<sup>[16]</sup>

## 4. Conclusion

Vice Prime Minister Wang Yang once pointed out: “The port is an important window for China’s opening up to the outside world, and it is also an important channel for connecting the two markets and the two resources. For a long time, the port has been able to provide strong support for China’s development of the foreign economy, if the port fails to develop roundly, it is difficult for China to become the world’s largest trading nation at the moment; the port is also a ‘testing field’ for the reform of China’s system, because the reform and pilot and other related work of many major reform measures must be carried out first at the port; the port is an important bridge for China to develop friendly relations with foreign countries, and the world and China can achieve mutual understanding through port; port is still an important force for maintaining national security, and blocking smuggling, drug trafficking and illegal immigration outside China.”<sup>[17]</sup> Faced with the current new situation, the construction of the Guangxi port has entered a new period of rapid development. How the Guangxi port simplifies work procedures and speeds up customs clearance is also a key part of building the “One Belt and One Road” initiative. How to achieve a reasonable flow of production factors and to conduct trade exchanges at present is an important link worthy of our attention. How to develop the foreign economy and promote the transformation is also the focus of China’s economic development in the new historical period. Therefore, the port is very important for maintaining the border security and promoting economic development of China.

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In the national implementation of the “One Belt and One Road” strategy, Guangxi connects the Silk Road Economic Belt in the west and connects the Maritime Silk Road in the south. It is an important gateway to organic integration of the “One Belt and One Road” and a new strategic pivot for the development of the southwest and south central region of China [1]. The Guangxi port and the ASEAN countries have special regional and geographical advantages that allow Guangxi port to develop into a key gateway for China to cooperate with ASEAN. It is an open gateway and an international exchange site. Recently, when President Xi Jinping visited Guangxi to conduct inspections and investigations, he believed that Guangxi could develop the economy of the sea according to its unique advantages <sup>[2]</sup>. At the same time, he also pointed out the development concept that “when building a good sea economy, if you want to be rich, build the port first” <sup>[3]</sup>. Under this background, the port will inevitably have a golden opportunity to take off.

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