Preface and acknowledgements

The collection of chapters for this BRI (Belt and Road Initiative) handbook is a comprehensive compendium that will interest a wide readership that includes political scientists, policymakers, students and investors. In putting together this collection, the editors have emphasized providing up-to-date evaluations of projects at national, regional, and global levels through the provision of granular analysis. While the immediate focus of this volume is the BRI, there are several other questions that loom large: Why is China investing so heavily in conceptualizing and building global trade routes? What role does the BRI play in shaping global order? How to ensure that large international development projects provide sufficient safeguards for citizens and local communities? What are the diplomatic challenges and advantages associated with the initiative? Are there lessons the international community can draw from a Chinese approach to development, governance, the economic–security nexus, and institution building?

This collection has not been designed to be a dictionary or encyclopedia, but as a broad reference source on a range of key topics related to the BRI in terms of its form, objectives, and manner of operationalization in different countries and regions. Moreover, while it does not claim to be exhaustive, the editors believe the chapters contained in this collection offer an extensive background on theory and practice and describe the BRI in particular areas with some implications for the future, within the overall context of the international political economy.

Contributors come from a wide range of backgrounds and many enjoy international reputations in their particular fields. They consist of university academics, think tank analysts, and, in some instances, either government officials or individuals with links to governments. For each chapter, the choice of coverage was determined in consultation with the contributors. We believe that the collection of chapters assembled here represents a comprehensive and balanced overview of the BRI.

The editors would like to acknowledge the partial funding support from the Lien Research Programme on the BRI, which is funded by the Lien Ying Chow Foundation and the Nanyang Centre for Public Administration, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. They also acknowledge the support of Edward Elgar Publishing, and, in particular, Daniel Mather, who ably shepherded the publication process, and Ge Chao for assistance in proofreading.

The arguments in this chapters are solely of those of respective authors and do not represent views of the editors and the funding institution.