

# Impact of collaborative innovation on green total factor productivity in Yangtze River Economic Belt: Analysis based on endogenous spatial-temporal weight matrix

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## Research Article

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1 **Impact of collaborative innovation on green total factor**  
2 **productivity in Yangtze River Economic Belt: Analysis based on**  
3 **endogenous spatial-temporal weight matrix**

4 Lei Wu<sup>1</sup> • Xiaoyan Jia<sup>1</sup> • Jie Lv<sup>1</sup> • Li Gao<sup>1</sup>

5  
6 **Abstract**

7 Technological innovation can promote high-quality economic growth. This paper discusses the promotion of green  
8 total factor productivity from the perspective of collaborative innovation in the Yangtze River Economic Belt.  
9 Firstly, the evaluation index system of collaborative innovation level is constructed from two aspects of  
10 collaborative innovation elements and collaborative innovation environment. Then the entropy method is used to  
11 measure its development level. The results show that the collaborative innovation level of provinces in the Yangtze  
12 River Economic Belt presents an increasing trend year by year. Meanwhile, there are regional differences, which is  
13 characterized by 'high in the middle reaches, middle in the downstream and low in the upstream' Secondly, the  
14 SDM model based on endogenous spatio-temporal weight matrix is constructed to analyze the influencing factors  
15 of green total factor productivity. The results show that collaborative innovation in the Yangtze River Economic  
16 Belt has significant negative impact on green total factor productivity in terms of spatial interaction and fiscal  
17 expenditure also has a negative impact. The spatial interaction between environmental protection and opening up  
18 has a significant positive impact on green total factor productivity. However, the spatial interaction between  
19 industrial structure and human capital on green total factor productivity is not obvious. Finally, this paper puts  
20 forward some policy suggestions to improve green total factor productivity.

21 **Keywords:**

22 Green total factor productivity; Spatial Durbin model; Collaborative innovation; Environmental protection

23 **Highlights:**

- 24 • Construct a mathematical model of collaborative innovation and green total factor productivity.
- 25 • Constructed a collaborative innovation level evaluation index system from two aspects called collaborative  
26 innovation elements and collaborative innovation environment.
- 27 • Establish an SDM model based on the endogenous time-space weight matrix to empirically analyze the  
28 factors affecting green. total factor productivity.

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35 **1 Introduction**

36 At present, China's economy has shifted from high-speed growth stage to high-quality development stage. It  
37 is necessary to change the development mode, transform the growth momentum and accelerate the development of  
38 green economy. Therefore, Chinese government proposes to implement the innovation-driven development  
39 strategy, emphasizing that scientific and technological innovation is a strategic support for improving social  
40 productivity and comprehensive national strength. In the meantime, it is necessary to focus on promoting scientific  
41 and technological innovation. Collaborative innovation is a new paradigm of today's scientific and technological  
42 innovation(Chen and Yang 2012), which is the driving force to promote regional economic development (Liu and  
43 Chen 2020). Therefore, whether collaborative innovation promotes the improvement of green total factor  
44 productivity is crucially significant for China to accelerate green development.

45 The Yangtze River Economic Belt is a national strategic development area in China, covering 11 provinces  
46 and cities, including Shanghai, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Anhui, Jiangxi, Hubei, Hunan, Chongqing, Sichuan, Yunnan and  
47 Guizhou. The details are shown in Figure 1 below.



**Fig 1.** Map of the Yangtze River Economic Belt

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50 The belt area is about 2.052 300 square kilometers, accounting for 21.4% of the country and its population  
 51 and GDP are more than 40 % of the country. It is rich in science and education resources. For example, the number  
 52 of ordinary colleges and universities accounts for 43% of the country, R&D expenditure accounts for 46.7% of the  
 53 country and effective invention patents account for more than 40% of the country. Otherwise, there are 2  
 54 comprehensive national science centers, 9 national independent innovation demonstration zones, 90 national high-  
 55 tech zones, 161 national key laboratories and 667 enterprise technology centers along the Yangtze River.  
 56 Therefore, relying on the advantages of regional talent and intelligence intensive, accelerating the cross-regional  
 57 collaborative innovation of the Yangtze River Economic Belt, strengthening environmental protection and  
 58 planning green development are the keys to the sustainable development of the Yangtze River Economic Belt.

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However, according to the data released by 《Driving Force Index of Science and Technology Innovation in  
 Yangtze River Economic Belt (2020)》, the average input index of scientific and technological innovation in the  
 Yangtze River Economic Belt is 0.12 and the average driving force index of scientific and technological

62 innovation is 0.14, which both are at a low level. So, in the context of green development concept, what is the  
63 development of collaborative innovation in the Yangtze River Economic Belt? Does it really promote regional  
64 green total factor productivity? On the basis of considering the spatial spillover effect of collaborative innovation,  
65 this paper discusses the relationship between collaborative innovation and green total factor productivity in the  
66 Yangtze River Economic Belt. The conclusion will provide scientific reference for the Yangtze River Economic  
67 Belt to promote green total factor productivity through collaborative innovation.

68

## 69 **2 Literature review**

70 Collaborative innovation was first proposed by Peter Gloor of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
71 (MIT). It refers to a network of self-motivated people who share a collective vision and achieve common goals  
72 through network communication and cooperation (Gloor 2006). Lee and Park pointed out that collaborative  
73 innovation is mainly through R&D cooperation and can enhance the agglomeration of knowledge (Lee and Park  
74 2006). Belderbos et al. (2004) believed that the most effective way to achieve innovation is to cooperate with  
75 research institutions. Scholars further measure the degree and performance of collaborative innovation. For  
76 example, Persaud defines the evaluation index system of collaborative innovation ability from four aspects,  
77 strategic R&D, management and operation, knowledge management and innovation degree, and then promotes the  
78 measurement of collaborative innovation degree theoretically (Persaud 2005). Leydesdorff and Fritsch use  
79 information flow in innovation subsystem as a measure of collaborative innovation (Leydesdorff and Fritsch  
80 2006).

81 Collaborative innovation can integrate innovation elements and make innovation resources accessible within  
82 the region, thereby enhancing the level of total factor productivity and promoting regional economic growth (Hu et  
83 al. 2019). In view of the spatial correlation of collaborative innovation, on the one hand, some scholars explore the  
84 relationship between collaborative innovation and economic growth from a spatial perspective. Using spatial  
85 econometric model, Shi et al. (2019) Shi Rong found that the synergistic effect of financial innovation and financial  
86 agglomeration significantly enhanced the positive effect of financial market on economy. Hu et al. (2019) use  
87 spatial lag model research shows that collaborative innovation in Yangtze River Delta urban agglomeration has  
88 significant spatial spillover effect, which can promote regional economic growth through direct effect, indirect  
89 effect and total effect. Hao and Yin (2019) established GMM and spatial panel Durbin model to study China's  
90 science and technology collaborative innovation and economic growth from the perspective of temporal and

91 spatial differences. It is found that the investment in science and technology collaborative innovation has a positive  
92 impact on economic growth in the current period and local. By also using the spatial panel econometric model, Lv  
93 et al.(2017). found that the spatial linkage of innovation resource synergy has a significant promoting effect on  
94 regional economic growth. On the other hand, some scholars explored their relationship from other perspectives.  
95 For instance, Zhou and Li (2017) expounded the dynamic co-evolution of institutional innovation and  
96 technological innovation to promote economic growth through a government-enterprise game model. Liu et al.  
97 (2017) believes that intra-regional synergy and inter-regional synergy of regional innovation networks are  
98 significantly positively correlated with industrial economic growth. From the micro level, Ren and Gan (2016)  
99 believe that the collaborative innovation system formed by business model innovation will promote the quality of  
100 macroeconomic growth.

101 However, relevant research shows that the promoting effect of collaborative innovation on economic growth  
102 is not obvious. For example, Dai et al. (2019) analyzed the industry-university-research collaborative innovation in  
103 Liaoning coastal economic belt from the perspectives of input and output believing that it did not make  
104 outstanding contributions to the economy. Wang and Gao (2018) used the algorithm of C-D production function  
105 and Solow residual value to calculate the effect of collaborative innovation of science and technology progress on  
106 the growth of construction industry was very insignificant. Zhong and Liu (2018) used the extended Cobb-Douglas  
107 production function to empirically show that innovative entrepreneurship has no significant impact on China's  
108 economic growth. Through co-integration regression and ECM model regression analysis, Lv and Kan (2017)  
109 believed that industry-university-research collaborative innovation has little effect on promoting economic growth  
110 in Jiangxi in the short term.

111 Technological innovation plays a vital role not only in the development of human society but also in  
112 economic development (Adak 2015; Ganda 2019).On the one hand, some scholars believed that technological  
113 innovation helps to improve economic development and total factor productivity. Given that green technology  
114 innovation is an important part of technology innovation (Chen et al. 2019; Deng et al. 2019), so (Fan and Sun  
115 2020) believed that green technology innovation is the main driving force for improving the development of green  
116 economy. Meanwhile, He (2015) believed that green technology innovation can effectively improve the total  
117 factor productivity of the industry. On the other hand, some scholars believed that the relationship between  
118 technological innovation and the improvement of green total factor productivity is not clear. For example, Jin et al.  
119 (2019) believe that there is no significant impact between technological innovation and the green total factor  
120 productivity of industrial water resources. Wang et al. (2020) believed that there is regional heterogeneity in the

121 relationship between technological innovation and green total factor productivity. The improvement of  
122 technological innovation in the western region of China helps to improve the green total factor productivity, while  
123 the eastern and central regions of China have the opposite conclusion. In addition, technological innovation has a  
124 significant positive impact on the local green total factor productivity and has a significant negative impact on the  
125 green total factor productivity in the surrounding areas.

126 In summary, although the conclusions of the impact of collaborative innovation on economic growth in the  
127 above studies are not the same, they all verify the existence of the impact of collaborative innovation on total  
128 factor productivity. And then the impact is uncertain. At the same time, most of the previous studies only examined  
129 the relationship between collaborative innovation and economic growth without taking into account the ecological  
130 and environmental effects of economic growth. That is to say, there was no further in-depth analysis of the impact  
131 of collaborative innovation on green economic growth and little literature specifically conducts similar studies on  
132 the Yangtze River Economic Belt. The main contributions of this paper are as follows: firstly, a mathematical  
133 model is established to analyze the impact mechanism of regional collaborative innovation on green total factor  
134 productivity. Secondly, this paper constructs an index system to measure regional collaborative innovation,  
135 specifically analyzing the level of collaborative innovation in the Yangtze River Economic Belt and further  
136 exploring its spatial dynamic evolution characteristics. Thirdly, the spatial economic matrix is established to  
137 explore the impact of collaborative innovation on green total factor productivity in the Yangtze River Economic  
138 Belt from the perspective of spatial spillover effect. Therefore, this study has important guiding significance for  
139 accelerating the high-quality development of China's green economy.

140

### 141 **3 Theoretical model analysis**

142 Based on the production function, this paper constructs a spatial expansion model of collaborative innovation  
143 and analyzes how collaborative innovation affects regional green total factor productivity growth through  
144 provincial spatial spillover mechanism. Total factor productivity refers to the ratio of the total output of a system to  
145 the input of various production factors. Green total factor productivity is the efficiency of resource development  
146 and utilization based on total factor productivity, which takes energy consumption and environmental costs into  
147 account. Referring to Zhu Wentao' s research on green total factor productivity calculation (Zhu et al. 2019), the  
148 green total factor productivity corresponding to the province  $i$  is expressed as :

$$GTFP_{i,t} = \frac{Y_{i,t}}{L_{i,t}^\alpha K_{i,t}^\beta} \quad (1)$$

149 Among them,  $GTFP_{i,t}$  is the corresponding green total factor productivity of provinces  $i$  in years  $t$ ;  $Y_{i,t}$  is the  
 150 corresponding total output;  $L_{i,t}$  is the corresponding labor input,  $K_{i,t}$  is the corresponding capital input;  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  are  
 151 the share of labor and capital in the input respectively.

152 In a fully competitive market, it is believed that the total output is realized by the combination of labor force  
 153  $L$  and other production factors. Referring to the research of Broda et al., the total output can be specifically  
 154 expressed as (Broda et al. 2006) :

$$Y_{i,t} = (A_{i,t}L_{i,t})^\alpha \left[ \int_0^{Q_{i,t}} P_{i,t}(\tau)^\tau d\nu \right]^{\beta/\tau} \quad (2)$$

155 Among them,  $\tau$  is the elasticity of substitution of other production factors. The greater the value is, the more  
 156 alternatives are.  $P_{i,t}$  is other production factors. At the same time, this paper considers that other production factors  
 157 have the same price and proportion of inputs, the total output can be further expressed as :

$$Y_{i,t} = (A_{i,t}L_{i,t})^\alpha Q_{i,t}^{\beta/\tau} P_{i,t}^\beta \quad (3)$$

158 Under the condition of equal proportion of input production factors, according to the production technology  
 159 conditions, the  $i$  capital stock of the province can be expressed as :

$$K_{i,t} = Q_{i,t} P_{i,t} \quad (4)$$

160 The total output of province  $i$  can ultimately be expressed as :

$$Y_{i,t} = (A_{i,t}L_{i,t})^\alpha Q_{i,t}^{((1-\tau/\tau)\beta)} K_{i,t}^\beta \quad (5)$$

161 Then the corresponding Eq. (1) can be transformed into :

$$GTFP_{i,t} = A_{i,t}^\alpha Q_{i,t}^{((1-\tau/\tau)\beta)} \quad (6)$$

162 This formula shows that green total factor productivity can be decomposed into two parts, including  
 163 technological innovation of other production factor combinations represented by  $A_{i,t}^\alpha$  and diversification of other  
 164 production factors represented by  $Q_{i,t}^{((1-\tau/\tau)\beta)}$ .

165 For its technological innovation part, this paper adopts (Ertur and Koch 2011), which is specifically expressed  
 166 as :

$$A_{i,t}^\alpha = \zeta \prod_{j=1}^n \left( \frac{T_{j,t}}{GTFP_{i,t}} \right)^{\gamma \omega_{i,j}} \quad (7)$$

167 Where  $T_{j,t}$  represents the geometric average of technical level of all provinces;  $\gamma$  is defined as the absolute  
 168 value of the level of technological gap valued in  $[0, +\infty]$ , which indicates the technological gap between province  
 169  $j$  and province  $i$ . If  $\gamma$  tends to 0, it indicates that the technological gap is small;  $\omega_{i,j}$  represents the economic  
 170 matrix. When  $i = j$ ,  $\omega_{i,j} = 0$ ; when  $i \neq j$ ,  $\sum_{j \neq i}^n \omega_{i,j} = 1$ .

171 Since technological innovation results need to be transformed into production technology to improve the  
 172 actual production efficiency. However, the transformation ability of innovation achievements will be affected by  
 173 the technological level gap in different regions. If the technological level of the region is higher, the ability to  
 174 transform innovative achievements is stronger. Assuming that the technological level of province  $i$  is higher than  
 175 that of province  $j$ , the corresponding transformation of innovation achievements of each province is specifically  
 176 expressed as :

$$AT_{i,t} = \rho_i CI_{i,t}^\gamma \quad (8)$$

$$AT_{j,t} = \rho_j CI_{j,t}^{-\gamma} \quad (9)$$

177 Among them,  $CI_{i,t}$  and  $CI_{j,t}$  denote the level of collaborative innovation corresponding to the  $t$ -year of  $i$  and  $j$   
 178 provinces respectively;  $AT$  denotes the level of transformation of collaborative innovation achievements.  $\rho_i$  and  $\rho_j$   
 179 represent other influencing factors.

180 For the diversification of its production factors, it is expressed as follows, where  $\zeta$  is the positive conversion

181 elastic coefficient of innovation results. :

$$Q_{i,t}^{((1-\tau/\tau)\beta)} = AT_{i,t}^\zeta \prod_{j=1}^n (AT_{j,t}^\zeta)^{\gamma\omega_{i,j}} \quad (10)$$

182 Substituting Eq. (7) (8)(9)(10) into Eq. (6), we can get :

$$GTFP_{i,t} = \xi \prod_{j=1}^n \left( \frac{T_{j,t}}{GTFP_{i,t}} \right)^{\gamma\omega_{i,j}} AT_{i,t}^\zeta \prod_{j=1}^n (AT_{j,t}^\zeta)^{\gamma\omega_{i,j}} \quad (11)$$

183 Taking logarithms on both sides of Eq. (11), we can get :

$$\begin{aligned} \ln(GTFP_{i,t}) &= \ln\xi + \gamma \sum_{j=1}^n \omega_{i,j} \ln(T_{i,t}) - \gamma \ln(GTFP_{i,t}) \sum_{j=1}^n \omega_{i,j} + \zeta \ln(AT_{i,t}) \\ &\quad + \zeta \gamma \sum_{j=1}^n \omega_{i,j} \ln(AT_{j,t}) \end{aligned} \quad (12)$$

184

$$\ln(GTFP_{i,t}) = \frac{\ln\xi}{1+\gamma} + \frac{\gamma}{1+\gamma} \sum_{j=1}^n \omega_{i,j} \ln(T_{i,t}) + \frac{\zeta}{1+\gamma} \ln(AT_{i,t}) + \frac{\zeta\gamma}{1+\gamma} \sum_{j=1}^n \omega_{i,j} \ln(AT_{j,t}) \quad (13)$$

185

$$\begin{aligned} \ln(GTFP_{i,t}) &= \frac{\ln\xi}{1+\gamma} + \frac{\gamma}{1+\gamma} \sum_{j=1}^n \omega_{i,j} \ln(T_{i,t}) + \frac{\zeta}{1+\gamma} \ln\rho_i + \frac{\zeta\gamma}{1+\gamma} \ln(CI_{i,t}) + \frac{\zeta\gamma}{1+\gamma} \ln\rho_j \\ &\quad - \frac{\zeta\gamma^2}{1+\gamma} \sum_{j=1}^n \omega_{i,j} \ln(CI_{j,t}) \end{aligned} \quad (14)$$

186 The Eq. (14) shows that the average technical level of each region has a positive effect on green total factor  
 187 productivity. The level of local collaborative innovation has a positive effect on the local green total factor  
 188 productivity. While the level of collaborative innovation in surrounding regions has negative effect on the local  
 189 green total factor productivity. When the technical level of the region is higher than that of the surrounding area,  
 190 the level of local collaborative innovation has a greater positive effect on local green total factor productivity.  
 191 When the technical level of the region is lower than that of the surrounding area, the level of collaborative  
 192 innovation in the surrounding area has a greater negative effect on local green total factor productivity. In

193 comparison, when  $0 < \gamma < 1$ , the regional collaborative innovation has a positive effect on the regional green total  
194 factor productivity and the effect is larger. When  $\gamma > 1$ , due to spatial interaction, local collaborative innovation  
195 has a negative effect on green total factor productivity in the surrounding areas and the effect is larger. Overall,  
196 when the regional technology gap is small, collaborative innovation has a positive impact on local green total  
197 factor productivity. When the regional technology gap is too large, collaborative innovation has a negative impact  
198 on green total factor productivity in surrounding areas.

199  
200

## 201 **4 Calculation and analysis of collaborative innovation level in** 202 **Yangtze River Economic Belt**

### 203 *4.1 Measurement index of collaborative innovation*

204 At present, collaborative innovation plays an increasingly important role in economic development and has  
205 become an important way and core driving force to realize the coordinated development of a country or region's  
206 economy (Li and Wu 2019). Researchers have given different connotations of collaborative innovation and  
207 interpreted collaborative innovation from the perspectives of innovation subject collaboration, innovation factor  
208 flow, collaborative innovation organization model and collaborative innovation content. For example, Chen and  
209 Yang (2012) believed that collaborative innovation is a large-span integrated innovation organization model for  
210 enterprises, governments, knowledge production institutions ( universities, research institutions ), intermediaries  
211 and users to achieve major scientific and technological innovation. Bai and Jiang (2015) believed that  
212 collaborative innovation includes not only the innovation achievements obtained by the integration of resources  
213 through collaborative cooperation among innovation subjects but also the collaborative innovation effect formed  
214 by the flow of regional innovation elements among regions. Wang and Wei (2016) think collaborative innovation  
215 includes knowledge innovation and technology innovation.

216 This paper believes that collaborative innovation is a technological innovation process based on the  
217 collaborative integration of innovation resources among different innovation subjects under the support of  
218 collaborative innovation environment. To a certain extent, the collaborative innovation process is the technological  
219 innovation process (He and Qiao 2015). Therefore, the collaborative innovation process is composed of two  
220 aspects of innovation factor collaboration and innovation environment collaboration. The synergy of innovation

221 elements refers to the process that collaborative innovation subjects invest certain innovation resources to achieve  
 222 scientific and technological output and transform technological achievements to achieve economic benefits. It  
 223 reflects the research and development of innovation achievements and its application in the production stage,  
 224 mainly including the synergy of funds, personnel and knowledge. Innovation environment synergy refers to the  
 225 integration of external supporting environment for collaborative innovation, mainly including the synergy of  
 226 external environment such as government policies, finance and human resources. Research shows that  
 227 collaborative innovation is inseparable from the support of innovation environment, which provides survival  
 228 support for innovation subjects (Fei and Ling 2019). According to Albert's research (Albert et al. 2013), the  
 229 number and impact of collaborative innovation research results have been greatly improved with government  
 230 funding. According to King and Levine's (1993) research, financial institutions have a great probability to promote  
 231 the innovation process. Therefore, based on the collaborative innovation process, this paper constructs the  
 232 evaluation index system of collaborative innovation level from two aspects of innovation element synergy and  
 233 innovation environment synergy. The specific indicator system is shown in Table 1.

234

235

Table.1 Collaborative innovation evaluation index

	Indicators	Specific indicators	Unit
Synergy of innovation elements	Fund synergy	External R&D expenditure of industrial enterprises above designated size	Million yuan
		External expenditure on R&D funds in institutions of higher learning	Million yuan
		R&D external expenditure of research and development institutions	Million yuan
		Internal Expenditure of R&D Funds for Universities and Research Institutions from Enterprises	Million yuan
	Staff coordination	Authors' scientific papers from the same province and different units	%
		Author 's Sci - tech Papers	%
		Author of Foreign Scientific Papers	%
	Knowledge synergy	Technology market turnover	Million yuan
		Ten thousand science and technology intermediary service personnel	People
	Innovation environment synergy	Policy coordination	Government funds in regional R&D funds
Financial coordination		Financial Institution Funds in Regional R&D Funds	Million yuan
Social		Ten thousand Internet users	People/Million

	coordination	Number of employees in producer services	Million people
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236

## 237 4.2 Calculation method of collaborative innovation

238 The measured methods of collaborative innovation include factor analysis, principal component analysis and  
 239 evaluation index system. For example, Yang and Li (2019) use factor analysis to extract the common factors  
 240 between innovation subjects as a measure of collaborative innovation and calculate the corresponding score to  
 241 measure collaborative innovation. Wu et al. (2016). used principal component analysis to measure collaborative  
 242 innovation capability. Huang and Xie (2016) used principal component-correlation coefficient method to construct  
 243 collaborative innovation measurement method. In addition to the above methods, Li and Liu (2020) used the  
 244 extended DEA method to measure the level of collaborative innovation. Based on the above literature research,  
 245 this paper selects entropy method to calculate collaborative innovation according to Zheng et al 's (2010) research.  
 246 Entropy method is an effective method for multi-index comprehensive evaluation of regional development. In this  
 247 paper, the weight of each index in each province of the Yangtze River Economic Belt is calculated and then the  
 248 comprehensive index of collaborative innovation is obtained by multiplying each index and its weight. The  
 249 process is as follows :

250 (1) Dimensionless treatment of indicators. The indicators selected in this paper are positive indicators, so  
 251 dimensionless processing formula :

$$X_{ij} = \frac{x_{ij} - \min(x_j)}{\max(x_j) - \min(x_j)} \quad (15)$$

252 (2) Coordinate translation and normalization of dimensionless data. Where A is the translation distance, the  
 253 value is selected as 1.

$$Y_{ij} = X_{ij} + A; P_{ij} = \frac{Y_{ij}}{\sum_{i=1}^m Y_{ij}} \quad (16)$$

254 (3) Calculation of index information entropy and difference coefficient.  $K = 1/\ln n$ ,  $n$  is the number of  
 255 samples.

$$e_j = -K \sum_{i=1}^m P_{ij} \ln P_{ij}; d_j = 1 - e_j \quad (17)$$

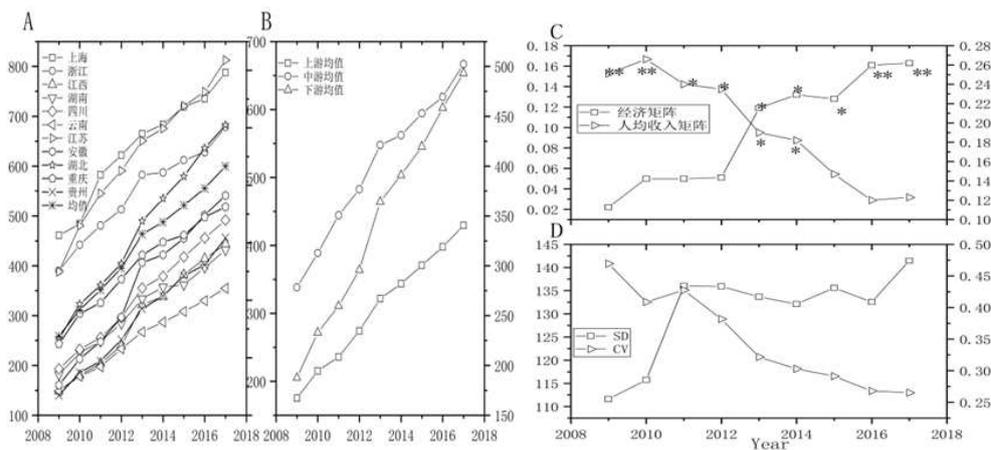
256 (4) Calculation of index weight.

$$\omega_j = \frac{d_j}{\sum_{i=1}^n d_i} \quad (18)$$

257 *4.3 Analysis of collaborative innovation calculation results of Yangtze River*  
 258 *Economic Belt*

259 This paper calculates the overall level of collaborative innovation in the Yangtze River Economic Belt from  
 260 2009 to 2017, as well as the sub-data of financial synergy, personnel synergy, knowledge synergy and  
 261 environmental synergy, and converts the level of collaborative innovation into graphic representation ( limited to  
 262 length, this paper does not list the results of relevant calculations, which can be obtained from the author if  
 263 necessary ).

264 From A and B in Figure 2, it can be seen that since 2009, the level of collaborative innovation in each  
 265 province of the Yangtze River Economic Belt has been increasing year by year. Further subregionally, the  
 266 collaborative innovation level of the Yangtze River Economic Belt shows the characteristics of 'high in the middle  
 267 reaches, middle in the downstream and low in the upstream'. However, the level of downstream collaborative  
 268 innovation grew rapidly, from near upstream provinces in 2009 to near midstream provinces. From the perspective  
 269 of a single province, there are Shanghai, Yunnan, Anhui and Hubei provinces above the average level of overall  
 270 collaborative innovation. However, there are Zhejiang, Jiangxi, Hunan, Sichuan, Jiangsu, Chongqing and Guizhou  
 271 provinces below the average level of overall collaborative innovation. It not only further explains the regional  
 272 differences in the level of collaborative innovation in the Yangtze River Economic Belt but also shows that there is  
 273 a significant deviation between the level of regional collaborative innovation and the level of economic  
 274 development, which is consistent with Zhao Zhe 's conclusion that the performance of collaborative innovation  
 275 and its contribution to economic growth are not significant (Zhao 2020).



277 **Fig 2.** Changes in the level of collaborative innovation of provinces in the Yangtze River Economic Belt

278 Note: A. The level and mean change of collaborative innovation in the provinces of the Yangtze River  
279 Economic Belt B. The mean change of regional collaborative innovation C. Moran 's I value of collaborative  
280 innovation corresponding to different matrices D. Standard deviation and coefficient of variation of  
281 collaborative innovation

282 Figure C in Figure 2 shows the self-correlation coefficient of collaborative innovation space under different  
283 spatial weight matrices. The economic matrix uses the reciprocal of GDP gap as the weight to measure the  
284 'adjacent' degree between provinces and the per capita income matrix uses the reciprocal of per capita income gap  
285 as the weight to measure the 'adjacent' degree between provinces. The map shows that the Moran's I value of the  
286 spatial autocorrelation coefficient of collaborative innovation calculated under the economic matrix is positive and  
287 passed the test from 2013 to 2019 at different significant levels. The Moran's I value of the spatial autocorrelation  
288 coefficient of collaborative innovation calculated under the per capita income matrix is positive and passed the test  
289 from 2009 to 2013 at different significant levels. The corresponding Moran's I values under different matrices  
290 show that collaborative innovation is positively correlated in space and the global Moran's I value changes little,  
291 indicating that the spatial distribution pattern of collaborative innovation is relatively stable and there is no large  
292 change. It can be seen from Figure D in Figure 2 that the standard difference corresponding to collaborative  
293 innovation changes greatly before 2011, tending to be stable from 2011 to 2017. The corresponding coefficient of  
294 variation tends to increase between 2010 and 2011 and the coefficient of variation at other time stages decreases  
295 year by year. It is believed that there is  $\sigma$  convergence in collaborative innovation, which is mainly due to the  
296 agglomeration of high-tech innovation bases. Under the effect of agglomeration-diffusion effect, regions with high  
297 level of scientific and technological innovation can promote the development of regions with low level of  
298 scientific and technological innovation.

299

## 300 **5. Empirical design**

### 301 *5.1 Indicator selection*

302 (1) Explained variable: green total factor productivity. Green total factor productivity is an input-output  
303 efficiency that considers energy and resource consumption. It is an important guarantee for transforming mode of  
304 economic development and achieving sustainable economic growth.

305 There are many methods to measure green total factor productivity. The traditional DEA model was proposed

306 by Chsrnes, Cooper and Rhodes (Charnes et al. 1979). Since it is unnecessary to determine the specific form and  
 307 estimated parameters of the model, it has been widely used. However, because it is a radial and angle measurement  
 308 method, it will lead to overestimation of efficiency value and inaccurate results. Therefore, this paper selects  
 309 Tone's SSBM model(Tone 2001;2002) based on the undesirable output SBM model and the idea of super-  
 310 efficiency model :

$$\min \rho = \frac{1}{m} \sum_{i=1}^m \frac{\bar{x}}{x_{ik}} \frac{1}{s_1 + s_2} \left( \sum_{r=1}^{s_1} \frac{\bar{y}^g}{y_{sk}^g} + \sum_{q=1}^{s_2} \frac{\bar{y}^b}{y_{qk}^b} \right) \quad (19)$$

311

$$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \bar{x} \geq \sum_{j=1, \neq k}^n x_{ij} \lambda_j ; \bar{y}^g \leq \sum_{j=1, \neq k}^n y_{sj}^g \lambda_j ; \bar{y}^g \geq \sum_{j=1, \neq k}^n y_{qj}^g \lambda_j ; \\ \bar{x} \geq x_k ; \bar{y}^g \leq y_k^g ; ; \bar{y}^b \geq y_k^b ; \\ \lambda_j \geq 0, i = 1, 2, \dots, m; j = 1, 2, \dots, n; \\ j \neq 0; s = 1, 2, \dots, s_1; q = 1, 2, \dots, s_2 \end{array} \right.$$

312  
 313  $\rho$  is the efficiency evaluation value;  $x, y^g, y^b$  respectively represent input indicators, expected output  
 314 indicators, unexpected output indicators;  $n$  is the number of DMUs;  $m$  is the number of input indicators;  $s_1$  is the  
 315 number of expected output indicators;  $s_2$  is the number of unexpected output indicators.

316 In this paper, the input indicators used to calculate green total factor productivity are labor, energy and  
 317 capital. On labor input, referring to the study of most scholars in total factor productivity research, this paper select  
 318 the provinces over the years of employment as a substitute indicator. With regard to energy input, taking into  
 319 account the regional differences in energy consumption types, the total regional energy consumption equivalent to  
 320 standard coal is selected as a substitute indicator. Regarding the capital stock index, we choose the total amount of  
 321 fixed capital formation to measure and use the perpetual inventory method for conversion. The investment price  
 322 index is replaced by the fixed asset investment price index of each province. And the depreciation rate is  
 323 determined to be 10.96 % based on the existing research (Zhang et al. 2004).

324 The expected output indicators in output are replaced by regional GDP and are reduced to constant price  
 325 levels based on 2000. In terms of undesirable output, using Chen Shiyi's (Chen 2009) method to calculate the total  
 326 CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of each province or city as the undesirable output index of the region. The specific indicators are  
 327 shown in Table 2.

328

Table 2 Green Total Factor Productivity Indicators

Indictors	Specific indictors	Unit
Labour	Employees at the end of the year	Million people
Energy source	Total energy consumption	Ten thousand tons of standard coal
Capital	Stock of capital	Billion yuan
Expected output	Gross domestic product	Billion yuan
Undesirable output	CO <sub>2</sub> emissions	Ton

330 (2) Explanatory variables: collaborative innovation level. This paper uses the measurement data of the overall  
 331 level of collaborative innovation of provinces and cities in the Yangtze River Economic Belt calculated above.

332 (3) Other control variables. Based on the research of other scholars, this paper selects five types of control  
 333 indicators, including environmental protection (*EP*), human capital (*HC*), industrial structure (*IS*), fiscal  
 334 expenditure (*MF*) and openness (*OP*). Considering the attributes of public goods and positive externalities of  
 335 environmental resources, this paper uses environmental protection expenditure to measure government investment  
 336 in environmental protection and then measures the specific relationship between environmental protection and  
 337 economic development. Human capital is calculated and characterized by the formula of the proportion of primary  
 338 school students \* 6 + the proportion of junior high school students \* 9 + the proportion of high school students \*  
 339 12 + the proportion of college students and above \* 16. The industrial structure of this paper selects the tertiary  
 340 industry output value and GDP ratio to measure. Fiscal expenditure is characterized by the ratio of regional fiscal  
 341 expenditure to regional GDP. The degree of opening to the outside world is measured by the ratio of regional  
 342 import and export volume to regional GDP; meanwhile, the RMB is converted according to the exchange rate of  
 343 the year. Before the model regression, the data are dimensionless to eliminate the impact of dimension.

344

## 345 5.2 Model construction

346 In order to reveal the influence mechanism of spatial factors on green total factor productivity, this paper uses  
 347 spatial econometric model analysis. This model is mainly divided into spatial lag model and spatial error model.  
 348 Because different regional subjects in the innovation network can share the knowledge spillover effect of the  
 349 network (Gao and Zhang 2019), the spatial correlation between regions is considered in the classical regression  
 350 model, namely the SDM model :

$$GTFP = \beta_0 t_0 + \rho TWGTFP + XB_1 + TWXB_2 + U_1 \quad (20)$$

351 GTFP is the explained variable matrix of  $NT \times 1$  order, which represents the pool accumulation sequence of  
 352 green total factor productivity in the Yangtze River Economic Belt.  $N$  is the number of provinces in the Yangtze  
 353 River Economic Belt,  $T$  is the time span. and  $t_0$  is a matrix with  $NT \times 1$  elements and its value is 1.  $\beta_0$  is an  
 354 empirical constant and  $\rho$  is the spatial correlation coefficient, which is between -1 and 1.  $X$  is the explanatory  
 355 variable matrix of  $NT \times K_1$ , which represents the pool accumulation sequence of possible influencing factors  
 356 affecting the green total factor productivity of the Yangtze River Economic Belt, where  $K_1$  is the number of  
 357 explanatory variables.  $TW$  is a space-time weight matrix of  $NT \times NT$  order and its construction method is based  
 358 on the research of Fan Qiao (Fan and Hudson 2018). The spatial weight matrix uses the economic matrix to  
 359 represent the spatial spillover effect between different regions. The time weight matrix is based on the ratio of  
 360 global Moran index in different years to reflect the transfer and conduction effects of spatial spillover effects with  
 361 time.  $B_1$  and  $B_2$  are the parameter matrices of order  $K_1 \times 1$  respectively, representing the parameters of  
 362 explanatory variables.  $U_1$  is a random perturbation matrix of order  $NT \times 1$ , obeying the multidimensional normal  
 363 distribution of mean 0 and variance  $\sigma^2 I_{NT}$ , where  $\sigma^2$  is a constant and  $I_{NT}$  is a unit matrix of order  $NT$ .

364

### 365 5.3 Data sources and descriptive statistics

366 The specific indicators involved in this paper come from 《China Statistical Yearbook》, 《China Energy  
 367 Statistics Yearbook》, 《China Statistical Yearbook of Science and Technology》, 《China Torch Statistical  
 368 Yearbook》, 《China Urban Statistical Yearbook》, 《China Regional Innovation Capacity Report》, National  
 369 Bureau of Statistics and 《China Environmental Yearbook》. The data in this paper is provincial panel data and  
 370 the time span is 2009-2017. The missing values are added by interpolation method. Data units and descriptive  
 371 statistical results are shown in Table 3.

372

373

374

375

376

Table 3 Definitions of indicators and descriptive statistics

Variable	Abbreviation	Min	Max	Mean	Std.Dev
Green total factor productivity	<i>GTFP</i>	0.558 9	1.079 7	0.877 2	0.127 0
Collaborative innovation	<i>CI</i>	134.715 6	787.820 8	393.311 5	157.418 5
Environmental protection	<i>EP</i>	33.856 5	370.580 0	114.096 4	63.217 9
Human capital	<i>HC</i>	707.640 0	125 8	926.313 8	109.120 7
Industrial structure	<i>IS</i>	32.500 0	69.780 0	43.908 5	7.999 1
Financial expenditure	<i>MF</i>	15.210 6	77.046 5	34.415 9	14.839 5
Opening to the outside world	<i>OP</i>	6.116 1	198.314 6	43.068 0	48.308 2

378

## 379 *5.4 Impact of collaborative innovation on green total factor* 380 *productivity*

### 381 *5.4.1 Regression results and analysis*

382 This paper first tests the panel data. ADF method is used to test the panel data stability and the conclusion is  
383 that the data is stable. Through Kao, Pedroni, Westerlund and other test variables cointegration relationship, this  
384 paper found that there is a cointegration relationship between the variables, the results show that it can carry out  
385 the next measurement operation. The specific test results are shown in Tables 4 and Table 5.

386

387

Table 4 Stability Test of Panel Data

Variable	ADF
<i>GTFP</i>	247.098 1***
<i>CI</i>	57.351 2***
<i>EP</i>	393.300 0***

Variable	ADF
<i>HC</i>	42.130 5***
<i>IS</i>	63.609 6***
<i>MF</i>	160.048 2***
<i>OP</i>	66.095 9***

388 Note : \* 、 \*\* 、 \*\*\* are significant at the level of 10 % 、 5 % 、 1 % respectively.

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Table 5 Cointegration Test of Variables

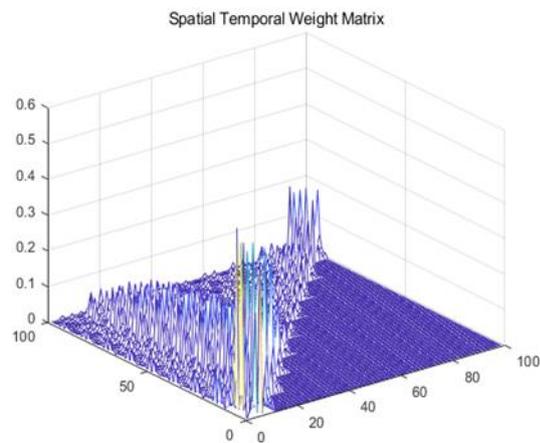
Cointegration test	Results of inspection
Kao	-1.521 9*
Pedroni	5.822 3***
Westerlund	1.599 3*

393 Note : \* 、 \*\* 、 \*\*\* are significant at the level of 10 % 、 5 % 、 1 % respectively.

394

395 Secondly, the endogenous space-time weight matrix based on economic space weight matrix and time weight

396 matrix is calculated, which is transformed into a visual graph, as shown in Figure 3 below.



397

398

**Fig 3.** Endogenous space-time weight matrix based on economic matrix

399

Then, MATLABR2020b software is used to calculate the SDM model of mixed effect and the calculation

400 results are shown in Table 6. From the regression results, without considering the spatial interaction effect, it is  
 401 found that the regression coefficients of environmental protection, human capital and industrial structure are all  
 402 positive and pass the test at the significance level of 1 %, indicating that the three have a positive role in promoting  
 403 the green total factor productivity of the Yangtze River Economic Belt. However, collaborative innovation, fiscal  
 404 expenditure and opening up did not pass the significant test, indicating that the impact of the three on green total  
 405 factor productivity is uncertain.

406 In the case of introducing space-time interaction effect, the regression coefficient of collaborative innovation  
 407 is negative and the test is passed at 1% significance level, indicating that the level of collaborative innovation in  
 408 the surrounding areas has a significant negative effect on the green total factor productivity of the region.  
 409 Collaborative innovation is based on the flow of knowledge and technology. The improvement of collaborative  
 410 innovation level in surrounding areas means that innovative resources and achievements will flow out, which has a  
 411 negative impact on technological innovation and green economic development. The regression coefficient of  
 412 environmental protection and opening up is significantly positive, indicating that the improvement of the two in  
 413 the surrounding areas has obvious spatial interaction effect on the improvement of local green total factor  
 414 productivity. As public goods, when the environmental protection level in the surrounding areas is high, the  
 415 environmental protection in the region also has a promoting effect, which will further improve the development of  
 416 green economy. The opening up can promote the economic growth and technological progress of the region and  
 417 the spillover effect affects the surrounding areas. The regression coefficient of fiscal expenditure is significantly  
 418 negative, indicating that fiscal expenditure in surrounding areas inhibits the improvement of local green total  
 419 factor productivity. The reason is that fiscal expenditure in each region is mostly used around the region and aims  
 420 at economic growth. Economic growth in surrounding areas will form a siphon effect on local resources and  
 421 inhibit the development of local green economy. The human capital and industrial structure did not pass the  
 422 significant test, indicating that the spatial spillover effect of human capital and industrial structure changes in  
 423 surrounding areas on local green total factor productivity is uncertain.

424

425 Table 6 SDM regression estimation results of endogenous spatio-temporal weight matrix based on economic  
 426 matrix

Variable	SDM	t-value	p-value
<i>CI</i>	0.017 5	0.0800	0.936 2

Variable	SDM	t-value	p-value
<i>EP</i>	0.747 5***	5.93	0.000 0
<i>HC</i>	0.383 2***	2.69	0.007 1
<i>IS</i>	0.661 1***	4.61	0.000 0
<i>MF</i>	0.033 1	0.31	0.754 9
<i>OP</i>	-0.110 6	-0.65	0.514 7
<i>TW×CI</i>	-2.558 5***	-6.21	0.000 0
<i>TW×EP</i>	1.390 3*	1.87	0.061 2
<i>TW×HC</i>	-0.303 9	-0.96	0.336 9
<i>TW×IS</i>	-0.650 2	-1.57	0.116 4
<i>TW×MF</i>	-1.643 0***	-6.29	0.000 0
<i>TW×OP</i>	0.995 5**	2.30	0.021 7
<i>rho</i>	-0.183 0	-0.98	0.327 6
<i>Sigma2_e</i>	0.012 6		
<i>Log-likelihood</i>	110.090 0		
<i>R<sup>2</sup></i>	0.788 1		

427 Note : \* 、 \*\* 、 \*\*\* are significant at the level of 10 % 、 5 % 、 1 % respectively.

428

#### 429 5.4.2 Effect decomposition

430 Since regions are interrelated, the spatial interaction of some economic variables does not affect the local  
431 economy but affect the economy of neighboring regions. That is to say, there is an external effect. Therefore, this  
432 paper decomposes the effect of mixed effect SDM model based on endogenous space-time weight matrix to obtain  
433 direct effect and indirect effect. Generally speaking, direct effects represent the impact of explanatory variables on  
434 the region and indirect effects represent the impact of explanatory variables on other regions. The decomposition  
435 results are shown in Table 7.

436 Table 7 Direct effect, indirect effect and total effect decomposition of mixed effect SDM model based on  
437 endogenous time-space weight matrix of economic matrix

Variable	Direct effect	Indirect effect	Total effect
<i>CI</i>	0.057 7	-2.218 7***	-2.161 0***

Variable	Direct effect	Indirect effect	Total effect
	(0.27)	(-5.44)	(-4.42)
<i>EP</i>	0.730 2*** (5.84)	1.131 2 (1.46)	1.861 4** (2.18)
<i>HC</i>	0.384 8** (2.62)	-0.347 9 (-1.25)	0.036 9 (0.13)
<i>IS</i>	0.667 1*** (4.45)	-0.677 0* (-1.78)	-0.009 9 (-0.03)
<i>MF</i>	0.053 3 (0.50)	-1.435 6*** (-5.41)	-1.382 3** (-5.92)
<i>OP</i>	-0.125 7 (-0.73)	0.869 4** (2.23)	0.743 8** (2.21)

438 Note: The number in brackets is the t-statistics of the coefficient, and \*, \*\*, \*\*\* represent the significance  
439 at the levels of 10 %, 5 % and 1 %, respectively.

440 The results of Table 7 show that the direct effect of collaborative innovation is not significant but the indirect  
441 effect is very significant and the coefficient is large, which has a significant inhibitory effect on the green total  
442 factor productivity in the surrounding areas. The results are consistent with the regression results of spatial effect  
443 in SDM model. Overall, the total effect reflects that the level of collaborative innovation in various regions has a  
444 significant impact on the growth of green total factor productivity in terms of spatial interaction. Since the  
445 inhibitory effect of collaborative innovation in the region on green total factor productivity in surrounding areas is  
446 too strong, it is not conducive to improving the green total factor productivity level in the Yangtze River Economic  
447 Belt. On the one hand, it shows that collaborative innovation does not necessarily aim at green efficiency but may  
448 be at the cost of high consumption and high output, thereby inhibiting the growth of green total factor productivity  
449 (Zhao and Chen 2020). On the other hand, it shows that the effect of collaborative innovation in backward areas  
450 may not be obvious when the technical level gap is too large.

451 The direct effect of environmental protection and human capital is very significant, which can greatly  
452 promote the growth of local green total factor productivity. However, its indirect effect is not significant,  
453 indicating that its spatial spillover effect is insufficient. Under the impact of this indirect effect, the total effect is  
454 differentiated. That is to say, environmental protection has significantly promoted the growth of regional green  
455 total factor productivity, while human capital has little effect on the growth of regional green total factor  
456 productivity. In general, the growth of human capital will promote the growth of total factor productivity

457 (Benhabib and Spiegel 1994). And if human capital is mismatched or under-matched, it will also lead to the  
458 reduction of green total factor productivity (Lai and Ji 2015).

459 The direct effect of industrial structure upgrading is very significant, which greatly promotes the growth of  
460 green total factor productivity in the region. However, its indirect effect shows that it has a significant inhibitory  
461 effect on the green total factor productivity in the surrounding areas. The reason is that the rational allocation of  
462 factors and dynamic equilibrium effect caused by industrial structure optimization can promote the growth of  
463 green total factor productivity in the region and inhibit the growth of green total factor productivity in the  
464 surrounding areas through the radiation effect caused by the correlation between industrial chains and industrial  
465 agglomeration.

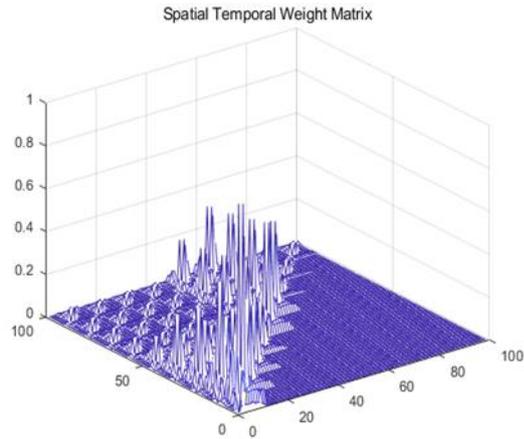
466 The direct effect of fiscal expenditure index is not significant, while its indirect effect is very significant. The  
467 results show that the growth of green total factor productivity in the surrounding areas is greatly inhibited and its  
468 total effect also reflects a significant inhibitory effect, which is consistent with the regression results in the SDM  
469 model. This may be due to the negative impact of fiscal policies aimed at promoting economic growth on the  
470 environment, resulting in no significant contribution to productivity growth (Zhu and Li 2019). This shows that the  
471 implementation of the current 'green finance' strategy needs to adopt diversified means other than green special  
472 funds and green government procurement to promote the sustainable growth of green economy.

473 The direct effect of openness index is not significant, while its indirect effect is very significant. The results  
474 show that it greatly promotes the growth of green total factor productivity in surrounding areas and its total effect  
475 also reflects a significant promotion effect, which is consistent with the regression results of spatial effect in the  
476 SDM model. The reason is that, as mentioned above, it is caused by the spatial spillover effect of economy and  
477 technology.

478

### 479 *5.4.3 Robustness test*

480 Considering the need for robustness test of spatial measurement, this paper selects alternative indicators to  
481 recalculate the endogenous spatio-temporal weight matrix. Because there are many alternative indicators that can  
482 be used to calculate the economic matrix, this paper selects per capita income as an alternative indicator to  
483 calculate the economic matrix to recalculate the endogenous space-time weight matrix. Figure 4 below shows.



484

485

**Fig 4.** Endogenous time-space weight matrix based on per capita income matrix

486

487

488

Then, the effect of SDM model based on the mixed effect of endogenous time-space weight matrix based on per capita income matrix is decomposed. And the direct effect and indirect effect are obtained to do stability test, comparing with the previous calculation results. The specific results are shown in Table 8.

489

490

491

Table 8 Direct effect, indirect effect and total effect decomposition of mixed effect SDM model based on endogenous time-space weight matrix of per capita income matrix

Variable	Direct effect	Indirect effect	Total effect
<i>CI</i>	0.058 8 (0.28)	-2.208 6*** (-5.63)	-2.149 9*** (-4.47)
<i>EP</i>	0.728 2*** (6.07)	1.082 4 (1.47)	1.810 6** (2.24)
<i>HC</i>	0.383 6*** (2.78)	-0.325 6 (-1.15)	0.058 0 (0.20)
<i>IS</i>	0.671 5*** (4.44)	-0.672 7* (-1.85)	-0.001 3 (-0.004)
<i>MF</i>	0.058 8 (0.54)	-1.440 0*** (-5.74)	-1.381 3** (-6.39)
<i>OP</i>	-0.131 4 (-0.77)	0.896 0** (2.35)	0.764 6** (2.32)

492

Note: The number in brackets is the t-statistics of the coefficient, and \*, \*\*, \*\*\* represent the significance

493 at the levels of 10 %, 5 % and 1 %, respectively.

494 It can be seen from Table 8 that no matter the total effect of the SDM model and the direct and indirect effects  
495 obtained by decomposition, the sign and significance of the collaborative innovation variable are completely  
496 consistent with the empirical results above, indicating that the transformation of the endogenous spatio-temporal  
497 weight matrix does not change the previous conclusion. Furthermore, the symbols and significance of the other  
498 five control variables are consistent with the previous empirical calculation results. All these conclusions prove  
499 that the empirical results are still robust and the conclusions are also convincing even considering the differences  
500 in the endogenous spatio-temporal weight matrix.

501

## 502 **6 Conclusion, discussion and policy implications**

### 503 *6.1 Conclusion and discussion*

504 In this paper, the mathematical model is used to analyze the way that collaborative innovation affects regional  
505 green total factor productivity. Meanwhile, the evaluation index system of regional collaborative innovation level  
506 is constructed. The entropy method is used to calculate the collaborative innovation level of the Yangtze River  
507 Economic Belt and its evolution is analyzed. On this basis, the spatial Durbin model based on endogenous spatial-  
508 temporal weight matrix of economic matrix is used to explore the specific relationship between collaborative  
509 innovation and green total factor productivity in the Yangtze River Economic Belt.

510 And then the following conclusions are obtained: firstly, the level of collaborative innovation in each  
511 province of the Yangtze River Economic Belt shows an upward trend year by year, which is characterized by 'high  
512 in the middle reaches, middle in the downstream and low in the upstream'. The level of collaborative innovation in  
513 the Yangtze River Economic Belt has a positive spatial correlation and  $\sigma$  convergence. Secondly, collaborative  
514 innovation in the Yangtze River Economic Belt has a significant negative impact on green total factor productivity  
515 in terms of spatial interaction. And its impact on local green total factor productivity is not significant. Oppositely,  
516 the inhibitory effect on green total factor productivity in surrounding areas is very strong. Thirdly, environmental  
517 protection and opening up in the Yangtze River Economic Belt have significant positive impact on green total  
518 factor productivity in terms of spatial interaction. However, the former mainly affects local green total factor  
519 productivity, while the latter mainly affects green total factor productivity in surrounding areas. Fiscal expenditure  
520 has significant negative spatial effect on green total factor productivity, mainly inhibiting the growth of green total

521 factor productivity in surrounding areas. The spatial interaction between industrial structure and human capital on  
522 green total factor productivity is not obvious.

523

## 524 *6.2 Policy implications*

525 According to above conclusions, following suggestions are proposed to improve green total factor  
526 productivity and collaborative innovation:

527 Firstly, it is necessary to further strengthen regional collaborative innovation. Through the coordination of  
528 science and technology innovation policy, it provides a good policy environment for collaborative innovation,  
529 gives full play to the role of intermediary service institutions, improves the supporting environment of  
530 collaborative innovation, promotes the flow and sharing of innovation personnel, funds and knowledge resources  
531 and maximizes the enthusiasm of innovation subjects. It is also indispensable to strengthen the transformation of  
532 collaborative innovation results in order to accelerate the reduction of regional technical level differences and  
533 promote the transformation, promotion and application of collaborative innovation achievements. Speed up the  
534 improvement of technology market and relevant laws and regulations, establish incentive and supervision  
535 mechanism for the transformation of innovation achievements and improve the positive feedback level of  
536 collaborative innovation.

537 Secondly, it is necessary to further strengthen environmental protection. Give full play to the spatial spillover  
538 effect of environmental protection, strengthen the coordination of regional environmental policies and accelerate  
539 the rational use of ecological environmental protection big data in environmental quality improvement and  
540 regional cooperation will improve the efficiency of green economy. By optimizing the industrial structure and  
541 layout, improve the energy consumption structure and actively develop energy saving and environmental  
542 protection technology will contribute to promoting the development of green economy. Through diversified  
543 industrial development, expanding the industrial chain and increasing the radiation effect of environmental  
544 protection industry for economic development will contribute to promoting the development of green economy.

545 Thirdly, it is necessary to accelerate the transition to green finance. Further optimize the fiscal expenditure of  
546 local governments, increase the 'green expenditure' in fiscal expenditure and guide the flow of funds to green  
547 industries will promote the transformation of economy to green. Continue to adhere to opening up. Pay special  
548 attention to the development of foreign trade green industry and increase the export of green goods. Pay attention

549 to the quality of foreign investment and give full play to its spatial spillover effect will help to promote the  
550 balanced development of regional green economy.

551

## 552 **Declarations**

### 553 **Ethics approval and consent to participate**

554 Not applicable

### 555 **Consent for publication**

556 Not applicable

### 557 **Availability of data and materials**

558 Not applicable

### 559 **Competing interests**

560 The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that  
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### 566 **Authors' contributions**

567 **Lei Wu:** Conceptualization, Formal analysis, Writing - review & editing. **Xiaoyan Jia:** Conceptualization,  
568 Methodology, Formal analysis, Writing - original draft, Writing - review & editing. **Jie Lv:** Writing - review &  
569 editing. **Li Gao:** Conceptualization, Writing - review & editing.

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572

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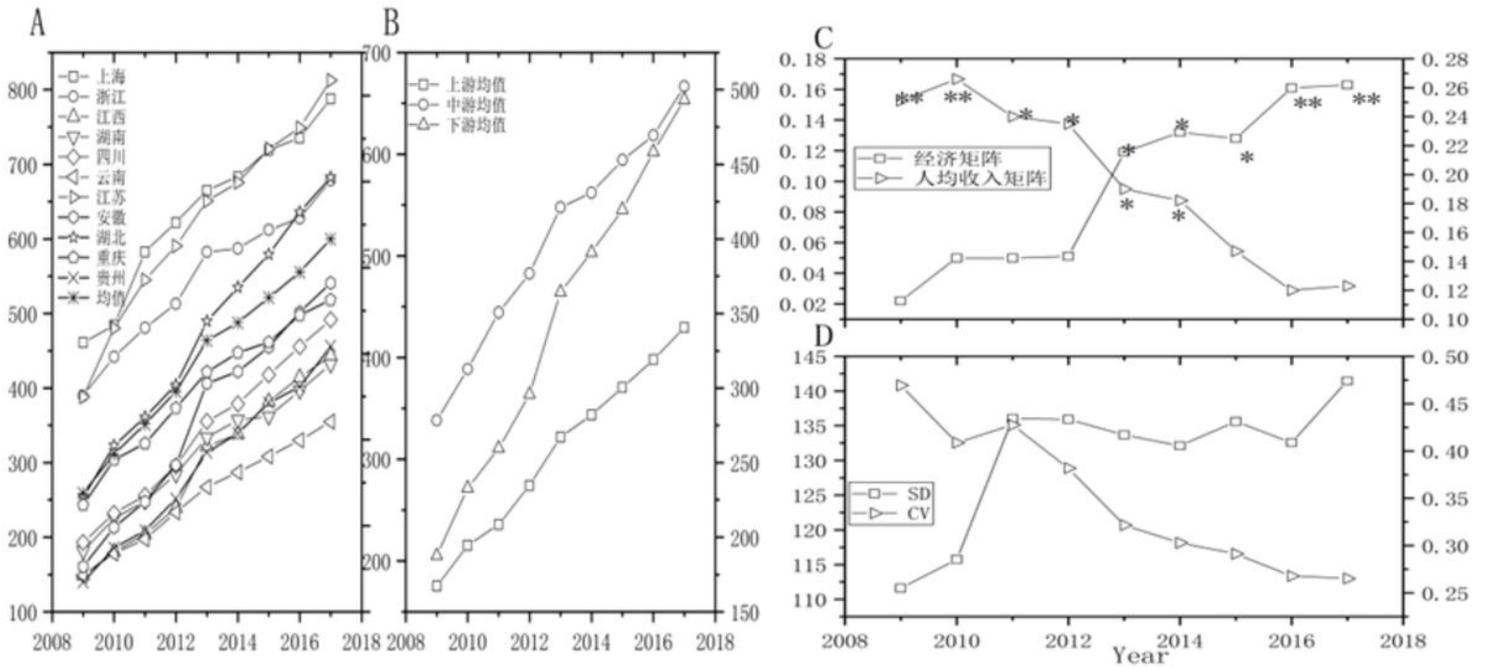
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# Figures



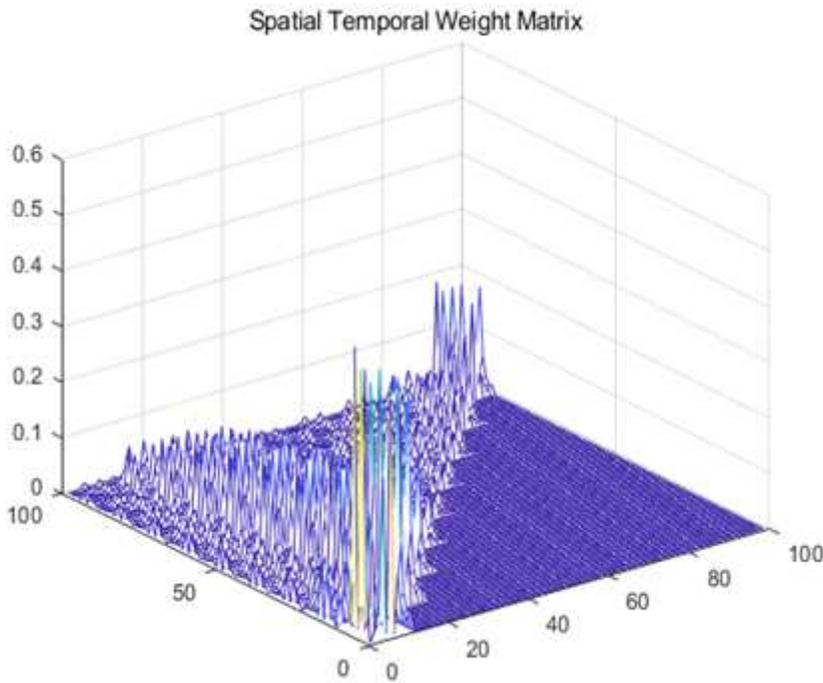
**Figure 1**

Map of the Yangtze River Economic Belt. Note: The designations employed and the presentation of the material on this map do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of Research Square concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. This map has been provided by the authors.



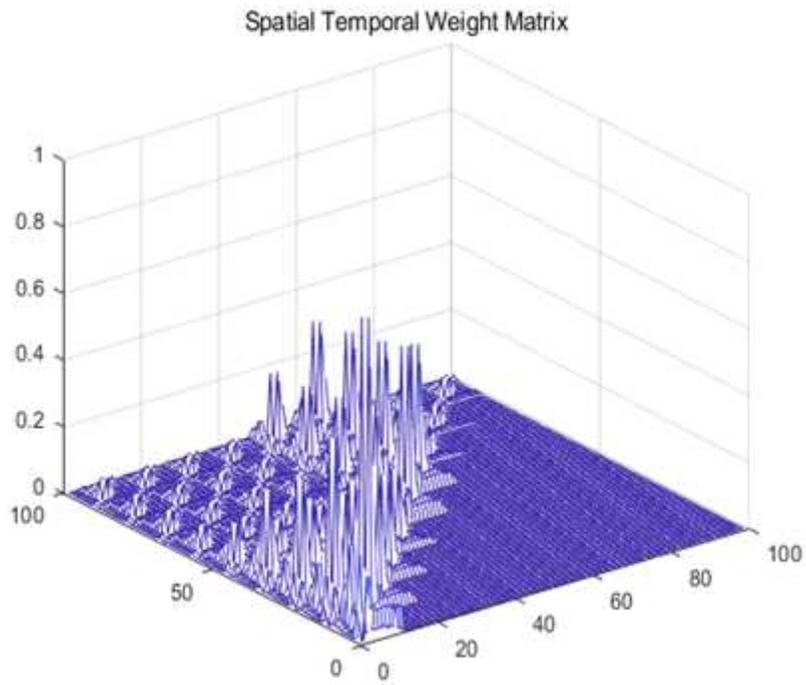
**Figure 2**

Changes in the level of collaborative innovation of provinces in the Yangtze River Economic Belt Note: A. The level and mean change of collaborative innovation in the provinces of the Yangtze River Economic Belt B. The mean change of regional collaborative innovation C. Moran 's I value of collaborative innovation corresponding to different matrices D. Standard deviation and coefficient of variation of collaborative innovation



**Figure 3**

Endogenous space-time weight matrix based on economic matrix



**Figure 4**

Endogenous time-space weight matrix based on per capita income matrix

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