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## REVIEWER'S REPORT

**Manuscript No.: IJAR-57587**

**Title: Embedded Cooperation and the Durability of Regional Cooperation in South Asia,**

**Recommendation:**

**Accept as it is** .....

Accept after minor revision.....

Accept after major revision .....

Do not accept (*Reasons below*) .....

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality		✓		
Techn. Quality		✓		
Clarity		✓		
Significance	✓			

**Reviewer's ID: JPR-002**

### *Detailed Reviewer's Report*

The manuscript titled “*Embedded Cooperation and the Durability of Regional Cooperation in South Asia*” presents a well-structured and analytically rich examination of cross-border electricity cooperation within the BBIN framework. The paper demonstrates strong originality by shifting the analytical focus from institutional authority to the concept of embedded cooperation as a source of durability in regional integration. The theoretical framing is coherent and supported by an extensive engagement with relevant literature in international relations, regionalism, and political economy. The author successfully develops a persuasive argument that infrastructure systems, contractual commitments, interdependence, and administrative routinisation collectively contribute to sustaining cooperation even under weak institutional conditions. The conceptual clarity and analytical consistency significantly enhance the academic value of the paper.

The technical quality of the manuscript is commendable. The study integrates theoretical discussion with empirical illustrations from the Bangladesh–Bhutan–India–Nepal (BBIN) electricity network in a systematic manner. The use of infrastructure projects, electricity trade statistics, contractual arrangements, and governance frameworks strengthens the credibility of the analysis. The tables included in the manuscript improve the presentation of empirical evidence and support the arguments effectively. The references are relevant, contemporary, and drawn from credible academic and institutional sources, reflecting adequate scholarly depth. However, minor improvements may be made in terms of citation formatting consistency and proofreading for typographical issues in certain sections.

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The clarity of writing is generally very good, with logical flow and strong paragraph transitions throughout the manuscript. The introduction effectively establishes the research puzzle and theoretical gap, while subsequent sections systematically build the argument. The conclusion appropriately synthesizes the findings and highlights broader implications for regional cooperation studies. The language used is academic and suitable for publication; however, some lengthy sentences may be simplified for improved readability. A few repetitive statements regarding infrastructural integration and contractual stability could also be condensed to avoid redundancy.

The significance of the study is substantial, particularly for scholars and policymakers interested in South Asian regionalism, energy governance, and international cooperation under institutional constraints. The paper contributes meaningfully to ongoing debates by proposing an alternative explanation for cooperation durability beyond formal institutionalisation. Its insights are valuable not only for South Asia but also for other regions in the Global South facing similar governance and coordination challenges. The manuscript demonstrates strong potential for publication after minor revisions related to language refinement, formatting consistency, and slight reduction of repetitive analytical observations. Overall, the article represents a thoughtful and significant scholarly contribution with high academic relevance.