



## REVIEWER'S REPORT

**Manuscript No.: IJAR-58009**

**Title: Advocacy for the Spice Route Program: Strategies for Preservation, Cultural Diplomacy, and UNESCO World Heritage Nomination**

**Recommendation:**

Accept after minor revision

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

**Reviewer's ID: JPR-Abdul Haseeb Mir**

### *Detailed Reviewer's Report*

The manuscript titled "Advocacy for the Spice Route Program: Strategies for Preservation, Cultural Diplomacy, and UNESCO World Heritage Nomination" presents a highly comprehensive, multi-disciplinary analysis of transcontinental cultural heritage management. The primary objective of the article is to articulate a strategic, policy-oriented framework for the revitalization and preservation of the historic Spice Route maritime networks. The authors explore how this expansive network of maritime trade, which historically linked the contours of Asia, Africa, and Europe, can be leveraged in the contemporary era as a potent vehicle for transnational cultural diplomacy. To achieve this, the study evaluates the complex administrative, diplomatic, and legal mechanisms required to successfully navigate a serial, multinational UNESCO World Heritage nomination process.

The research topic holds outstanding relevance in the fields of heritage studies, international relations, and public policy. In an era often characterized by geopolitical fragmentation, tracing the shared historical, artistic, and culinary lineages left by ancient trade routes provides an essential foundation for fostering peaceful cross-border collaborations. A major strength of this work lies in its pragmatic approach to cultural diplomacy. The authors successfully avoid a purely nostalgic or historical retreading of spice trade dynamics; instead, they integrate rigorous policy analysis with actionable strategies that address the modern complexities of international heritage laws, maritime boundary cooperation, and multi-state treaty alignments. The narrative flow is highly logical, guiding the reader seamlessly from

### REVIEWER'S REPORT

tangible and intangible heritage mapping to public-private funding models and institutional advocacy frameworks.

In terms of overall contribution, the manuscript significantly advances the existing literature on linear and serial heritage corridors. By providing a detailed roadmap that synthesizes local community preservation with high-level state diplomacy, the study fills an important gap in global heritage governance strategies. The insights generated are robust, highly sophisticated, and represent a premium scholarly effort that aligns perfectly with the standards of a leading international journal specializing in cultural heritage and global policy.

#### Suggestions for Improvement

While the manuscript is exceptionally well-conceptualized and thoroughly structured, a few minor modifications and narrative enhancements would further optimize its academic depth and strategic utility prior to final publication.

- 1. Clarification on Multinational Coordination Bodies:** The section detailing the UNESCO World Heritage nomination process outlines the necessity of cross-border synergy. To strengthen the actionable nature of this text, the authors should add a brief paragraph outlining the proposed structure for a central, multinational steering committee or secretariat, detailing how conflicting national heritage management laws among participating states might be systematically harmonized.
- 2. Expansion of Intangible Cultural Heritage Links:** The manuscript focuses heavily on maritime ports, underwater archaeology, and physical fortifications. The narrative would be significantly enhanced by adding a dedicated subsection or expanding existing paragraphs to explore specific elements of intangible cultural heritage—such as culinary traditions, boat-building techniques, and shared linguistic loanwords—that continue to thrive along the Spice Route today.
- 3. Deepening the Risk Assessment for Coastal Sites:** In the discussion regarding physical preservation strategies, the authors correctly identify urbanization as a threat to ancient ports. Given the coastal nature of the Spice Route nodes, it is recommended that the text include a brief, explicit analysis of climate-change-induced threats, such as rising sea levels and coastal erosion, framing these challenges within modern sustainable heritage management protocols.
- 4. Detailing Public-Private Partnership Models:** The financial advocacy framework notes that state funding alone is insufficient for an undertaking of this magnitude. The authors should elaborate slightly on the specific mechanics of proposed public-private partnerships, illustrating how international tourism operators, maritime shipping agencies, and corporate foundations can be ethically engaged in funding preservation without compromising heritage integrity.

## REVIEWER'S REPORT

- Incorporating Lessons from Parallel Global Nominations:** To reinforce the viability of the proposed nomination strategy, the manuscript would benefit from a brief comparative discussion citing lessons learned from successful parallel serial, multinational UNESCO inscriptions, such as the Silk Roads: the Routes Network of Chang'an-Tianshan Corridor or the Qhapaq Ñan Andean Road System.
- Minor Technical and Reference Polish:** The text demonstrates an exceptional command of language and diplomatic terminology. A minor proofreading pass is recommended solely to ensure that all references to UNESCO operational guidelines, international charters (such as the Venice or Burra Charters), and specific maritime treaties are completely standardized in their citation formats and uniformly applied throughout the text.

### Recommendation

**Recommendation:** Accept with Minor Revisions

### Justification

The manuscript makes a meaningful, highly sophisticated, and timely contribution to global heritage studies and cultural diplomacy by presenting a thorough and actionable advocacy framework for the Spice Route Program. The methodology combining policy critique with comparative nomination analysis is sound, the diplomatic reasoning is sharp, and the preservation strategies are well-grounded in modern international standards. The identified areas for improvement are entirely minor, focusing primarily on slight narrative expansions regarding institutional coordination, intangible heritage, climate risks, and formatting consistency. These minor modifications can be readily executed by the authors and will further polish an already outstanding and highly valuable piece of scholarship, making it fully suitable for immediate publication.