

REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR-59349

Title: Integrated Programme Governance for Tourism Infrastructure and Regional Development in Saudi Arabia under Vision 2030.

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 Id: JPR-384

Reviewer's Comment for Publication.

The manuscript addresses a timely and significant topic concerning the governance of tourism infrastructure and regional development in Saudi Arabia under Vision 2030. The paper makes a useful attempt to connect tourism development, infrastructure planning, megaproject governance, sustainability, stakeholder management, project controls, and benefits realization within an integrated programme-governance perspective. The proposed Integrated Programme Governance Framework is potentially valuable for both researchers and practitioners involved in large-scale tourism and infrastructure programmes.

A major strength of the manuscript is its multidisciplinary synthesis. Rather than considering tourism infrastructure as a collection of independent projects, the paper appropriately emphasizes interdependencies among transport, utilities, digital infrastructure, hospitality, heritage, environmental resources, and regional development. The identification of six governance capabilities—strategic alignment, regional systems integration, decision rights, delivery assurance, sustainability and heritage stewardship, and benefits intelligence—provides a coherent conceptual structure.

The review methodology is also clearly described, including the 2020–2025 search period, inclusion and exclusion criteria, DOI verification, thematic coding, and comparison of Saudi and international evidence. The manuscript also appropriately acknowledges that some elements of the proposed framework are adaptations from broader megaproject literature rather than empirically established Saudi-specific causal relationships.

However, some minor revisions are recommended to improve the academic rigor, clarity, and presentation of the manuscript:

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1. **Strengthen the review methodology.** The manuscript states that 30 peer-reviewed studies were identified, but the search process is not sufficiently reproducible. The authors should provide more information about the databases searched, search strings, screening process, number of records initially identified, duplicates removed, and final studies included. A simple PRISMA-style flow diagram or equivalent screening table would substantially improve transparency.
2. **Clarify the distinction between evidence and the authors' proposed framework.** At several points, recommendations in the framework appear to be presented as direct findings from the reviewed literature. The authors should explicitly distinguish established findings from the authors' conceptual synthesis and proposed governance mechanisms.
3. **Strengthen the theoretical contribution.** The proposed framework is practically useful, but its relationship to established programme-governance and megaproject-governance theories could be explained more explicitly. The manuscript would benefit from clearly stating what is novel compared with existing programme-management, project-governance, and megaproject-governance frameworks.
4. **Improve the presentation of Figures 1 and 2.** The manuscript refers to both figures, but the conceptual relationships represented by them should be sufficiently clear and readable. The figures should explicitly demonstrate how strategic outcomes, portfolio decisions, programme integration, project interfaces, lifecycle gates, and regional benefits interact.
5. **Provide stronger evidence for the Saudi-specific claims.** Some conclusions concerning Saudi Arabia are derived from international megaproject studies. This is acceptable given the stated limitations, but the manuscript should clearly label where evidence is Saudi-specific and where governance principles are transferred from international cases.
6. **Improve consistency in terminology and language.** Terms such as "programme," "project," "portfolio," "governance," "programme integration," and "benefits realization" should be consistently defined and used throughout the manuscript. There are also several grammatical and typographical issues, including missing spaces and occasional awkward sentence constructions, which should be corrected during revision.
7. **Reduce repetition in the Discussion and Conclusion.** Several arguments presented in Sections 4–6 are repeated later in the policy implications and conclusion. A moderate reduction in repetition would make the manuscript more concise and improve its overall readability.
8. **Strengthen the validation of the proposed framework.** Since the framework is conceptual and derived from a literature synthesis, the authors should explicitly acknowledge that it has not yet been empirically validated. The manuscript already identifies this limitation, but the distinction between a literature-derived framework and an empirically tested model should be emphasized more clearly.
9. **Improve Table 1 and Table 2 formatting.** The tables contain useful information, but their formatting and alignment should be carefully checked. Table 2 in particular could

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be improved by making the relationships among governance layer, decision rights, mechanisms, evidence/indicators, and failure signals more visually consistent.

10. **Check all references and citation formatting.** The references should be carefully checked for consistency in author names, spacing, journal titles, volume/issue information, page ranges, and DOI formatting. The in-text citations should also be checked against the reference list to ensure complete consistency.

Overall, the manuscript presents a relevant and potentially valuable contribution to the literature on integrated programme governance for tourism-led regional development. Its strongest contribution is the argument that the success of tourism infrastructure programmes should be evaluated not only through individual project delivery but also through cross-project integration, regional capacity, sustainability, stakeholder coordination, and realized benefits. The proposed framework provides a useful basis for future empirical research.

Recommendation: Accept after minor revision.