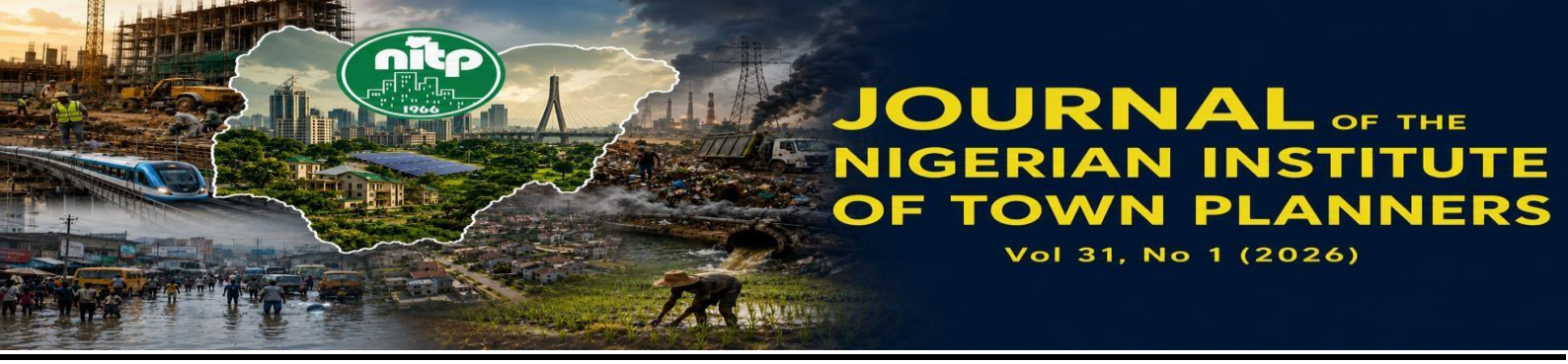


AWARENESS AND PERCEPTIONS OF PLANNING STANDARDS, DEVELOPMENT CONTROL AND INFRASTRUCTURE GOVERNANCE IN THE LAGOS–OGUN BORDER SETTLEMENTS, NIGERIA

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Abstract
The Lagos–Ogun border region is a rapidly urbanising corridor in which strong functional integration coexists with divided administrative authority. This creates a distinctive planning problem: settlements increasingly operate as part of one metropolitan system, while responsibility for infrastructure provision, development control and standards enforcement remains institutionally fragmented. This article examines residents' awareness and perception of planning standards, development control and infrastructure governance in the border settlements. A case study mixed-methods design was adopted. A multistage sampling procedure produced 623 sampled buildings, from which 604 valid household questionnaires were analysed, representing a 97.0% response rate; 296 respondents were in Lagos and 308 in Ogun. Twenty-six key informant interviews were also conducted with planning and development-control officials. Descriptive statistics and content analysis were used for the governance-focused analysis. The results show partial boundary awareness and weak institutional intelligibility. Only 29.8% of respondents were fully aware of the Lagos–Ogun statutory boundary, while 37.1% were not aware. Lagos was more frequently perceived as responsible for infrastructure provision (57.0%), but revenue collection was almost evenly attributed to Lagos (47.0%) and Ogun (48.3%). Government presence and infrastructure provision were rated inadequate or very inadequate by 60.3% of respondents. Community participation was perceived as high or very high by 79.4%, whereas 81.5% rated organised private-sector participation as low or very low. Although 75.5% reported awareness of a planning authority, 84.1% did not identify the agency responsible for development control. In addition, 75.5% perceived public infrastructure as non-compliant with planning standards; government (74.2%), planning authorities (60.9%) and developers (52.3%) were the principal actors blamed. The findings indicate that the border settlements are characterised not only by infrastructure deficits but also by blurred accountability, weak governance literacy and limited confidence in development control. The article recommends a formal Lagos–Ogun inter-state planning coordination mechanism, clearer institutional communication, routine compliance audits, stronger public engagement and a more structured role for communities and private actors in infrastructure governance.

Keywords: Border settlements; Collaborative governance; Development control; Planning standards; Infrastructure governance; Lagos–Ogun corridor

1.0 Introduction

The Lagos–Ogun border region has been noted in literature as rapidly urbanising areas in south-western Nigeria (Oyalowo, 2022; Abiodun and Salami, 2023). Its transformation is driven largely by the continued outward expansion of metropolitan Lagos into adjoining settlements in Ogun State. Population movement, housing demand, industrial relocation, commuting, land development and infrastructure pressure increasingly transcend the statutory boundary, creating a corridor that is functionally connected but institutionally divided. Earlier studies have demonstrated that Lagos has expanded beyond its formal administrative limits and that adjoining settlements are being restructured by metropolitan spillover, land-market pressure and peri-urbanisation (Lawanson, Yadua and Salako,



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2012; Oyalowo, 2022; Abiodun and Salami, 2023). The consequence is a borderland in which everyday socio-economic interaction occurs across administrative space more rapidly than institutions have adapted to the emerging regional reality.

This condition raises a fundamental governance question. Infrastructure development is not determined only by the physical availability of roads, schools, health facilities, drainage, water, electricity or security services. It also depends on the institutional arrangements through which facilities are planned, financed, located, regulated, maintained and monitored. Planning standards provide the technical norms that should guide development, while development control translates those norms into approvals, monitoring and enforcement. Infrastructure governance is broader still, encompassing the relationships among state agencies, local authorities, communities, developers and private actors through which infrastructure decisions are made and implemented (Aluko, 2011; OECD, 2021). In a border corridor, these functions become especially complex because settlement growth is continuous while governmental mandates remain territorially separated.

The Nigerian planning literature has long identified weak enforcement, fragmented institutional responsibility, bureaucratic barriers and informal development as major constraints on effective development control (Nwaka, 2005; Aluko, 2011). More recent evidence from south-western Nigeria similarly shows that development-control institutions often operate under practical capacity constraints and implementation gaps (Olatunji, Yoade and Oyelade, 2022; Adeyemi et al., 2023). At the metropolitan fringe, these problems are intensified by rapid land conversion and settlement expansion. Oyalowo (2022), for example, shows that Lagos' expansion beyond its administrative boundary has significant implications for land, housing and planning, while OECD (2024) notes more generally that border regions frequently experience legal, administrative and fiscal barriers that complicate coordinated service delivery.

Yet the governance problem is not only institutional; it is also perceptual. Planning systems depend partly on whether residents understand the jurisdictions, agencies and standards that govern development. Where people do not know which authority is responsible for approvals, inspections, infrastructure provision or enforcement, accountability becomes difficult to establish. Residents may recognise that "government" or a "planning authority" exists without understanding which institution performs a specific development-control function. Such institutional opacity can weaken compliance, public participation and the legitimacy of planning. This issue is particularly important in the Lagos–Ogun border settlements, where residents may live in one state, work in another, use infrastructure across the boundary, and experience multiple layers of governmental authority.

The governance dimension of the problem remains underdeveloped in the literature. Studies have long noted that border and peri-urban settlements in Nigeria suffer from weak governmental attention, poor coordination and regulatory neglect (Kadiri and Oyalowo, 2011; Oyalowo, 2022). Yet fewer studies have examined how residents themselves understand the institutional environment within which

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settlements are planned and managed. Questions of boundary awareness, knowledge of planning authority, perception of development-control responsibility, views on compliance with planning standards, and reliance on state versus community initiative are crucial in a border corridor where jurisdictional overlap and ambiguity are likely to weaken accountability. The evidence already available suggests that planning and development control in such areas may be shaped by blurred responsibility, low institutional visibility and heavy dependence on self-help responses, but there is still insufficient resident-level empirical evidence on these issues in the Lagos-Ogun border settlements.

The research gap addressed by this study therefore lies in the absence of an integrated analysis that brings together the residents' awareness and perception of planning standards, development control and infrastructure governance. This study addresses that gap by examining the Lagos-Ogun border region as a single but internally differentiated political corridor. This article addresses that gap by assessing residents' awareness and perception of planning standards, development control and infrastructure governance in the Lagos–Ogun border settlements. It specifically examines boundary awareness, perceived governmental responsibility, governance challenges, stakeholder participation, knowledge of planning institutions, perceived compliance with planning standards and attribution of responsibility for non-compliance.

2.0 Literature Review

The study was undertaken in the shared boundary between Lagos State and Ogun State in south-western Nigeria. The corridor is shaped by the outward expansion of Lagos and the increasing residential, commercial and industrial importance of adjoining Ogun settlements. For the broader thesis, the border region was operationalised as a 20 km-wide corridor extending approximately 10 km on either side of the Lagos–Ogun boundary. This delineation enables the analysis of spatial, socioeconomic, planning and governance challenges and influence with increasing distance from the border between the two states. The study covered twenty border local government areas distributed across four analytical zones. This spatial definition was intended to capture the wider zone of border influence rather than settlements located directly on the statutory line alone.

Physical development planning provides the institutional framework through which land uses, buildings, infrastructure and environmental relationships are organised to achieve orderly and functional settlements. Planning standards translate this broad purpose into technical and locational requirements relating to matters such as setbacks, accessibility, facility siting, safety, plot development and infrastructure provision. Development control is the mechanism through which these standards are operationalised by means of planning permission, monitoring, inspection and enforcement (Nwaka, 2005; Aluko, 2011). Where development control is weak, planning becomes reactive rather than anticipatory and urban growth can precede the infrastructure and regulatory systems intended to guide it.

Infrastructure governance extends beyond formal development control. It concerns the institutions, rules, actors and relationships through which infrastructure is planned, funded, delivered and


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maintained. OECD (2021) emphasises that infrastructure outcomes depend on governance arrangements capable of aligning investment decisions with wider social, economic and territorial objectives. This is particularly relevant in peri-urban and border regions, where service demand may expand across administrative boundaries while authority remains divided. In such settings, institutional fragmentation can produce duplication, neglect, uneven standards and weak accountability.

For the Lagos–Ogun corridor, the distinction is important. A road, school, clinic or drainage channel may be physically located within one state but serve a population whose everyday economic and social life extends across both states. Similarly, residents may perceive one state as the effective provider of infrastructure while another authority collects revenues or exercises development-control powers. The governance challenge is therefore not simply the absence of institutions, but the degree to which responsibilities are visible, intelligible and coordinated.

Border Governance and Collaborative Planning

Collaborative Governance Theory provides a useful lens for interpreting this problem. Ansell and Gash (2008) conceptualise collaborative governance as a formal process through which public institutions and non-state actors engage directly in collective decision-making and implementation. The framework directs attention to starting conditions, institutional design, facilitative leadership and the quality of collaborative interaction. Emerson, Nabatchi and Balogh (2012) broaden the perspective by emphasising principled engagement, shared motivation and joint capacity across institutional boundaries. These ideas are relevant to a border corridor because no single institution is likely to possess the territorial reach, information and resources needed to address all development pressures independently.

However, collaboration should not be romanticised. It may be weakened by power asymmetry, institutional rivalry, conflicting incentives and unclear mandates. Where the statutory responsibilities of actors overlap or are poorly communicated, collaboration can become episodic rather than institutionalised. In rapidly growing border settlements, communities may therefore resort to self-help not because collaborative governance is functioning well, but because formal provision is weak. Similarly, private actors may invest selectively in profitable infrastructure while neglecting less profitable collective needs. The central issue is whether state, market and community actors operate within a coherent framework or as disconnected substitutes for one another.

The literature on cross-border and inter-jurisdictional planning reinforces this concern. Planning across boundaries requires mechanisms capable of coordinating spatial strategies, service provision and regulatory responsibilities across adjacent territories (Steele, Alizadeh and Eslami-Andargoli, 2013; Cappellano, Richardson and Trautman, 2020). OECD (2024) further shows that border regions often remain institutionally disadvantaged where governance systems fail to respond to functional interdependence. Although the Lagos–Ogun boundary is an internal state boundary rather than an international frontier, the same principle applies: functional integration can outpace institutional coordination.



Public Awareness, Institutional Legitimacy and Compliance

Public awareness is central to development control because compliance depends partly on the visibility and legitimacy of planning institutions. Residents who understand planning requirements and know where to seek approvals, report violations or obtain information are better positioned to participate in regulated development. Conversely, where institutions are distant or difficult to understand, planning rules may be treated as external bureaucratic requirements rather than shared instruments for protecting collective welfare. Agbola and Agunbiade (2009) link weak urban governance in Lagos to broader problems of informality, tenure insecurity and limited institutional effectiveness, while Nwaka (2005) notes that cumbersome formal systems can encourage actors to operate outside regulatory frameworks.

The problem is especially important in peri-urban settings. Rapid development often occurs before planning institutions are adequately established, staffed or understood. Mabogunje (2002) described this tendency in Nigerian urbanisation as a pattern in which development frequently precedes planning. The implication is that weak compliance is not simply the product of individual disregard for regulations; it also reflects institutional weakness, limited public engagement and the inability of planning systems to keep pace with urban transformation. Recent studies in south-western Nigeria continue to show gaps in development-control capacity and implementation (Olatunji, Yoade and Oyelade, 2022; Adeyemi et al., 2023).

This article therefore treats awareness, perception and non-response as analytically important dimensions of governance. Awareness refers not only to whether residents have heard of a planning authority, but also to whether they can identify the institution responsible for development control. Perception refers to how residents assess government presence, institutional responsibility, stakeholder participation and compliance with planning standards. High levels of uncertainty or non-response are interpreted cautiously as possible indicators of weak governance literacy or limited institutional visibility, rather than being treated automatically as evidence of apathy.

3.0 Methodology

A case study design involving mixed methods was adopted, with the quantitative component dominant and qualitative evidence playing a complementary role. The household survey constituted the principal source of resident-level evidence for this article. The sampling frame comprised 6,225 buildings identified across the selected settlements and streets within the four zones. Ten percent of the buildings, equivalent to 623, were selected. A multistage procedure was used: all twenty border LGAs were covered; one border settlement was randomly selected from each LGA; one street was randomly selected from each selected settlement; and 10% of buildings on the sampled streets were selected systematically after a random start. One eligible adult respondent was selected from each sampled building.

At the end of fieldwork and data cleaning, 604 valid questionnaires were retained, representing a 97.0% valid response rate. Of these, 296 respondents (49.0%) were located in Lagos State and 308 (51.0%) in Ogun State. The


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questionnaire included items on awareness of the statutory boundary, perceived responsibility for infrastructure provision and revenue collection, government presence, infrastructure-governance challenges, stakeholder participation, awareness of planning authorities, development-control responsibility, perceived compliance with planning standards and attribution of responsibility for non-compliance.

The wider study also conducted 26 key informant interviews with planning and development-control officials: 13 district planning offices in Lagos State and 13 zonal town planning offices in Ogun State. The interview guide addressed planning strategies, funding, management practices, inter-agency collaboration and the challenges of planning the border region. For the governance-focused analysis reported here, household responses were summarised using frequencies and percentages, while interview material provided contextual understanding of the institutional setting. Qualitative information was organised thematically using content analysis (Krippendorff, 2018). Ethical principles of voluntary participation, confidentiality and academic use of information were observed throughout the study.

4.0 Result and Discussion

Boundary Awareness, Government Responsibility and Perceived Government Presence

Residents' knowledge of the statutory boundary was incomplete. Only 29.8% were fully aware of the Lagos–Ogun boundary, 29.1% were partially aware and 37.1% reported that they were not aware. The pattern shows that a substantial proportion of residents live within a borderland context without complete knowledge of the administrative geography that structures planning jurisdiction and service responsibility. This is important because the border settlements are functionally interconnected; residents may work, trade or use services across the state boundary even when their legal and administrative location remains fixed.

Perception of governmental responsibility was similarly fragmented. Lagos State was identified by 57.0% of respondents as the state responsible for infrastructure provision, compared with 39.7% for Ogun. Revenue collection, however, was attributed almost equally to the two states: 47.0% identified Lagos and 48.3% identified Ogun. The divergence suggests that residents do not necessarily experience infrastructure provision, revenue collection and jurisdictional authority as a coherent institutional package. The perceived geography of governance is therefore blurred rather than clearly aligned with statutory boundaries.

Perceptions of government presence reinforce this interpretation. A combined 60.3% rated government presence and infrastructure provision as inadequate or very inadequate, compared with only 8.6% who rated them adequate or very adequate. A further 28.5% considered government presence fairly adequate. The dominant assessment is therefore one of weak institutional visibility. In a rapidly expanding border corridor, such a perception has consequences for development control because regulatory compliance is difficult to sustain where government is seen as distant, weak or inconsistent.

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Table 1: Boundary Awareness, Government Responsibility and Perceived Government Presence

Variable	Response category	Frequency	Percentage
Awareness of Lagos–Ogun statutory boundary	Fully aware	180	29.8
	Partially aware	176	29.1
	Not aware	224	37.1
	Indifferent	12	2.0
	No response	12	2.0
State perceived as responsible for infrastructure provision	Lagos State	344	57.0
	Ogun State	240	39.7
	Not sure/no response	20	3.3
State perceived as collecting taxes and revenues	Lagos State	284	47.0
	Ogun State	292	48.3
	Not sure/no response	28	4.7
Adequacy of government presence and infrastructure provision	Very inadequate/inadequate	364	60.3
	Fairly adequate	172	28.5
	Adequate/very adequate	52	8.6
	No response	16	2.6

Source: Field survey, 2026

Perceived Infrastructure-Governance Challenges

The governance-challenge items generated an unusually high non-response rate of 39.7% across all the listed issues. This is analytically important. It may indicate that a substantial group of residents did not possess sufficient information to evaluate the governance factors presented, were uncertain about their relevance, or were unwilling to assign responsibility. Since the objective itself concerns awareness and perception, this level of non-response cannot simply be discarded as a technical inconvenience. It points to a possible gap between the institutions that structure infrastructure governance and the public understanding of how those institutions operate.

Among the substantive responses, remoteness from the state capital emerged as the strongest perceived challenge: 53.0% of the entire sample rated it strong or very strong. Poor revenue generation followed at 48.4%, while poor access to infrastructure grids and roads was rated strong or very strong by 28.5%. By contrast, only 14.6% rated lack of clear boundary demarcation as strong or very strong, 9.9% did so for insecurity, 9.2% for lack of awareness of the state boundary, 8.6% for land tenure, 8.0% for lack of community/social cohesion and 7.9% for poor political participation.

The pattern suggests that residents understand the governance problem primarily through administrative peripherality, fiscal weakness and inadequate infrastructure connectivity rather than through the legal existence of the boundary itself. This is a significant distinction. The border line may be institutionally important, but residents appear more concerned with the practical consequences of being distant from decision-making centres and insufficiently connected to infrastructure systems.

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Table 2: Residents' Perception of Infrastructure -Governance Challenges

Governance issue	Strong/very strong (%)	Indifferent (%)	Low/very low (%)	No response (%)
Remoteness from state capital	53.0	4.6	2.7	39.7
Poor revenue generation	48.4	7.9	4.0	39.7
Poor access to infrastructure grids/roads	28.5	27.2	4.7	39.7
Lack of clear boundary demarcation	14.6	29.8	15.9	39.7
Insecurity	9.9	32.5	17.9	39.7
Lack of awareness of state boundary	9.2	20.5	30.5	39.7
Land tenure system	8.6	26.5	25.1	39.7
Lack of community/social cohesion	8.0	19.2	33.2	39.7
Poor political participation	7.9	37.1	15.3	39.7

Source: Field survey, 2026

Stakeholder Participation: Strong Community Self-Help and Weak Private-Sector Involvement

A sharp contrast exists between community participation and organised private-sector participation. Residents and community-based associations were widely perceived as active in infrastructure development: 36.4% rated their participation very high and 43.0% rated it high, giving a combined 79.4%. Only 19.2% rated community participation low or very low. The low non-response rate of 1.3% suggests that respondents were familiar with community involvement in local infrastructure matters.

The organised private sector presents the opposite pattern. Only 17.2% rated private-sector participation high or very high, while 81.5% rated it low or very low. This asymmetry indicates that infrastructure development relies strongly on community initiative but is weakly supported by structured private-sector participation. Community action may involve road repairs, drainage clearing, street lighting, neighbourhood sanitation, local security and financial contributions to minor infrastructure.

Such participation has two meanings. On one hand, it demonstrates local resilience and collective capacity. On the other, it may reflect the transfer of responsibilities from formal institutions to residents. The earlier finding that 60.3% perceived government presence and infrastructure provision as inadequate or very inadequate strengthens the latter interpretation. Where communities fill public infrastructure gaps by necessity, participation may represent adaptation to institutional weakness rather than evidence of effective collaborative governance.

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Table 3: Stakeholder Participation and Awareness of Planning Institutions

Issue	Response category	Frequency	Percentage
Residents/community-based associations participation	Very high/high	480	79.4
	Low/very low	116	19.2
	No response	8	1.3
Organised private-sector participation	Very high/high	104	17.2
	Low/very low	492	81.5
	No response	8	1.3
Awareness of planning authority in locality	Yes	456	75.5
	No	136	22.5
	No response	12	2.0
Identification of development-control agency	Local Planning Authority only	44	7.3
	Local Planning Authority and State Agency	36	6.0
	State Agency only	16	2.6
	No response	508	84.1

Source: Field survey, 2026

Awareness of Planning Authority and Development-Control Responsibility

The results reveal a striking distinction between general institutional awareness and specific institutional knowledge. At the general level, 75.5% of respondents reported that they were aware of a planning authority in their locality, while 22.5% were not aware. Taken alone, this would suggest relatively high public visibility of planning institutions.

The picture changes substantially when respondents are required to identify the agency responsible for development control. A total of 84.1% gave no response. Only 7.3% identified the Local Planning Authority only, 6.0% identified both a Local Planning Authority and a State Agency, and 2.6% identified a State Agency only. In the agency-specific questions, only 13.2% recognised the Local Planning Authority as responsible for development control and 8.6% recognised the State Agency.

This gap between institutional visibility and institutional intelligibility is one of the most important findings of the study. Residents appear to know that planning institutions exist, but most do not know which institution is responsible for approvals, complaints, monitoring or enforcement. In a single-jurisdiction city this would already weaken accountability; in the Lagos–Ogun border region the implications are more serious because residents are exposed to two state systems and multiple local planning structures. Institutional ambiguity may therefore encourage regulatory avoidance, reduce reporting of violations and make it difficult for residents to hold a specific authority accountable.

Perceived Compliance with Planning Standards and Accountability for Non-Compliance

Residents expressed a strongly negative assessment of compliance with planning standards. Three-quarters of respondents (75.5%) believed that public infrastructure in the border settlements did not comply with planning standards, while only 18.5% believed that it did. The result indicates that planning legitimacy is challenged not simply by weak awareness, but also by residents' perception that actual

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development outcomes fall below the standards expected of the formal planning system.

Responsibility for non-compliance was located principally within the formal development and regulatory system. Government received the highest level of blame, identified by 74.2% of respondents. Planning authorities were blamed by 60.9%, while infrastructure developers were identified by 52.3%. Only 11.3% blamed other actors. Residents therefore appear to expect government and planning institutions to ensure compliance, even when they cannot identify precisely which agency carries the development-control mandate.

This combination is revealing. The public may have weak operational knowledge of the institutional architecture, yet still possess clear expectations about the responsibilities of government. Non-compliance is consequently interpreted as both a regulatory and implementation failure: government and planning authorities are expected to establish and enforce standards, while developers are expected to comply with approved plans and technical requirements. The findings are consistent with long-standing arguments that urban development in Nigeria often proceeds ahead of effective planning and enforcement (Mabogunje, 2002; Nwaka, 2005; Aluko, 2011).

Table 4: Perceived Compliance with Planning Standards and Accountability for Non-Compliance

Compliance/accountability issue	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Perceived compliance of public infrastructure with planning standards	Yes	112	18.5
	No	456	75.5
	No response	36	6.0
Government blamed for non-compliance	Yes	448	74.2
Planning authority blamed for non-compliance	Yes	368	60.9
Infrastructure developer blamed for non-compliance	Yes	316	52.3
Other actors blamed for non-compliance	Yes	68	11.3

Source: Field survey, 2026

Discussion

From Boundary Ambiguity to Institutional Ambiguity

The findings show that the Lagos–Ogun border problem is not simply a matter of physical demarcation. Only 29.8% of residents were fully aware of the statutory boundary, but lack of clear boundary demarcation was not itself considered one of the strongest governance challenges. Residents were more concerned with remoteness from state capitals, fiscal weakness and infrastructure connectivity. This suggests that the institutional consequences of the boundary matter more in everyday life than the boundary as a physical line.

This distinction is consistent with contemporary border scholarship, which treats borderlands as spaces produced simultaneously by territorial separation and functional interaction. In the Lagos–Ogun corridor, residents may experience one metropolitan economy but multiple administrative systems. The finding that Lagos is more strongly associated with infrastructure provision while revenue collection is almost evenly attributed to both states illustrates this



disjuncture. Functional integration has not produced equivalent institutional integration.

The implication is that governance reform should not focus narrowly on boundary demarcation. The more important task is to clarify who does what, where responsibilities begin and end, and how residents can navigate the two planning systems. OECD (2024) argues that border regions require governance arrangements capable of overcoming regulatory and administrative barriers created by jurisdictional division. The Lagos–Ogun corridor demonstrates the relevance of this argument within an internal Nigerian setting.

Community Self-Help and an Incomplete Governance Partnership

The high level of community participation is one of the clearest features of infrastructure governance in the study area. Nearly four-fifths of respondents perceived residents and community-based associations as highly or very highly involved. This confirms that local communities are not passive recipients of infrastructure. They mobilise resources, maintain neighbourhood facilities and respond pragmatically to gaps in formal provision.

However, the governance significance of this participation requires careful interpretation. Collaborative governance is most effective where public agencies, communities and private actors contribute within an institutional framework characterised by shared responsibility, trust and joint capacity (Ansell and Gash, 2008; Emerson, Nabatchi and Balogh, 2012). The Lagos–Ogun pattern is less balanced. Communities are highly visible, organised private-sector participation is weak, and government presence is widely perceived as inadequate. Rather than a coordinated governance partnership, the evidence points to a compensatory arrangement in which communities shoulder responsibilities created by gaps in formal provision.

This distinction matters for planning standards. Community-led infrastructure may be essential in the short term, but fragmented self-help interventions can produce uneven technical quality where they are not connected to statutory plans, engineering standards or wider infrastructure networks. The policy objective should therefore not be to displace community initiative, but to institutionalise it within transparent, technically guided and jointly financed planning arrangements.

Institutional Visibility without Institutional Intelligibility

Perhaps the most consequential finding is the contrast between the 75.5% who reported awareness of a planning authority and the 84.1% who did not identify the agency responsible for development control. This is more than a knowledge gap. It suggests that planning institutions may be visible in name or presence but opaque in mandate and procedure. Residents know that planning exists, yet many do not know how the system is organised or where responsibility lies.

Such institutional opacity has direct implications for planning effectiveness. Development control requires interaction between regulators and the regulated public. Residents and developers need to know where approvals are obtained, which standards apply, how complaints are made and



which agency has enforcement authority. When that institutional pathway is unclear, compliance becomes more difficult to achieve and accountability becomes diffuse. A developer can claim uncertainty, a resident may not know where to report an infraction, and agencies can operate without strong public scrutiny.

The result also helps to interpret the high non-response observed on governance challenges. Rather than concluding that residents are uninterested, the pattern may reflect institutional distance. Planning systems that are technically present but weakly communicated can generate precisely this form of uncertainty. The findings therefore support the argument that urban governance requires not only institutional capacity but institutional intelligibility: residents must be able to understand the architecture of authority well enough to engage it.

Perceived Non-Compliance and the Legitimacy of Development Control

The widespread perception of non-compliance with planning standards is a critical governance finding. If three-quarters of residents believe that public infrastructure itself fails to comply with planning standards, the legitimacy of development control is weakened. The state cannot credibly demand compliance from private developers if public infrastructure is perceived as disregarding the same principles of siting, accessibility, environmental protection and orderly development.

The allocation of blame reinforces this interpretation. Government was blamed by 74.2%, planning authorities by 60.9% and developers by 52.3%. Residents therefore understand the problem principally as one located within the formal development process rather than as an exclusively community-level failure. This is consistent with Aluko's (2011) argument that planning standards may exist formally but remain undermined by weak compliance and enforcement. It also echoes Adeyemi et al. (2023), who identify implementation gaps as a major constraint on development control in south-western Nigeria.

At the same time, the results should not be read as evidence that communities have no role in non-compliance. Informal land transactions, building practices and resistance to regulation can also shape development outcomes. The more important point is that residents expect the formal planning system to provide leadership, monitoring and enforcement. Where government institutions are perceived as weak, distant or unclear, the wider planning culture is also likely to weaken.

Planning and Policy Implications

The first implication is the need for a formal inter-state coordination mechanism for the Lagos–Ogun border corridor. The corridor is functionally integrated, but the governance arrangements remain state-centred. A standing Lagos–Ogun border planning platform should bring together relevant state ministries, local planning authorities, infrastructure agencies and local governments to coordinate spatial planning, major infrastructure provision and development-control priorities. The purpose should not be to remove the constitutional authority of either state, but to create an operational framework for matters that are inherently cross-boundary.

Second, institutional responsibilities need to be communicated more clearly to residents.



Planning agencies should provide simple, publicly accessible information showing which authority is responsible for planning permission, development monitoring, complaints, infrastructure siting and enforcement in each border settlement. Joint signage, community information programmes, digital service portals and periodic planning clinics could reduce the gap between general awareness and specific institutional knowledge.

Third, compliance with planning standards should be made more visible and verifiable. Major public infrastructure projects in the corridor should be accompanied by transparent planning-compliance statements and periodic development-control audits. This would help address the credibility problem created when public infrastructure is perceived as non-compliant. Enforcement should also be more consistent across public and private development so that planning standards are not seen as requirements imposed selectively.

Fourth, the strong role of communities should be institutionalised rather than treated as an informal substitute for government. Community development associations can provide valuable local knowledge, help identify infrastructure priorities and support maintenance, but their interventions should be integrated into local and inter-state plans. Mechanisms for technical guidance, co-financing and accountability would allow community initiative to complement rather than fragment formal infrastructure provision.

Fifth, organised private-sector participation should be deliberately broadened. The finding that 81.5% of respondents perceived private-sector participation as low or very low suggests that existing investment is not translating into visible collaborative infrastructure development. Public–private arrangements can be developed for selected infrastructure and maintenance functions, but they should operate within clear service standards, public accountability and spatial-equity requirements.

Finally, the large knowledge and non-response gaps indicate the need for sustained planning education. Planning awareness should not be limited to building approval campaigns. Residents need practical knowledge of why planning standards matter, which institutions are responsible, how infrastructure decisions are made, and how they can participate or seek redress. In a border region, this governance literacy is essential to improving compliance, legitimacy and accountability.

5.0. Conclusion

The Lagos–Ogun border settlements are typical illustration of a wider challenge of governing rapidly urbanising regions whose functional geography no longer corresponds neatly with administrative boundaries. The findings show that the governance deficit is not defined only by weak infrastructure. It is equally evident in incomplete boundary awareness, fragmented perceptions of state responsibility, weak government visibility, uneven stakeholder participation, poor knowledge of development-control institutions and a widespread perception that public infrastructure does not comply with planning standards.

The most important analytical insight is the distinction between institutional presence and institutional intelligibility. Many residents know



that planning authorities exist, yet most cannot identify the agency responsible for development control. At the same time, residents place clear responsibility for non-compliance on government, planning authorities and developers. This means that expectations of formal governance remain strong even where understanding of institutional mandates is weak.

The corridor, therefore, requires more than additional infrastructure investment. It requires a governance architecture that residents can understand and institutions can operate collaboratively. Clearer responsibilities, coordinated inter-state planning, visible and consistent enforcement, structured community participation, stronger private-sector engagement and sustained public planning education are necessary if physical development is to keep pace with the rapid transformation of the border settlements. The Lagos–Ogun case demonstrates that in metropolitan borderlands, effective infrastructure development depends as much on institutional clarity and legitimacy as on the physical provision of facilities.

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