

STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS AND THE PERFORMANCE OF IRRIGATION PROJECTS IN KIAMBU COUNTY, KENYA

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Abstract: Monitoring and evaluation assists stakeholders of the project to have a project that meets their requirements. When planning to monitor and evaluate a project, it is vital to consider whether appropriate stakeholders are well managed in order to meet their needs. Despite this many irrigation projects in Kenya continues have failed because they were never monitored and evaluated accordingly. This study examined the influence of stakeholder analysis on the performance of irrigation projects in Kiambu County, Kenya. Descriptive research design was utilized. Three irrigation projects in Kiambu County, Kenya namely; Wamuoro Irrigation Project, Kawira Irrigation Project and Githuito Irrigation Project were targeted. A census of 35 respondents was carried out which comprised of 3 managers and 32 support staff from the Ministry of Agriculture. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. The study revealed that stakeholder analysis has a positive and significant effect on the performance of irrigation projects. The study concludes that stakeholder analysis is a very important factor towards delivering a success project because it leads to better relationship among project parties by having a project that addresses their requirements and also improves accountability. The study recommends that proper communication should be done to all the stakeholders in order to ensure all the activities of the projects are understood by each party involved, project expectations are met and all stakeholder have gain a sense of belonging.

Keywords: Stakeholder Analysis, Irrigation Projects, Project Performance.

1. INTRODUCTION

Monitoring and evaluation practice is seen as a way of achieving project consistency and effectiveness by the organizations in which the organizations are able to gauge the importance of the project to their stakeholders and come up with proper ways in which they can improve the projects in future (World Bank, 2008). Nevertheless, Chaplowe (2008) argue that some of the failures witnessed in the process of monitoring and evaluation are because of lack of proper standards for assessing the quality of the project. Yumia and Susan (2013) concluded that for better performance of public projects it is important that organizations plan to have effective implementation strategies for better results of the implemented projects.

Nyonje, Ndunge and Mulwa (2012) observe the descriptive nature of monitoring and that it tries to describe the status of the project in line with the set goals and expected outputs. On the other hand, Ogula (2012) argue that evaluation is measuring of project systematically and objectively by showing the progress of the project and reasons for any deviations. According to Khan (2012) monitoring and evaluation is an integrated part in the management of the project which reflects the status of the projects for corrective measures. The author further indicates that evaluation is based on the data obtained from the monitoring process.

Shapiro (2011) observe that issues arising from a project and their causes are identified through monitoring and evaluation which then appropriate control measures can be undertaken. Therefore, the performance of a project largely depends on monitoring and evaluation tools. UNDP report of 2009 show that carrying out monitoring and evaluation entails various tasks in which the major one is the formulation of a plan meant for monitoring and evaluation which forms that basis of all the other subsequent processes. In addition, Shapiro (2011) shows that during the process of project planning monitoring and evaluation must be incorporated.

Kusek and Rist (2014) indicate that the performance of a project is greatly influenced by the monitoring and evaluation tools. Shapiro (2011) supports this by showing that monitoring and evaluation tools are essential in assessing the quality of the projects and whether it satisfies the client needs. According to Naidoo (2011) proper monitoring and evaluation enables a project manager to come up with better decisions in project management.

Irrigation is an essential part of the package of technologies, institutions and policies that underpins increased agricultural output (FAO, 2011). According to Jurriens et al (2012), good management of irrigation schemes involving all the stakeholders including members is an important factor in achieving better irrigation projects. It is seen that poor project performance does not only arise from the technical aspects of performance but in project design and systems of irrigation operations.

In Kenya, the Ministry of Water and Irrigation annual report, (2016) estimates that Ksh 8 billion is invested annually in developing irrigation projects. However most of these Projects hardly serve their intended purpose because they cease to function or operate below capacity as soon as the financing agencies and development partners pull out. Irrigation farming especially for high value crops and horticultural crops has a number of challenges in that using irrigation as a farming method needs better understanding among stakeholders involved in irrigation projects.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Monitoring and evaluation tools are vital in the management and assessment of efficient and effective projects invested in the agricultural sector. Nevertheless, the performance of project in the agricultural sector has been poor due to challenged monitoring and evaluation process. Most organizations view monitoring and evaluation as donor based than a tool for management (Babbie & Mouton, 2010). Kusek and Rist (2014) observe that privately owned organizations execute projects only to satisfy the need and forces emanating from their funders instead of focusing on the performance of the project.

The development of irrigation in Kenya is still low as compared to its potential. For example, the Kenya's irrigation potential in 2010 was estimated at 539,000 hectares, but only 105,800 hectares have been exploited for agricultural production (GoK, 2012). In this effort the government through the National Irrigation Board identifies, designs and constructs irrigation infrastructure to improve water availability for agricultural productivity and in turn improve the food security in the country. Kiambu County has 16 permanent rivers originating from Aberdare ranges, which are its main water tower. Despite the existence of these rivers only 172,872 out of 469,244 households have access to piped water and 296,371 with access to potable/safe water. This represents a very low percentage of population that has access to safe and adequate water at reasonable distances to their homesteads.

Several studies have been undertaken on monitoring and evaluation on project performance. For instance, El-Sawalhi and Hammad (2015) study examined factors affecting stakeholder management in construction projects in the Gaza Strip. However, the study was based on construction projects. Muli, Bwisa and Kihoro (2016) study explored stakeholder management role and performance of projects. However that study focused on projects funded by constituency development fund in Kenya. Ong'ong'a (2012) study on LATF showed that there was no Monitoring and Evaluation department in Local Authority Councils to follow project implementation even if an M & E framework as part of strategic management existed and suggested further research on how to strengthen Monitoring and Evaluation in the local authorities to effectively carry out their projects.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Muli, Bwisa and Kihoro (2016) study investigated stakeholder management role and performance of projects funded by constituency development fund in Kenya. The study population as 450 CDF projects and stratified sampling was used. Data was collected from the respondents using questionnaires. The study conclude that management of stakeholders has a positive significance to the performance of projects. However, the study used a cross-sectional research design which is time bound and static and therefore a possibility of different results in different time.

Menoka (2014) did an empirical study which examined the stakeholder engagement and sustainability-related project performance in construction by using mixed methods. Data was collected using semi-structured questionnaires and interview schedules. The study concluded that stakeholder management improves the quality of construction projects through proper decision making and good relationship among parties involved. However, this study focused on construction projects.

Heravi, Coffey and Trigunarysyah (2015) study evaluated stakeholder involvement level in project planning processes of building projects. The study targeted 200 companies where data was collected using questionnaires from the respondents who were directly involved in building residential houses. The study established that stakeholders were fully engaged in projects activities which contributed to better project performance and proposed improvement for further engagement of stakeholders.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Both descriptive and explanatory research design was used. The study targeted three irrigation projects in Kiambu County, Kenya namely; Wamuoro Irrigation Project, Kawira Irrigation Project and Githuito Irrigation Project. The targeted respondents were 35 respondents comprising of 3 managers and 32 employees from the Ministry of agriculture in Kiambu County, Kenya. A census of 35 respondents was carried out. Questionnaires were used for the purpose of collecting primary data. Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were used to analyse data.

5. FINDINGS

The findings on the influence of stakeholder analysis on project performance are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Stakeholder Analysis and Project Performance

| | Mean (M) | Standard Deviation (SD) |
|---|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| Staff involved in monitoring and evaluation process possesses the required skills | 3.82 | 1.642 |
| The employees have laid their loyalty in execution of monitoring and evaluation | 3.85 | 1.374 |
| Staff monitoring and evaluation role and responsibility are clearly indicated when initiating a project | 4.32 | 1.492 |
| The organization ensures an ongoing staff capacity building | 4.76 | 0.431 |
| The organization has enhanced monitoring teams through proper HRM management to ensure that there would be more team work and hence more productivity | 4.06 | 1.369 |
| Aggregate Score | 4.16 | 1.262 |

Source: Survey Data (2018)

From the aggregate scores, stakeholder analysis affect project performance to a very great extent as expressed by a mean score of 4.16 based on the five point likert scale in the questionnaire. The results also indicates that majority of the respondents strongly agreed that the organization ensures an ongoing staff capacity building (M=4.76, SD=0.431) and staff monitoring and evaluation role and responsibility are clearly indicated when initiating a project (M=4.32, SD=1.492). Heravi, Coffey and Trigunarysyah (2015) established that stakeholders were fully engaged in projects activities which contributed to better project performance and proposed improvement for further engagement of stakeholders

In addition, the respondents agreed that the organization has enhanced monitoring teams through proper HRM management to ensure that there would be more team work and hence more productivity (M=4.06, SD=1.369), The employees have laid their loyalty in execution of monitoring and evaluation (M=3.85, SD=1.374) and that Staff involved in monitoring and evaluation process possesses the required skills (M=3.82, SD=1.642). Menoka (2014) study concluded that stakeholder management improves the quality of construction projects through proper decision making and good relationship among parties involved. However, this study focused on construction projects.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Stakeholder analysis has a positive and significant effect on project performance. Effective analysis of stakeholders improves the accuracy of the assessment of the project environment and minimizes fundamental misunderstandings amongst parties involved. It enables project teams to assess a project's riskiness before commencement. The study recommends that proper communication should be done to all the stakeholders in order to ensure all the activities of the projects are understood by each party involved, project expectations are met and all stakeholder have gain a sense of belonging. Proper management of stakeholders improves the quality of the project, cost can be controlled and also the timeline factor can be assessed and improved.

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