

# ASSESSMENT OF EFFECT OF STRATEGIC PLANNING ON THE PERFORMANCE OF CONSTITUENCY DEVELOPMENT FUNDED PROJECTS: A SURVEY OF VIHIGA COUNTY

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this study was to analyze the effect of strategic planning on performance of CDF projects in Vihiga County; the study was supported by the Theory of change whose layout analysis of outcomes of a project deliverables resembles the logical framework model. Descriptive survey design was used. The survey was conducted in Vihiga County, constituencies namely: Emuhaya, Luanda, Hamisi, Sabatia and Vihiga. A complete survey involving all 80 committee members from all the CDF projects was done. Data was collected using predesigned questionnaires. The study received responses from 80 respondents forming a response rate of 100%. Data obtained was cleaned, coded and analyzed using *spss 21* software. Multiple regressions model/analysis was used to determine the relationship between the independent and dependent variable. The results were presented using inferential statistics such as the Pierson correlation coefficients, comparative tables and percentages. Findings emanating from this study will be of great importance to all the direct and indirect stakeholders who play key roles in ensuring the ultimate accomplishment of the devolved fund-CDF and further realization of the Kenya Vision 2030 development blue print. The regression model showed Strategic planning ( $P = 0.119$ ) had no significant influence on the level of project completion and project performance. From the findings it can be concluded that budgetary parameters influence the performance of Constituency development funded projects in Vihiga County.

**Keywords:** strategic planning, CDF projects, logical framework model.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Several research studies have been conducted with the aim of determining the various factors that influence project performance in developing countries. Despite more than a quarter of a century of intensive experience with projects investment, international funding institutions and ministries of less developed countries still report serious problems in project execution. Many are due directly to ineffective planning and management. It has been found out that most developing nations simply do not have adequate institutional capacity or trained personnel to plan and implement projects effectively. In one developing country after another, it has been discovered that a major limitation in implementing projects and programs, and in operating them upon performance, is not financial resources, but administrative capacity. In Nigeria for instance, a study by Agundu (2010) showed that projects performance experiences frequent incidences of wastage and pilfering of resources accounting for about 2.5percent to 15percent of the total budget thus leading to abandoned projects.

Similarly, a study on the causes of Ghana government projects failure was done to determine the most influential (important) factors from contractors, project management practitioners and general public. In view of the effort to ensure that projects succeed, factors such as limited resources and budgetary allocations for monitoring & evaluation, weak linkage between planning, budgeting and monitoring & evaluation, weak demand for and utilization of monitoring and evaluation results and poor data quality, data gaps and inconsistencies presented a challenge to project performance in Ghana (Ahadzie, 2007). Furthermore, as noted by GNDPC (2010), limited resources in terms of budgetary allocations for project performance, monitoring and evaluation posed a barrier to projects performance.

In another study to identify challenges facing projects performance at local government level in South Africa, Lawal & Onohaebi (2010) argued that for any project in the local government to be considered successful, criteria such as time, efficiency, effectiveness and quality delivery should be satisfied. This was essential and beneficial for the relevant bodies to monitor projects, because doing so improves insight concerning project performance status. They noted that The Mfolozi municipality had far mostly focused on developing community halls, small playgrounds. As a result, other kinds of social facilities and basic needs had been excluded from plans, for example, clinics, ICT centers, the provision of clean water, and roads indicating poor project selection criteria which is a key parameter to ensuring beneficiaries benefit from the community projects.

The legal provision of the CDF Act suggests that the fund is essentially a model for decentralization of development planning and performance. Since the introduction of CDF projects in Kenya in 2003, Kenyans have complained that the outcome of such development projects is not fruitful, in most cases the performances of such projects take longer than planned. The end user gets a dubious outcome or the funds are not adequately utilized. As cited out by Kimenyi (2005), other CDF projects are abandoned in the process of performance. CDF progress for the past three years is seen to be consistently performing poorly in some constituencies and there have been persisting questions of whether the fund has met its objective. This shows that the degree to which CDF has met its objectives remains an imperative research topic. Vital components of project performance, project identification, monitoring and evaluation have not fully been managed by the CDF committees in the constituencies and thus most of the projects end up being terminated at early stages of performance. For instance, Lumiti (2008) notes that it has been a challenge in some constituencies to have success in the projects due to lack of a performance plan. This leaves the constituencies with a lot of stalling projects. In most of the stalling projects, the reason given is that more funds are needed. This study seeks to bridge the gap created in the stage of performance of the CDF projects and diagnoses the problem behind the stalled projects.

In Vihiga County for instance, political battles have ensued between politicians accusing others of rushing to open health centers that were constructed by CDF but now have been closed for lack of drugs. This indicates a problem of projects sustainability since the projects are only used to advance political agenda. Recent empirical evidence by Owuor (2013) point out to arrays of challenges faced by CDF among them management, organization structure and Project identification criteria. This CDF projects lack clear management guidelines and frameworks at local levels. In addition, budgetary misappropriations especially during procurement cause stalling of CDF projects in the five constituencies namely: Luanda, Hamisi, Emuhaya, Sabatia and Vihiga. Failure to use PMTT has resulted in lack of data for use during phase by phase monitoring and evaluation of projects deliverables. This ultimately results in time and cost overruns in the short run and overall project failure in the long run. From the CDF mandate aforesaid, CDF projects performance heavily relies on appropriate strategic planning, strict adherence to the project budget in order to avoid cost overruns, adequate analysis and engagement of stakeholders as well as proper utilization of project tools and techniques for effective monitoring and evaluation, all which are either lacking or not fully practiced during CDF projects performance in Vihiga County. Despite the several years of research in CDF projects, no research has ever been conducted in Vihiga County to come up with the answers to the problems above through investigating the how strategic planning affect the performance of CDF projects in Vihiga County. This study is thus geared towards the right direction.

The findings of the study will be important for the public who are generally the end users. They are the people who ensure projects sustainability through owning them and it will assist in understanding the problems that hinder the full performance of their projects. Similarly, it will help in development of the nation in planning and provision of manpower requirements to ensure that the CDF projects are efficiently managed and meet the set objectives. The findings will also ensure positive attitudes to meet the needs of economic development of the nation. This will support a cohesive development agenda as Kenya gears towards achieving the sustainable development goals.

CDF project managers and Implementing teams:

The findings emanating from this study will instill the principles of project management in CDF projects identification and performance in order to ensure a desirable outcome to the common citizens who are the end user. The findings will be important to the relevant stakeholders' ensuring the right measures are taken during the performance phase of CDF projects including relevant monitoring and evaluation practices to ensure the set project objectives are achieved within the set timeframes.

Researchers and scholars

This is because it will add to their knowledge and enable them to be more informed in future research areas as concerning CDF project performance. This is mainly so because the study aims at highlighting factors influencing effective performance of CDF projects. They will also be able to identify further gaps and areas of research.

The study will be conducted in Vihiga County. The sampled respondents will be drawn from the five constituencies which make up Vihiga County namely: Vihiga, Emuhaya, Sabatia, Hamisi and Luanda. This is mainly attributed to the proximity to the researcher's place of work

## 2. STRATEGIC PLANNING AND PROJECT PERFORMANCE

According to Mulwa (2010), strategic planning concerns itself with vision, mission, goals and values of the organization, which the organization will serve, organization role in the community further concerned with resources needed. Strategy performance is the realization of strategy and what the firm does (Håkonsson et al., 2012). This goes hand in hand with similar observations as noted by Elbanna, Thanos, & Colak (2014), that the successful performance of strategic decisions is widely thought to be critical to the achievement of project aims and objectives.

Nevertheless, in spite of the widespread recognition of the critical role that strategic planning and performance success plays in determining organizational achievements amongst public management theorists (Bryson, 2010), there remain few studies that actually examine the antecedents of successful strategy performance in public service organizations (Yang, 2010). Colak (2014) argued that the available literature on strategic planning and performance generally remains patchy and dispersed with little systematic investigation of any of the major themes relating to the performance success. In this article, we seek to cast light on a critical issue running through scholarly debates about strategic management in the performance of key project decisions: the role that formal strategic planning can play in determining strategy performance success. As noted by Bryson et al (2011), strategic planning is a set of concepts, procedures and tools that organizations use when determining their overall strategic direction and the resources required to achieve strategic objectives.

Although aspects of strategic planning are common to all types of organizations, the application of planning processes needs to be carefully tailored to the project sector environment when applied by public service organizations (Bryson et al, 2011). In particular, public managers have to build-in the perspectives and the needs of those stakeholders with whom they must cooperate and collaborate in order to achieve organizational goals (Bryson et al, 2009). Not only is the formal strategic planning undertaken by public service organizations an important indicator of top management's commitment to developing and implementing coherent and comprehensive organizational strategies (Boyne 2010), it is also a key means for promoting inclusive public management in a democratic society (Bryson et al 2009). The more time and effort that is devoted to analyzing the internal and external environments, developing and evaluating strategic options, the more managers may feel confident that the outcome of the process will be a positive one.

According to the advocates of strategic planning in the public sector, effective performance through formal methods, such as business or project plans that identify tasks with targets, is more likely when activities are clearly defined (Boyne, 2010). All of which is to say that one way in which public service organizations can seek to bridge the gap between formulation and performance is to ensure that they establish strong strategic planning procedures. At the same time, performance quality may be improved because managerial involvement facilitates the continual adaptation of strategic plans as they are being implemented ensuring that they are 'fit for purpose'. Several studies of private sector organizations suggest that strategic planning can be enhanced by encouraging managerial participation in the process. Elbanna, Thanos, and Colak (2014), in particular, find that such participation results in improved performance.

Barry (1997) sees strategic planning as a process not done off activity but ongoing or continuous process. It helps stakeholders in an organization or a project determine what they intend to accomplish in a specified period of time. This ensures that employees and other stakeholders; are working towards common goals have established agreement around intended outcomes or results, asses and adjust the organizations direction in response to actions that shape and guide what an organization serves, what it does and why it does it, while a focusing on the future BSSI (2014). The strategic planning thus ensures project performance and sustainability. CDF in Kenya faces various challenges. Especially related to strategic planning for instance there is evidence that there are no satisfactory resources availed to complete the necessary internal and external oversight and audits that are in CDF legislation (GOK, 2009). Second there is no guarantee that ordinary constituencies will be fully knowledgeable and able to act effectively in developing plans for CDF projects. Third the CDF program is subject to cumbersome process of coordination with other government agencies opening a loop hole for fraud and corruption. This is especially significant against broader efforts to decentralization. Further it will be necessary to develop procedures for effective cost planning in support of project performance as it is necessary to address the politicized nature of the CDF funds, in order to ensure project performance regardless of electoral results. In the prevailing scenarios CDF funds are dispersed to various projects without due reference to neither Strategic plans nor the time frame of the project. Nyandemo (2010) the repairs maintenance, rehabilitations are given equal chances like a planned and approved project depending on the political environment and availability of funds therefore. There is need to consider the influence of a Strategic plan to further funding because this is not given the attention it deserves before discernment of the funds, therefore significantly affects the performance of the project.

Copious findings have been brought forward from research by scholars concerning utilization of devolved funds and their effective use in projects performance. This include research by Rutere (2009), Omanga (2010) and Siringi (2010) focusing on the factors influencing projects performance notably procurement, governance and political interference. The main findings included: CDF projects stalled (60 percent), abandoned (20 percent) and completed (10 percent) in 2008/2009 and 2009/2010 financial year. These researches were systematic as required but all of them did not examine other factors which influence the performance of CDF projects such as proper strategic planning. There is need for researchers to focus on the visibility of this factor (strategic planning) in CDF projects as a key performance indicators in order to realize on time, economical and high performance rate of CDF projects in Kenya as scheduled during the project planning where all project activities originates.

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study used a descriptive survey design. According to Best et al (2003) this design enables one to capture all pertinent aspects of a situation while employing a unit study and investigation. The population of study comprised of all 80 CDF committee members in all the constituencies of Vihiga County namely Emuhaya, Hamisi, Sabatia, Vihiga and Luanda. In this research, a sampling frame of 80 CDF committee members from the 5 constituencies was used. In this research, CDF committees' members are targeted because they are solely charged with analysis of projects proposals and allocation of funds as well as overseeing the processes of projects identification, planning, execution, monitoring and evaluation and ultimate closure. Similarly, the CDF committees are a representation of all the population characteristics from the society. According to Nkpa (1997) a sample is a small proportion of a target population. In this study, total census was done on CDF committee members since the total target population was small (80). A census study occurs if the entire population of respondents is very small or it is reasonable to include the entire population (Henry, G. T., 1990). Data was collected by use of a predesigned semi structured questionnaire as well as observations. To test reliability, of the instrument, the questionnaire was piloted using Ikolomani constituency which does not fall within the study area. Analysis of the data was done using spss 21 software. Comparative tables, percentages and pie charts were also used for data analysis and presentation. Inferential statistics were also used-Pierson correlation. Multiple regressions model/analysis was further generated to determine the relationship between independent and dependent variable. The model enables the researcher to predict value of the outcome binary variable given values of the explanatory variables.

### 4. RESULTS OF THE STUDY

80 questionnaires were distributed for feedback on the study. All the 80 were distributed, dully filled and returned for analysis. The response rate was therefore 100 percent. The response rate reflects a strong representation of the target population and hence satisfactory for analyzing the objectives of the study. To determine the reliability of the findings, Cronbach's alpha correlation coefficient was computed at 95% C.I for all the variables under study. It was found to be

0.782, which indicated that the level of internal consistency for the items was 78.2 percent. Male respondents slightly outnumbered female respondents, with males reflecting a 53.8percent while females reflected 46.2percent representation, creating an approximate 7.5percent disparity.

#### 4.1 Extent to which aspects of strategic planning influence CDF projects performance

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	agree	Strongly agree
strategic planning parameters					
The availability of a valid project strategic plan	12.5	17.5	21.3	38.8	10.0
Clearly documented and delineated project goals and forecasts	2.5	16.3	30.0	41.3	10.0
The inclusion of budget in the strategic plan	11.2	18.8	21.4	33.6	15.0
The adherence to the time schedule as in the strategic plan	8.8	22.5	31.3	27.5	10.0
Reflection of monitoring and evaluation in the strategic plan	13.8	18.8	26.2	28.8	12.4
Project team and key stakeholders adequate knowledge of the planning and execution structure and approach	30.0	17.5	16.3	18.8	17.5

From the analyzed research data, only a meager 10.0 percent of the respondents strongly agreed that the availability of a valid project strategic plan influence CDF projects performance while 38.8 agreed. However, 21.3percent of the respondents were not sure while the remaining 12.5 percent strongly disagreed and 17.5 percent disagreed. Similarly, only 10 percent of the respondents agreed to the statement that clearly documented and delineated project goals and forecasts influence projects performance while 41.3 percent agreed. On the contrary, only 2.5 percent strongly disagreed and another 16.3 percent who disagreed. 30percent of the respondents were not sure about the effect of the same parameter on project performance. Although 15 percent strongly agreed and 33.6 percent agreed that the inclusion of budget in the strategic plan influences CDF projects performance, 11.2 percent strongly disagreed while 18.8 disagreed. Only 21.4 percent stated as not being sure. 31.3 percent were not sure that the adherence to the time schedule as in the strategic plan influences CDF projects performance while 27.5 percent agreed. Only 10.0 percent strongly agreed that adherence to the time schedule as in the strategic plan had an influence on CDF projects performance while 8.8 percent strongly disagreed on the same. Analyzing data on reflection of monitoring and evaluation in the strategic plan showed that 26.3 percent of the respondents were not sure; 13.8 percent strongly disagreed, 18.8 percent disagreed while 12.4 percent strongly agreed and 28.8 percent agreed that the parameter influence CDF projects performance. The extent of influence of project team and key stakeholders' adequate knowledge of the planning and execution structure and approach on the CDF projects performance was evaluated. 30 percent strongly disagreed that it has an influence on project performance while 17.5 disagreed. Only 16.3percent of the respondents were not sure while 18.8 percent and 17.5 percent agreed and strongly agreed respectively. These findings can be correlated to those of Bryson et al (2011) where he notes that strategic planning is a set of concepts, procedures and tools that organizations use when determining their overall strategic direction and the resources required to achieve strategic objectives. Strategy performance is the realization of strategy and what the firm does (Håkonsson et al., 2012). This goes hand in hand with similar observations as noted by Elbanna, Thanos, & Colak (2014), that the successful performance of strategic decisions is widely thought to be critical to the achievement of project aims and objectives.

#### 4.2 Pearson correlation

A Pearson correlation was carried out to determine the relationship between the independent variable (i.e. strategic planning) and the dependent variable (i.e. project performance).

		Level of project performance	Strategic planning
Strategic planning	Pearson Correlation	.023	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.838	
	N	80	80

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The influence of strategic planning on CDF projects when correlated with performance of CDF projects in Vihiga County has Pearson Correlation index of 0.023. The interpretation of correlation coefficient shows that strategic planning has no significant influence on performance of CDF projects in Vihiga County because the P value was  $p = 0.838$  or  $P > 0.05$ . The findings of this study were contrary to those of a research by Serrador (2012), who found out that there is a positive significant correlation between project planning and its ultimate success with an average value of an  $R^2 = 0.33$  correlation with efficiency, and an  $R^2 = 0.34$  for overall project success.

#### 4.3 Regression coefficients

Variables in the Equation	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95percent C.I. for EXP(B)	
							Lower	Upper
Strategic planning and project performance	1.332	.665	4.012	1	.119	.264	.072	.972
Constant	5.878	3.493	2.832	1	.092	356.965		

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: Strategic planning

Predictors: Strategic planning ( $X_2$ )

Dependent variable: Level of project performance/project performance.

The following regression analysis was obtained.

$$Y = 5.878 + 1.332X_2 + X_e$$

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The study relied on census sampling method in identifying participant respondents for this research. A census sample of 80 respondents from Vihiga County was selected to participate. There was 100percent response rate; 80 questionnaires were distributed, all duly filled and returned. The results emanating from this research showed that strategic planning have no significance influence on the performance of CDF projects in Vihiga County. The p value was 0.838 which was higher than  $p > 0.05$ . This implies that the null hypothesis was true and thus will not be rejected. Strategic planning has no significant influence on performance of CDF projects in Vihiga County. (Not rejected).

#### 5.1 Recommendations

There is need to release the findings of this study for further scholarly research by other researchers in other counties. From the findings of this study, it's noble to recommend that CDF committees should comprise members well versed in the principles and knowledge of project management practices to match the recommended project output. With them in the team they will be able to provide professional guidance on how to effectively initiate and manage projects up to the performance or closing phase. Similarly, CDF committees need to be aggressive in ensuring all-inclusive efforts to ensure proper strategic planning techniques are in place.

#### 5.2 Areas for Further Research

Similar study on factors influencing performance of CDF in various counties needs to be done in an environment where the selected factors in this study have been actively practiced for a period of time. This will help in ascertaining the validity of the findings obtained in this research. Similarly, different models apart from regression analysis need to be applied to further in-depth understanding of the relationships between the variables being studied.

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