

## Factors Contributing To Project Success among Organizations in Guinea

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**Abstract:** Project Management in Guinea is growing rapidly such as in many developing countries. It's heavily used now in diverse area such as in agriculture, construction, manufacturing, telecoms, IT, education, and so on. This high prevalence of making projects in various sectors determined the increasing importance of effective project management. Managing project rightly at a right time with multiple constraints (human and technical aspect) remains the main challenge for project managers. The relationship concerning successful project and the project success factors are topics of great interest in project management. The paper highlights the most Critical Success Factors (CSFs) through project planning, project top management support and stakeholder involvement in project implementation in Guinea.

**Keywords:** Project, Project Management, Critical Success Factors (CSF), Guinea.

### INTRODUCTION

The issue of successful project management in Guinea is still relevant. Since 2010, many initiatives have been taken over for sustainable infrastructures implementation and development to pull the country towards economic emergence by 2020. The government's post-Ebola strategic recovery program for (2016-2020), which has been prepared by the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the African Development Bank (ADB), puts a particular accent on adequate infrastructures improvement.

Therefore, many major projects have been carried out or are in progress, particularly the kaleta dam with an installed capacity of 240 megawatt, construction of urban roads (Conakry and others cities within the country), construction and renovation of hotels, the renovation and extension of the Donka National Hospital, the renovation and extension of the Autonomic Port of Conakry, etc.

Despite this performance and with the degradation of road transport infrastructures, since it is necessary to know that in Guinea, 95% of the transport is ensured by the road, add the insufficiency of energy production and the lack even see the absence of investments in these sectors for several years, the government's efforts since 2012, remain broadly insignificant compared to the immense needs of the population.

The projects identification, preparation, and appraisal failed to assess accurately the risks associated with many development projects in Guinea [1]. For example, the outcome of Guinea National Seed Project (NSP) in 2010 was unsatisfactory. The project failed to achieve its main goals: institutional and managerial development was negligible, sustainability is unlikely,

and the performance of the project was unsatisfactory while the Borrower's was marginally satisfactory and success was compromised by the Government's failure to replace NSP's weak management and provide counterpart funds in a timely manner.

In this order of thinking, project success factors should be related to project quality and the impact of those factors on the people, as well on the economy. For instance, project success criteria (longer-term outcome) are related to project performance as it was stated by [2]. Generally, people measure project success referring to the famous golden triangle (time, cost and budget), But there are some important project success criteria (PSCs) and factors (PSFs) that have been pointed by project management researchers (Pinto and Slevin, 1987) to display the most valuable factors which can lead efficiently, consistently and effectively to the project success.

More specifically, development projects in Guinea have progressively evolved from so-called social investments (public health, education, village water supply), to the industrial, transformation and heavy infrastructure sectors (roads, ports, energy). To do so, a clear and strong relationship between projects

“objectives” and “costs” must be at the heart of the programming of development projects before their launching.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Project Planning

Project planning is the process of establishing the scope, defining the objectives and steps to obtain sufficient outcome. It is one of the most important of the processes that make up project management, Westerveld [3]. In other words, Baldwin and Bordoli [4] have mentioned that regardless of the definition chosen for project planning, it has the objective of reaching a number of common factors including the delivering of realistic schedules and costs, the completion of a project to defined standards of quality, design criteria, project resources, health and safety, and meeting project stakeholders' expectations.

According to Cleland [5], the connection amongst project planning efforts and project success is based on three project planning aspects (project requirements, project technical specifications, and project management processes or procedures). To develop these aspects, the project manager, contracting office, and the end-users must explore consistently with precise perspectives on project final result [5]. Although, planning does not absolutely ensure the success of a project, but lack of planning could lead to its direct failure. The effective connection between different aspects of project planning leads to project success as displayed from various reviews [6, 7].

The impact of effort invested during project planning, and the degree of success achieved, determine whether or not the project reaches its goal. As we can see, detailed planning will make it possible to better identify risks and uncertainties in any types given project. It should be remind that project plan in advance, cannot overcome all unforeseen events, risks, and deviations. However, having a project plan with threats is still better than getting any plan.

From the previous study reported in this paper, project planning is considered as a systematic procedure which involves a complete definition of works, scope, schedule, and cost requirements and the early identification of potential factors that could affect the project performance [8]. Thus, during the planning phase, project managers must underline as soon as possible the role, responsibility and obligation of all stakeholders involved in the development and implementation of the project.

Many projects experienced cost overrun and thereby exceed initial contract amount in Guinea. The number of public development projects is endless increasing from time to time. But it is becoming more difficult to complete those projects entirely within the allocated cost, budget and time because of inadequate

and ineffective conception and preparation procedures within national planning departments and operating services [9]. The extant theories relevant to this research were studied and investigated, with the aim of identifying and understanding shortcomings in the application of project plan and schedule in practices within the national context. And the main goal of planning is to ensure that tasks and schedule are happened correctly as they were established since from the beginning until the end of the project as stated by Baldwin and Bordoli [10].

### Project Top Management Support (TMS)

The role of TMS in project outcome is crucial and it has been demonstrated as a core critical factor for project success by the recent investigations making difference between project success and project management [6, 11].

The people operating at the top level of management positions must possess a strong leadership and management skills. They have to provide facilitative and supportive working environment for project well implementation [12]. TMS is one of the most powerful and critical project success factors [13, 14]. Projects are used as a mean to achieve organization strategic goals, and top management contributes highly to that success. Consequently, lack of senior management support is considered as one of the primary causes of project failure [13]. The terms senior management, executive management, upper management used in this paper refer all to the top management, as it was mentioned by Basu [10].

The top management support theory developed by Boonstra [15] through exploratory research cited the top management support as a multidimensional construct. Hence, the purpose of this section is to highlight the top management support processes, which highly contribute to project success. To do so, we adapted these dimensions identified by Boonstra [11], for measurement of top management support and we analyzed the effect of top management support on project success. Boonstra [11] identified the following dimensions of top management support: Resource provided structural arrangements, communication, expertise and power.

### Resources Provided

The support from the top management is capital for project leaders or managers in achieving project objectives. If senior management does not support a particular initiative, they won't give sufficient if any resources to do it and that will lessen the project success or else prevent it from going forward [16]. A good organizational structure facilitates better resource allocating and sharing for the project rather than wasting it on a pure specific matrix structure [17, 18].

### **Structural arrangements**

Top management support is a critical element for delivery a successful project. It is the most appropriate tool to meet the users or customers' requirements. For successful delivery of product, services, or result, top management support and commitment are significant throughout the respect of project timing. Top management establishes and performs appropriate processes, procedures, and project structures for achieving project strategic objectives. The basic principles with this dimension are system adaptation, improving organizational effectiveness, effective controlling procedures, implementing organizational change, and strengthening the stakeholder's support and involvement [19].

### **Communication**

Top management should communicate frequently and consistently with the project team on what leadership initiatives, styles, visions, strategic direction, and business goals are going with the project [20]. Top management should regularly communicates with project stakeholders to promote the company wide acceptance of the project, motivate the team, bring everyone to the same thinking, discuss organizational implications and organizational changes, explain potential system changes, and collaborate and support various group of stakeholders [11].

The high executive of the project must develop a strong communication structure with project team [21]. It concerns to provide an appropriate structure, solve problem together, practice strong visual communication, practice conflict management, consider cultural issues, cultivate extraverted qualities, and practice strong written communication.

### **Expertise**

Eventually, the project managers are accountable for project success or failure. Turner and Muller [2] have also indicated that the success of project managers at leading project dependents on their personal skills and competences, particularly their leadership style comprising their motivation and readiness. Project leaders should have both technical and conceptual skills to complete project successfully. At the same time, top management should be committed and willing to provide resources and set requirements. Top management focus on strategic planning goal, so they have to provide support and proper commitment in all project implementation phases.

Accordingly, project Manager should make sure that the team understands the project requirements and goals. Carrying out a good quality of product or deliverables with the required features is under their responsibility. They should be self-motivated and must have strong people management and interpersonal skills and general management skills such as leadership, negotiating, team building, motivating, problem-solving

and mentoring. They should also be an effective communicator [22, 23].

### **Power**

Top management has the power and authority and made financial and human affectation [24]. They use their influence to support the project, protect the team members, facilitate the potential system changes, and identify the needs, roles and responsibilities of project stakeholders [11]. Strong top management support is fundamental for successful projects execution [14, 25].

The previous literature of project management found that the top management support contribute highly to project success [26- 28]. These studies show that top management support is considered to be among project management critical success factors (CSFs). Belassi and Tukel [29] have mentioned that, the most project critical success are quite different through industries, but the top management support is still relevant and it is the most common critical success factors across industry. That means the more top management support is practiced in organizations, the greater the level of project success will be [30, 31]. Have also mentioned that success criteria vary across industries. However, the literature does not provide organizations with a clear list of effective top management support practices to achieve this type of support.

### **Stakeholder Involvement**

This sequence presents the reviews on stakeholder involvement before, during and after in project implementation. And after many search, reviewers found that stakeholder theory is broadly fed by articles from the UK, Australia, USA or Canada and mainly applied in construction and IT sectors [1]. The percentage of stakeholder articles is growing constantly over the time, as well as the number of definitions. The understanding of the stakeholder notion is moving towards a more complex view. We also found that many stakeholder articles are from the project success, project risk, project performance and project strategy contexts, as stakeholders are playing a key role in these project management areas.

The stakeholder approach varies across several industrial sectors, especially construction, manufacturing, mining, IT and other services but it is widely recognized as a one of project success factors. Since decades, many reviews from a growing community of researchers, academics, and practitioners contribute to define the role, place and importance of effective stakeholders' management. Project management previous journals are giving growing importance to stakeholder effective commitment. This started to be evident after the publication of the famous book of Freeman in 1984. After 25 years from its inception, most of researchers have tried to determine in

what extent stakeholders can be considered as an important critical success factor. Hence, the definitions within the previous stakeholder theories evolve from year to year.

As we have seen from the introduction of this section, we can define Stakeholders as individuals or group who either care about or have a vested interest in the project. Looking at Project Management (PM) literature, we can find a considerable number of articles in different fields trying to determine the key project success factors. Within these factors, project management researchers have often mentioned stakeholder involvement as key player in projects success [8, 32]. David Cleland [33] introduced stakeholders and stakeholder management processes notion to the project management by highlighting the importance of early stakeholder identification, classification, analysis, and management approach.

During the last few years, many authors indicated clearly the significant role of stakeholders in projects implementation [34, 35]. Stakeholder management has become a powerful soft skill in projects [36, 37]. Stakeholder theory has really started in the year 1984. At that time, Freeman defined stakeholders as “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization’s objectives” [38]. Freeman's definition is often cited as the classic stakeholder definition [19, 12]. Although this term had been used before, Freeman was the starting point of the stakeholder theory [12].

A stakeholder’s involvement and support depends on the project situation and progress. Stakeholder participation and classification strategies have been developed to assess and understand each stakeholder’s role and responsibility to the project and to determine the most appropriate relationship among them. A stakeholder can be a project user or a customer, one model categories stakeholders based on their relationships with project and their urgency or claim on the project leading to a specific managerial action [39].

#### Use of the stakeholder Salience model

Stakeholder Salience is a very useful addition to stakeholder theory. In addition of providing a model to better identify “who and what counts” it can explain and predict some stakeholder behavior [39] For example people who have a problem that is urgent to them, but don’t have any power or legitimacy are demanding. Those with power and legitimacy are dominant; the team will report to them and defer to their direction.

The Salience concept of stakeholder was proposed by Ronald K. Mitchell, Bradley R. Agle and Donna J. Wood in an article for “The Academy of Management Review” in 1997. The authors proposed a “Theory of Stakeholder Identification and Salience” in

response to the many competing definitions of “stakeholder” and the lack of agreement “Who and What Really Counts” in stakeholder management [39].

Stakeholders have certain attributes that determine their relationship and ability to make claims and impose their will on the project. These are power, legitimacy, proximity and urgency [39, 40]. Various types of definition tend to focus either on power or legitimacy. The power of the organization over a stakeholder and vice versa or the legitimacy of a stakeholder’s claim over on organization power. Solving this equation could help to know whether stakeholders have something at risk or if they have a legal, contractual, moral or financial claim. Following a detailed literature review, Mitchell *et al.* [39] noted that all definitions ignore “urgency”, the degree to which stakeholder claims call for immediate attention and emphasizing on the main one. They proposed a new normative theory of stakeholder identification based on three variables: (Power, legitimacy and urgency).

#### These attributes are defined as follows

- Power: The ability of a stakeholder to influence the action of other stakeholders either positively or negatively or the decision making process of the project. This can be acquired and it can also be lost.
- Legitimacy: The perceived validity of stakeholders’ claim. It can also be defined in terms of stakeholders bearing some risks in relation to the project context which could either be beneficial or detrimental to the project.
- Proximity: This refers to the level of association of the stakeholders with the project. Depending on their proximity, they can have direct involvement on the project or operate remotely from the project.
- Urgency: The degree to which stakeholders’ claim requires immediate attention.

The use of the attribute of legitimacy is not clear and it’s difficult to understand whereas the attribute of proximity is easier to explain and operationalize. Proximity instead of legitimacy could be more helpful [16]. Mitchell *et al.* [39] categorized stakeholders based on whether or not they possess the power to influence project progress, legitimacy to influence project success in relation to other stakeholders and urgency of claim on the project.

#### CONCLUSION

In sum, among the least developed countries, Guinea funds many of its development projects through official development assistance institutions: World Bank, European Union, African Development Bank, etc. So the periods of processing and approving projects funding by international funding agencies are too long and complex. In this context, administrative, institutional and financial requirements and procedures should be clearly defined and agreed by both side

(government and partners). However, it is necessary to note the performance and adequate assessment of projects funded by international funding agencies. They are systematically and carefully prepared and planned before their launching. Financial procedures, control and supervision and other operations are clearly mentioned and reported. Moreover, success criteria have changed considerably and moved from the classic golden triangle's view of time, cost and scope to a large framework which includes benefits for the organization and user satisfaction [41]. As a result, the most important phenomenon which is widely studied and discussed by investigators in project management is project success [13]. Many authors have mentioned a common success factors to any project or any organization. And the senior management support, appropriate project planning through a realistic scheduling and well assessment of risks and the active engagement of stakeholders are ones among them. They are recognized as the most important project success factors for all.

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