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The Project Lifecycle in the Political and Economic Cycles in the Developing World: Case of Zimbabwe

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Abstract

This article is built on a study that investigated a development projects' life cycle in the context of Zimbabwe's political and economic cycles. These projects bring about visible and tangible public goods that can be used as evidence that development is taking place. The study's main goal was to figure out the reasons for the failure of some megaprojects in Zimbabwe within the context of political and economic cycles and provide recommendations on improving that nexus. This study's approach included a desktop review and topic and content analysis for in-depth analysis. As argued in the study findings, numerous projects that have been set to fit in particular political and economic periods, have failed to meet the completion deadlines because of constraints within and beyond the project's control. These include unsustainable use of resources, poor project planning, lack of stakeholder involvement, incompetent project managers, poor inadequate monitoring and evaluation and lack of funding and an unconducive political climate, resulting in the so-called white elephants.

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INTRODUCTION

Across the globe, projects are key building blocks for the development of any nation. They are instruments of policies that demonstrate the impact of the policies at a practical level (Cusworth and Franks, 2013). Once these projects are successfully executed, they result in economic and social good of the nation. In most developing countries, projects are a vehicle for attracting both domestic and foreign investment. As argued by Mathabire and Dzingirayi (2020), projects involve large sums of money that are pumped in with an expectation that they will, in return, produce greater economic gains after their activation. A project is a short-term endeavour having a clear beginning and end point, undertaken to fulfil specific aims and objectives, typically to bring about good change or additional value. For this reason, efforts should be given to successfully deliver the goals and objectives of the project within a specified timeframe and given budget. Since projects are temporary in nature, PMI (2000) notes that the success of the project should be measured in terms of completing the project within the constraints of scope, time, cost, quality, resource and risk as approved between the project managers and senior management.

However, the perceptions of success vary with individuals, the nature of the business and the type of projects and that project success can be categorised from an objective perspective when it considers factors such as cost and quality, while a subjective perspective focuses on stakeholder satisfaction (Zuofa and Ochieng, 2014). A project is regarded as a failure if it does not achieve what was expected by the specifications (Project Smart, 2012). (Zuofa *et al.*, 2014:60) note that, in addition to using traditional indicators that include cost, time and scope, value-added assessment criteria that include project usefulness, value to the organisation and learning potential should be added. Exceeding a project's initial budget is regarded as a failure. Similarly, if a project achieved everything in the detailed project

blueprints, it may still have failed as a result of omitted crucial features that important stakeholders require. It appears unfair but project success and failure are not only about facts or what was provided.

The success of national projects is a benchmark of socio-economic and psycho-political growth and stability (Mathabire *et al.*, 2020). It is further noted that mega projects in developing countries are not always immune to common financial, environmental and legal setbacks and Zimbabwe is an example of an interesting environment under which projects exist (*ibid.*). Projects are exposed to a series of political, economic, social, technological and economic underpinnings. They are also used in political and economic cycles for various reasons, thus declarations are made over these projects in terms of the purpose of their deliverables to communities and regions in the country. Project periods are also defined to suit political cycles such as electoral cycles, hence funds are set aside or disbursed for implementation at the appropriate time. This article seeks to explore why some megaprojects in Zimbabwe fail within the context of political and economic cycles and proffer recommendations for improving that nexus. Using Life Cycle Management (LCM) as a conceptual lens, the study assessed the involvement of various stakeholders and their relationships in the Project Life Cycles (PLC) to determine their influence on the process. The environment within which the project exists may pose challenges to the success of the project. It is prudent to note that project failure can happen at any stage of the PLC, depending on the circumstances of each project. Many projects have failed as a result of not meeting the requisite deadlines or compromised quality of output. However, it is inadequate to just measure the success of a project using the benchmarks of time, cost or quality alone as there are other factors such as the political, social, ecological and technological environment, among others (*ibid.*).

In national development interventions, health, social services and basic infrastructure development are a priority. Legal and policy frameworks have been put in place to ensure the delivery of these development priorities. Current public sector

governance for project execution remains implied, among other things, in the Procurement Act (Chapter 22:14) that creates the State Procurement Board (SPB), which is responsible for regulating and managing the public procurement process in all government ministries, public bodies and local governments by public procurement legislation; the Prevention of Corruption Act (Chapter 9:16) focusing on corruption prevention by establishing a code of behaviour, policing it and criminalising non-compliance; the Public Finance Management Act (Chapter 22:19), that attempts to provide accountability, transparency and effective public resource management and the Joint Venture Act, enacted to regulate and facilitate Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs). The updated Zimbabwean Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets (Chapter 22:23) Act of 2018 emphasises 'procurement' processes, corruption prevention and prudent management of public resources, but is silent on execution, monitoring and regulating, and project closing (Chaza, 2016). In Zimbabwe's legislation, though there are various provisions, they appear to be limited to guidelines or methods on project management and project governance for the public sector, and this study's interpretation is that the implementation of state capital projects has many challenges.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

PLCs are influenced by various factors that can be internal or external to the project. LCM can be used to understand how various stakeholders influence the cycles. LCM is the process of managing products and services throughout their life cycle. To accomplish LCM, all stakeholders in the chain must work together. Policy instruments like product declarations and certifications, can help to support this collaboration. LCM can also be supported by analytical techniques such as Life Cycle Assessment (LCA). The major aim is to enhance LCM in a way that considers this diversity. The main priorities in this field are to improve the link between analytical tools and procedural approaches to link corporate and governmental strategies in the use of communication tools such as various types of labelling, to develop stakeholder communication and participation in given product life cycles, and to create training material and a description of LCM case studies.

The use of life cycle techniques creates numerous societal benefits. Life cycle techniques can assist to avoid issue-shifting that occurs when a problem is not addressed, but (partially) moved (from one stage of the life cycle to another, from one place in the world to another, from this generation to future ones). Secondly, they can assist in identifying points in the life cycle where improvements can be implemented at a lower cost and/or with better impact. Redesigning items to maximise their recycling efficiency is frequently less expensive than improving recycling systems. Additionally, in some circumstances, employing life cycle techniques is just necessary to produce changes. Finally, motivations exist for particular businesses to engage in life cycle techniques, such as improved market conditions, opening new markets or improving company image.

LITERATURE REVIEW

As argued by Wetland (2006), the PLC is a structured methodology whereby all potentially fundable projects are steered. It shows the steps required by project managers to successfully manage a project. A PLC describes how it begins and finishes. A well-defined cycle brings order and structure to the project. To achieve the desired results, a cycle of interrelated activities is undertaken by project implementers.

The stages of the PLC differ based on where the classifications or groups come from. Larson and Gray (2011) define the stages as defining stage, planning stage, executing stage and closing stage. Concurrently, Burke (2001) explains the stages as identification, formulation, appraisal, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Regardless of the kind of project being planned for, every project goes through the same stages, although some stages are combined and others are separated as shown by the definitions.

The first step in the PLC is to identify an issue that a project could address. As argued in Westland (2006), during this stage, a problem or opportunity is identified, leading to the identification of a solution. At this stage, project ideas are conceived to meet the needs or requirements for development. This usually involves a 'needs assessment' that finds out what the community needs are. Only when planners know what

development recipients need, can they develop an effective project. Consultation and involvement of stakeholders should not be neglected at this stage to ensure appropriate identification and increase prospects for successful implementation and, ultimately, sustainability. From the definition stage, the next is planning. The goal of the planning and design stage is to demonstrate project management throughout the remainder of the phases. During this stage, tasks are defined, the order of operations is established and the resources required are determined concerning the various grouped activities. It ensures that a project meets its target audience and can be completed within the project's defined restrictions, which may include time and cost limits (PMI, 2004).

The third stage is the execution or implementation phase. The actions outlined in the Project Management Plan (PMP) are carried out to achieve the project's goal. This includes integrating activities and the coordination of people and other resources to accomplish the intended outcome defined in the PMP (*ibid.*). The monitoring and controlling stage involves primarily an assessment of progress in the project execution phase with the primary objective of detecting execution obstacles and taking corrective action. This stage considers activities that are still being completed, the real cost of doing the tasks, the time it took to complete the jobs, and the effort involved in these tasks.

All of this is compared to the PMP's budgeted cost, projected time, and predicted production rate. This stage also examines the Project Performance Baseline (PPB) in greater detail, assesses risks and implements corrective measures (*ibid.*). The closing stage is the phase in which the completed project is formally turned over to the client and formal acceptance is given. At this stage, tasks across the project are completed and certified, and contracts relevant to the project are concluded and closed off (*ibid.*). While project cycles appear to be very technical on paper, in reality, they involve social processes and power relations that bring out the kind of environment they operate in. Various stakeholders have different interests.

CAUSES OF PROJECT FAILURE

Globally, each country's wealth is measured by the status of its infrastructure. Scholars believe that projects are critical building blocks for every nation's progress (Rwelamila, 2007). National project success is an indicator of socio-economic and psycho-political growth and stability. Furthermore, emerging countries require more developmental national programmes to avoid stagnation or even retreat. Zimbabwe's economic progress has been stifled by decades of economic morass. Over the years, Zimbabwe has received several projects, some of these have been completed while others failed to provide the expected outcomes. While non-implementation of government projects has been discussed several times, one cannot run away from the fact that what defines and characterises how projects are conceptualised and funded, and contracts awarded and implemented, has long ceased to have public or national interest at heart but, rather, personal and self-serving interests.

As argued by Mathanda (2021), the major cause of a nation's development project failure is the failure of monitoring and evaluation systems for national projects. Challenges of pilfering of resources and stalling of work by team members can be experienced if project evaluation is not effectively done. It is easy to get stuck in the details of a project as you are working on it. Monitoring and change control of a project is very essential. Monitoring project goals, both large and small, is essential to clearly understand if the project is on track and moving along efficiently. While the project work is being performed by the project team, it is necessary to monitor progress to ensure that everything is going according to plan. The project control process involves regularly gathering data on project performance, comparing actual performance to planned performance, and taking corrective actions if actual performance is behind planned performance.

Project management is a proactive approach to controlling a project, to ensure that the project objective is achieved even when things do not go according to plan. However, by having constant reviews of a project, the project manager may identify problems early, avoid missing deadlines and waste minimal time and resources. Change of ideas may come into play, hence

project managers must be able to discern and evaluate each idea. so only the best survives the cut hence change management (Leeuwen, 2000). Priorities should be managed so each new idea is evaluated against the original goals and the availability of resources.

In addition, as the world moves forward, many changes take place in all spheres of the economy, especially the way of doing business. Mathanda (2021) is of the view that due to technology, there are new ideas that come in a single day and this is why some project managers fail to deliver. Project managers should invest in project risk management and adapt to new environments to successfully deliver desired goals as they face continuous changes in the developing world.

Another cause of project failure is poor communication. Successful project managers also ensure that all stakeholders have an appreciation of what the project is all about. Relevant stakeholders in development projects can help project managers to meet desired goals in a stipulated timeframe (*ibid.*). A lack of, or poor, communication leads to misunderstanding in the workflow, weak Return on Investment (ROI), and even loss of revenue. In short, the level of communication can spell either the success or failure of a particular project (Dammoleros, 2018). Poor communication, especially in this digital era, is a common cause of project failure. Project managers should make sure that stakeholders and beneficiaries are fully aware of the project's objectives. Some project managers get too excited when they receive donor funds and rush to initiate projects that are far from being relevant to communities. Project managers always remember that projects are done for the people, not just to please the donors (Mathanda, 2021), hence relevance. It is also important to evaluate the relevance of any project before implementation to avoid wastage of resources During project implementation, people should understand how to communicate and use technology available to them.

As argued in a study of big infrastructure departments in South Africa (Rwelamila, 2007), many public-sector Project-Oriented Organisations (POO) are doing badly in terms of project delivery, owing to the use of experienced 'accidental' project managers. It

was, however, proposed that project management be adopted as a core competency, that would need a restructure of the POO management structures and cultures and the establishment of a project manager development programme. Using Ghana as a proxy for African project management policies, a research study carried out by Amponsah (2012) discovered that only 46% of public sector interviewees involved in project implementation had some knowledge of project management techniques, while a staggering 54% did not know project management. Despite the high literacy rate in Nigeria (Eja and Ramesgowda, 2019), most projects suffer from inadequately skilled professionals to execute the project.

Administrative procedures influence project delay or failure among Ghana's Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assembly (or MMDAs). This is followed by issues with the release of cash and resources, which is a primary cause driving project delays or failure among Ghana's MMDAs (Amponsah, 2012; 2014; Ika, 2012; Amade *et al.*, 2015; Damoah, 2015; Okereke, 2017). Changes in government and political meddling are both significant factors in MMDA project delays or failure. The Ofori (2013) and Damoah *et al.* (2015) studies corroborated the effects of government change on project delay or failure. This reflects the nature of Ghana's socio-political climate, which depicts each administration's hesitation to maintain prior government undertakings. Each government strives to launch its initiatives to earn popularity, favour and acceptability among voters in subsequent election cycles (Amponsah, 2012; Ofori, 2006).

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to highlight the main causes of project failure. It may be critical to first define project failure before discussing its causes. Project failure is defined as failure to meet deadlines, failure to fulfil objectives, failure to deliver services and failure to bring about good change. As argued in allAfrica.com (2011), a project fails when it falls short of reaching its initial goals (whether defined in terms of functionality or business edge).

Many projects have failed as a result of poor budgeting or lack of financial resources and corruption. The Zimbabwean government frequently faces budgetary difficulties while implementing projects. For example, the Matabeleland Zambezi Water Project (MZWP) is a national project whose origin can be traced back as far back as 1912, but is yet to be completed. The project was inherited by the First Republic in 1980 to become Matabeleland province's permanent water supplier. This project is at the core of national development in Zimbabwe. If successfully implemented, it is envisaged to spur socio-economic growth by creating a green belt of agricultural projects in the region. The project upon completion should also be able to service areas that include Kadoma, Kwekwe, Gweru and Plumtree (Zhou and Chilunjika, 2013). This project is considered a failure since it failed to accomplish defined objectives within the set timeframe and is now late owing to a lack of financial resources. Zhou and Chilunjika (*ibid.*) go on to assert that the project was dogged by financial constraints since inception as it is capital intensive and clearly shows that the governments, pre- and post-independence, lacked the financial capacity to expedite and complete the project. The estimated project costs continue to escalate with each review from US$600 million in 2007 to around US$1.2 billion in 2009. The first phase of a total of three phases that constitute the project is the construction of the Gwayi-Shangani Dam since 2012 with the support of China International Water and Electric, a Chinese company.

Another example of project failure is the Shavi Dam construction in Zvishavane which began in 2004. The project aimed at supplyling water to the Mabwematema Irrigation Scheme and the local communitiesof Zvishavane communal lands. The contractors were granted permission by Zimbabwe National Water Authority (ZINWA) to commence the project on 18 June 2004. Activities that include site establishment, access roads and excavation of foundations were executed in the same year. However, it is not clear why the project was suspended between October 2004 and December 2007. When the project was resumed, excavation on the river bed had silted and the left bank had been destroyed by nature and had to be rebuilt. However, the contract did not last long as it was officially

suspended on August 11 2008. ZINWA bemoaned the lack of financial resources on their failure to pay for work done (Chiri, 2011). In addition, a misunderstanding between the two parties led to contractors removing equipment from the site without informing the resident engineer.

Corruption and lack of accountability result in the failure of national projects. Several issues that affect the delivery of public sector projects in the African context are cited as, *inter alia* (Chima 2016), corruption through ineffective governance and haphazard control of a given project by the government; lack of skills, that is, absence of training and ignorance of project management knowledge; lack of resources; failure to include the local community in planning; project implementation; operations and no arrangement for maintenance and operation of the project deliverables (Chaza, 2018). The government supports projects through the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) which some legislators divert for personal use. People in the Chikomba West constituency in Mashonaland East Province, for example, were outraged over the alleged misuse of CDFs provided to their legislators for failing to use the funds for the community development of the constituency (Chiripasi, 2011). Chiripasi (*ibid.*) observes that 210 hMembers of Parliament were allocated $50,000 for the development of their constituencies. However, the then Minister of Parliamentary Affairs reported that only 66 of the 210 legislators accounted for the constituency development funds.

Corruption begins by cutting project finances, then diverting cash, and finally, lack of financing for projects, becomes an outcome. The study found that corruption led to project failure in the execution of the Harare Airport Road project that was commissioned and given national project status in 2009. Mathabire and Dzingirayi (2020) state that the project was initially granted to a local company, Augur Investments (with a 70% stake), a company involved in the business of developing properties and infrastructure and the Harare City Council (HCC), through a company called Sunshine Investments. Ironically, the then Harare Town Clerk was reported to be the Director of Sunshine Investments with allegations that the then

Minister of Local Government and Housing had a stake in the same company. This alone indicates corruption as suggested by the Auditor General's Report (2015), whose findings indicated that the project was marred by serious corruption allegations, whereby proper tender procedures were not followed by authorities. As argued in Mathabire *et al.* (2020), Augur Investments failed to deliver on the project despite having received payment for the work to be done, leading to the project being taken over by the Zimbabwe National Road Administration (ZINARA) in 2014. The Auditor General's Report notes that ZINARA was inconsistent in the project implementation which saw fresh funds that had been injected in the project being misappropriated.

Funds were misused through unnecessary procurement and contracting of equipment that was not relevant to the project. The example shows that corruption and lack of transparency lead to project failure in most developing countries like Zimbabwe. Therefore, diligent execution of a project is key its success. Sound financial management is a critical ingredient of the diligent execution of a project and its success. Timely and relevant financial information provides a basis for better decisions, thus speeding the physical progress of the project and the availability of funds, and reducing delays and bottlenecks (Lumby, 1998). Depending on the economic situation, this is why bank policy and procedures require good financial management in bank-funded projects. Essential information is needed by those who manage, implement and supervise projects, including government oversight agencies and financing institutions. The comfort needed by the borrower country, lenders and donor community that funds have been used efficiently and for the purposes intended; and a deterrent to fraud and corruption, since it provides internal controls and the ability to quickly identify unusual occurrences and deviations (Dobie, 2007).

Furthermore, inadequate project planning, control and monitoring is a major source of failure in development projects. As argued in allAfrica.com (2011), the biggest management concerns that organisations encounter include uneven methods of documenting and controlling project activities, difficulty in

project planning and too many projects or investing in an incorrect project. As argued by Adebayo *et al* (2018), project planning, control and monitoring are extremely important to execute successful projects. The social change theory, therefore, has an impact on the project's success with regards to constant review in that culture is dynamic, so the geographical delimitation may also expand or may be reduced, hence may influence the change in the course of a project determining its success or failure.

The majority of the time, there is little or no planning. The lack of skilful planning, scheduling and monitoring in the implementation of projects is a major cause of project failure. As argued in Eja and Ramegowda (2019), the planning shortcomings arise in poor development of objectives and clear-cut roadmaps (project plan) to attaining them. The delivery or success of a project's purpose requires the management of project objectives, project scope and project constraints. However, project objectives are a clear statement of what the project intends to achieve and the objectives must be specific or clearly stated, measurable, agreed upon by both parties, for instance, donors/sponsors/beneficiaries and regulating authorities, realistic or achievable and time-bound. The project plan is the most frequent document that most project managers rush to sponsors to present, without considering the two prior steps that give life to the planning, which are issue analysis and objective analysis. Many practitioners are task-oriented, and they perceive planning as a waste of time and resources, preferring instead to get on with the job. The project team simply tries to "fly it", i.e. executing the task without any preparation at all. As argued in *Herald Online* (2011), failure to produce a strategy means that there can be no true control over the project. Everything is a diversion when there are no plans. Project managers frequently overlook critical early steps that enable project success. The projects are thus embarked upon haphazardly, devoid of structured projections that altogether cause significant failures in most projects (Eja and Ramegowda, 2019).

A case in point is the Jatropha Bio-diesel Project that was launched by the then Governor of the Reserve Bank of

Zimbabwe, Gideon Gono, in 2005 at the height of an economic crisis that saw a lot of fuel service stations running dry across the country. The project was a multimillion-dollar intervention with funds raised locally and abroad. One of the many bio-diesel plants that were erected could produce 70 000 litres of biodiesel every month showing the great magnitude of the project (Mathabire and Dzingirayi, 2020). To show commitment, several stakeholders were involved in the project but Tigere *et al* (2006) noted that theylacked coordination, hence no coordinated implementation of the project. Despite the government's efforts, the project failed due to poor planning. As argued by Mathabire *et al.* (2020), from the onset, on planning for the project, the government should have ensured that the duties and responsibilities of all involved stakeholders were very clear to avoid uncertainties during the course of the project. However, because all this was ignored during the initial planning of the project , it collapsed.

Lack of stakeholder engagement from the initial stage is another cause of project failure. Development practitioners prefer to interact with beneficiaries during the implementation stage while working alone during the preceding phases. One effective way for stakeholders to contribute to the achievement of programme or project objectives is to be directly involved in the planning, organising, monitoring and evaluation process, thus in the formulation of the project and during its life cycle. Monitoring and evaluation reports help stakeholders, partners, donors and others involved in the project to grasp a clear picture of the performance of the project and its real impact on the ground, helping them make evidence-based decisions to improve the current intervention and design better projects in the future. Beneficiaries thus lack ownership of the initiatives, which leads to project failure. When government officials wish to undertake problem analysis, they conduct so-called rural tourism in rural regions, for instance.

Rural tourism refers to the visit by urban professionals to rural regions in pursuit of rural issues. This is generally done in easily accessible regions, such as peri-urban areas. As a result, because other rural regions are more marginalised, some professionals do not access these places. These contribute to

project failures in the sense that projects are performed without the full participation of people throughout the planning stage. For example, Christian Care in Zvishavane distributed money vouchers as a means of poverty reduction, with recipients expected to spend the money on small animals but the people spent the money on items outside the scope of the project. When they gave people the vouchers, they did not involve people in their planning stage, instead, they consulted their beneficiaries only during the implementation (Zvishavane Development Report, 2012). As a result, this project was a failure in the sense that it was not sustainable since people were unaware of the initiative's goal. Those who bought the goats with the money sold the goats to buy food and paid school fees for their children. In this essence, one can argue that a lack of beneficiary participation during the planning stage cause project failure to attain the intended objectives.

Furthermore, contractor-related issues have also surfaced as causes of project failure. Many Zimbabwean contractors are accused of failing to meet performance targets, have limited knowledge about business techniques and are generally blamed when projects fail (Ngendakumana and Kakono 2020). As argued by Eja *et al.* (2019), poor contracting practices linked to poor contracts agreed upon with contractors, contractors' deliberate non-performance on awarded contracts and embezzlement of allocated budgets to contractors, have been subpar delivery of projects, late deliveries and all dreaded abandonment and failure of public projects across the country. The performance of Zimbabwean contractors has become a major concern as observed by Mhlanga (2017). The ineffective selection of contractors is another challenge. Chiri (2011)'s report on the management of dam construction and water supply projects by the ZINWA highlights that the failure to select contractors who met all the requirements, such as qualified personnel, equipment and other amenities, harmed the completion of projects.

The contractors awarded contracts were failing to execute them as expected. These included contractors for Matezva Dam, Bubi-Lupane and the Beitbridge pipeline, among others. Using the Matezva Dam construction as an example, the dam is

located in the Bikita District of Mavingo Province, and the main purpose was to provide water for irrigation in the surrounding community. It was first contracted to C&A Biffen in 1999 with the completion date being set for October 2001. The contractor failed to complete the work due to a lack of appropriate equipment and resources. The contract was refloated and awarded to Kuchi Builders on 5 February 2004. The project was given resources and was supposed to run for a period of 100 days, from February 2004 to May 2004. The contractor was advanced 50% of the project cost to enable him to meet the deadline and buy the equipment required for the speedy completion of the project. However, by 15 March 2004, no equipment had been bought. The equipment on site was continually breaking down and no mechanic was on site to do the repairs. For example, a bulldozer was down for one month from 15 March to 18 April 2004, hampering the progress of work and the contractor was not in a position to hire another one. Again, this contract was terminated by ZINWA due to poor performance by Kuchi Builders. The contracting challenges that contribute to failures have also been linked to nepotism and corruption in awarding contracts in a rather biased manner that has led to high failures. Work should be given on merit but nepotism is rife in Zimbabwe. Other contractors also apply but without full capacity to perform the tasks at hand but those who apply for tenders should be honest about their capacity. Bribery is also another issue that leads to awarding of tenders to unworthy contractors. To get tenders, contractors offer discounts to entice clients but this eventually leads to shortcuts that then compromise the quality of services.

After offering discounts, the contractors then use cheap materials to cut costs and make more profits which is not good practice. Also, in some instances, contracts are awarded to some companies who already had work in progress that they are failing to complete or performing poorly. This means that resources for those contractors are overstretched as they move between projects, hence affecting the completion of the project. For example, Chiri (2011) notes that Multiforce Contractors 21 (Pvt) was awarded the contract for the construction of the Beitbridge pipeline in 2007, yet it was failing to complete the Bubi-Lupane Dam construction that it was awarded in 2003. As

of 5 August 2005, Multiforce was working on five projects that were the Bubi-Lupane Dam, Beitbridge Pipeline, Kamunda Dam, Chiduku Weir Irrigation Scheme and Jekwa Irrigation Scheme. The little resources of the contractor were spread over many projects, thereby reducing the capacity of the contractor to perform on a particular project, and affecting the progress of the projects as equipment was moving between the projects, hence the delay in completing the projects. The examples show that there is no thorough background checks through research and verification of contractors' records, equipment and other requirements to assess their capacity to deliver. These poor contracting practices lead to failure in national projects.

However, among all the factors of project failure described above, poor planning and management is the leading cause of project failure in Zimbabwe. As a result, excellent planning can result in project success. Other causes of project failure can be identified if the key factors are presented by development practitioners. Poor planning results in projects that do not solve people's needs. Furthermore, the capacity to function under triple restrictions is a sign of inadequate planning. One may argue that poor planning and management are major human drivers of project failures in Zimbabwe. As a result, thorough planning is a must to ensure project success. Furthermore, the use of government finances must be monitored and evaluated in government.

DISCUSSION

As argued by Tichapondwa and Tichapondwa (2013:7), "There are two sorts of projects in any situation: those that are improving and those that are dying. "A project that is stalled is dying because it is sick. The health of a project is determined by how it is handled." As argued by Andersen *et al.* (1995), the features of project failure relate to cases where the project scope is not adequately defined, initiatives that fail to gain buy-in from the relevant stakeholders, and a lack of resources. Furthermore, Andersen *et al.* (*ibid.*) cite workplace politics and a lack of effective planning as factors for project failure.

Governments in different regions of the developed and developing worlds are implementing policies to improve the

performance of public project delivery by introducing project management capabilities and project governance within the public sector. The application of such regulations in Zimbabwe will result in savings of hundreds of millions of dollars in infrastructure project implementation. Without it, project failure rates will be high. Opportunistic corruption will accompany this. The announcement by the Zimbabwe's Minister of Finance and Economic Development on the need to implement a suitable Project Management framework and training is a good development. Project Management specialists in Zimbabwe are encouraged to contribute to the creation of such a framework, and the private sector is encouraged to follow suite and embrace Project Management as an important management skill, therefore restoring Zimbabwe's greatness.

Life cycle thinking incorporates current consumption and production systems, avoiding a piecemeal approach. Life cycle techniques prevent problems from migrating from one life cycle stage to the next, from one geographic region to the next, and from one environmental medium to the next. Human needs should be addressed by supplying product and service functions like food, housing and transportation via optimised consumption and production systems that are limited by the capacity of the ecosystem. LCM is an integrated concept for controlling the whole life cycle of products and services to achieve more sustainable consumption and production patterns. The LCA technique is used to evaluate the environmental implications of a product or service system at all phases of its life cycle.

The PLC methods are intended to translate the conclusions of the analytical approaches and aid in the realisation of a life cycle economy. Governmental and business efforts, for example, attempt to achieve (part of) a life cycle economy. Green Procurement policies may be implemented by both governments and organisations to encourage the purchase/consumption of environmentally friendly products or services. Policy tools assist governments and organisations in carrying out these projects. In the case of Green Procurement, governments might utilise a financial instrument (taxes) to encourage the procurement of environmentally friendly items. Procedural tools, also known as

practical life cycle methods, are recommendations for developing and implementing these initiatives.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE DIRECTION

Zimbabwe is one of several nations that engage in mega-projects to attain economic progress. However, as seen above, mega-projects are not doomed to failure. Certain principles must be addressed to reduce the risk of failure or delay in implementing such national developmental programmes. There are several reasons projects fail to fulfil their deadlines, including lack of proper money, corruption, the political climate, misuse of resources and occasional bureaucratic impediments. These components will undoubtedly influence the stated three key project limitations, which are time, money and scope, affecting the overall quality of the project.

The government, through its positive policies, might make it a condition for any indigenous contractor to have proof of certification or have passed the vocational training programme to qualify to tender for any publicly financed projects. No financial aid in the form of government advance mobilisation should be made available to indigenous contractors whose management personnel are not competent in their respective disciplines. This is significant because using these monies will fail, as has been the case in the past. The development of indigenous contractors should be prioritised since it has a high potential for job creation, while also building the critical infrastructure that the country requires. Only by teaching these indigenous contractors project management skills, will they be able to contribute effectively to economic growth. Only when indigenous contractors comprehend project management, will future projects allocated to them be executed within budget, to specification and on schedule. As a result, all stakeholders in the building sector must take a comprehensive approach. More research is needed in Zimbabwe to define project management criteria for success and to determine the existing degree of public sector failure or success.

Policy formulation must be customised to the local context. As a way forward, project implementing institutions should ensure that they have a robust monitoring and evaluation system that

is informed by the National Monitoring and Evaluation Policy of Zimbabwe. A functional monitoring and evaluation system ensures the successful implementation of national projects and ensures effective and efficient use of resources. The monitoring and evaluation system will assist in tracking implementation and informing decision-making. It will also assist in ensuring accountability, thereby reducing corrupt practices for the success of projects.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- To minimise project failures, Zimbabwe's government and organisations must hire competent and qualified individuals to boost efficiency.
- Furthermore, project managers must employ additional project analysis tools, such as the "pestle analysis", which is a method used to identify and analyse primary drivers of change in a strategic or commercial environment (Dcosta, 2011). The application enables an evaluation of the present environment and future adjustments by looking at the political, economic, social, technological, legal and environmental aspects. The assumption is that if the project is better positioned than its rivals, it will be better equipped to adapt to changes. As a result, if the project manager uses this tool, projects are more likely to succeed since it contains crucial aspects that, if not handled properly, can lead to project failure.
- To create sustainable projects, project planning techniques such as the logical framework approach must be implemented (Project Smart, 2012). Such frameworks require the presence of skilled individuals who are conversant with them. The logical framework approach gives room for participatory planning by involving all stakeholders during the planning phase. Participatory planning enhances the sustainability of projects by incorporating all stakeholders, including the marginalised, who are usually the target beneficiaries. The logical framework can enable a common understanding among all stakeholders of what the project entails and a thorough exploration of the causes and effects of the development problem to reduce the risk of project failure.

- To prevent wasting resources, it is critical to analyse the relevance of every project before execution..

Project initiation is a vital step that necessitates extensive study in that project managers should examine previous similar initiatives, keeping in mind that culture differs from time to time and from location to place. For example, while executing comparable projects, a creative project manager cannot repeat techniques. Current fiscal and monetary policies can influence or derail project outcomes. Previous projects should instil an agile mindset in project managers who are trying to adapt to the new scenario.

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