



E-ISSN: 2706-8927
P-ISSN: 2706-8919
www.allstudyjournal.com
IJAAS 2020; 2(3): 571-574
Received: 22-06-2020
Accepted: 26-07-2020

Maria Kabiri
Junior Assistant Teacher of
Economics Faculty University
of Herat-Afghanistan

Investigating the common problems of implementing public projects in government offices in Herat province

Maria Kabiri

Abstract

In today's society, project management knowledge is of great importance due to the increasing expansion of various public and private sector projects. However, using traditional project planning and control solutions has left managers with numerous problems. One of the major challenges for managers in Afghanistan is the lack of resources needed for project allocation, especially the technical and expert forces. On the other hand, accelerating the implementation of projects has become unavoidable due to the increasing needs of the community and time constraints.

This field-based and analytical study seeks to investigate the common problems of implementing public projects in Herat governmental offices.

The results of this study show that in the past, few projects were planned and managed with project management techniques. Today although the field of project management has encompassed and accelerated most projects and the majority of projects in the provincial offices. However, majority of the projects that are designed, planned and implemented in Herat governmental offices still failed to qualitatively satisfy key stakeholders and complete the project within the designated timeframe, which in turn has resulted in liquidity shortage because of unrealistic estimates without considering the relative economic stability situation and government policies.

Keywords: project, project management, utility, project problems

Introduction

Project management knowledge has been one of the most important and widely used areas of management, especially in recent years. Numerous definitions of the project have been expressed so far, project management is any set of activities that have a beginning and an end to be unique, unparalleled. From this definition, we conclude that many things that have happened in people's lives from the past to the present are related to this definition.

Today, all management professionals agree that resource constraints are not the main challenge for managers, but the main issue is the management approach and decision-making method. In addition, the management process has always been directly related to "experience" and throughout history, has played an increasing role in promoting the scientific-practical power of human societies.

Project management knowledge is one of the scientific fields that has recently developed with considerable speed and has shown its position and necessity in the success of projects to project executives and managers. Today, all managers, from low-level and small projects to managers of large and extensive constructions, all need to know and use the principles of project management and techniques, and we are no exception to this rule. Understand the basics and principles of planning and control the project is undeniable for all managers.

Today, we see that in any scientific discussion in any educational program, while presenting the discussion, usually the participants, instead of criticizing and questioning the main scientific content, criticize and do not have a suitable platform for implementing the principles and point to examples that show the implementation of many projects are without considering scientific principles. The most common problems we face in project management are cost, time and quality management; projects are prioritized according to the importance of each of these factors in project management.

Importance and necessity of research: Today, most of the projects that are planned and implemented in government offices, a large number of these projects cannot be completed

Corresponding Author:
Maria Kabiri
Junior Assistant Teacher of
Economics Faculty University
of Herat-Afghanistan

According to the time specified in the plan and usually face lack of liquidity in the estimates. Therefore, it is necessary to identify problems and submit solutions and suggestions to the relevant departments according to the scope of problems and the effectiveness of the solutions to make maximum use of the facilities available in the offices and increase the productivity and effectiveness of that reassures.

Aim of the study: The purpose of this study is to investigate the common problems of implementing public projects in government offices in Herat province.

Research Questions: The questions that have been tried in this research to find a relative answer are: What are the biggest common problems of project implementation in government offices? From what dimensions can common problems in projects be examined? Why most projects have (end up) delivery delays with low quality, time and costs more than estimated?

Statistical population of the research (Sample size/study Area): In this research, according to the subject of "Study of common problems of implementation of public projects in government offices of Herat city", the research field is the General Office of Harirod Murghab Herat River Basins.

The General Directorate of Harirod Murghab River Basin is one of the five basins of the country, including the second unit of the Ministry of Energy and Water. Activities of this department is at the level of the zone and has 4 sub-departments in Farah, Ghor, Herat and Badghis provinces. This department has three separate departments, Plan Department, Water Affairs Department and Energy Affairs Department. Development projects by Plan Department, budget projects Ordinary is designed and implemented by the Department of Water Affairs and Energy Projects, it means that projects using wind energy, solar energy, biomass energy. The Project Cohesion Directorate in the west of the country has designed and implemented many projects with the financial assistance of the World Bank. Management Unit of the projects has designed and implemented more than \$ 9 million in various projects in the past three years with the help of Islamic Bank. The department is working on major projects: the construction of the Pashdan dam in Herat, the water section dam in Farah and the Pozeh Lech dam in Ghor province.

Data Analysis Method: The information contained in this research has been collected and analysed by field method and library method. In this research, more attempts have been made to use the qualitative analysis method and the research has a more descriptive aspect. Information was collected through the distribution of a 20-item questionnaire and was collected from the managers of 5 important projects of the Maritime Department based on a range of 5 optional qualitative methods and percentage of control determined, and analysed through Excel program based on tables and graphs.

Literature Review

Concept of the project: Before addressing the issues related to the problems of projects, first the concept of the project should be carefully defined so that it is clear what category of activities and actions can be called a project. As a comprehensive understanding of the descriptions of the

concept of project management by project management experts and practitioners, it reflects the fact that; The project is considered to be a set of activities that have started and ended, based on known needs so that this set of activities is not generally repetitive. In this way, many of the actions that take place in people's lives will be a kind of project. Because first they have a beginning and an end, and secondly, they are not repetitive. With this perception of projects today, it mostly includes research projects, infrastructure projects, software projects, and IT projects.

Literary concepts of project Meaning: Project "Project" is originally from the Latin word Projectum, which is also derived from the word Projaicer. The word is a combination of the words Pro and Jacere, which mean to throw (do) it before from now on Hence project phrase is from: A leap into the future, with a plan that has already been prepared. In other words, in the movement of a project towards the future, in addition to the existence of a kind of compulsion to move, which is due to the pressure of competitive conditions, there will be uncertainty of the place of execution due to lack of anticipation of future events. In fact, the existence of such an interpretation of a project implies the existence of risk in the project (Verzuh, 2011, P18) [5].

Project Definition: A project is a set of complex and unique actions and operations that are logical activities and are interconnected. In order to achieve the predetermined goal or goals, in the framework of the pre-planned schedule and budgeting, the quality level is specified, which is implemented under the supervision of a specific management and executive organization. All project management experts believe in the existence of three distinct features in the scientific definitions of all types of projects. These three features are:

To be Temporary: The temporary nature of a project reflects the fact that every project has a beginning and an end clearly. In other words, the project implementation process is not a repetitive and continuous process, and in the end it must be completed and include a specific result. The fact that a project is temporary does not mean that the project execution time is short.

To be Unique: The uniqueness of a project reflects the fact that the end result of the project is a product or service that does not already exist and is presented for the first time. (The basis of the project plan is a known need).

To be New: The novelty of a project's product is given due to its economic justification. In a process that is new in nature, due to lack of previous experience, new methods and techniques must be used to achieve the goals. Therefore, there should be a special integration between the proposed methods so that this integration cannot be achieved unless the exact characteristics of the product are specified (Yazdan, Keshtiban, 1386: 6) [4].

Project life stages: In general, in each project, four different and distinct stages can be defined, which are: (Shirmohammadi, 1384: 5).

1. Design stage (recognition and start or needs assessment stage)

2. Planning stage (determining the ways of meeting the needs)
3. Execution stage (practical implementation of the plan)
4. Completion stage (project delivery)

Project Management: Project management is a set of tools, techniques and knowledge that, when used, will help you improve your project results. Project management is defined by PMBOK as follows. “Applying knowledge, skills, tools and methods to do project activities In order to meet the needs and expectations of the elements who want the project”, in other words, the project manager must do whatever is necessary to do the project. Of course, to the extent required to perform the task and work. This definition clearly states that the purpose of the project is to meet the needs and expectations of the demanding elements. Therefore, for the project manager to know the demanding elements (along with the customer) and their needs and expectations is a basic need. In order to finally define the purpose of the project and the scope of work and its objectives.

This elements in a project are provided by the project manager. The project management structure typically includes the following.

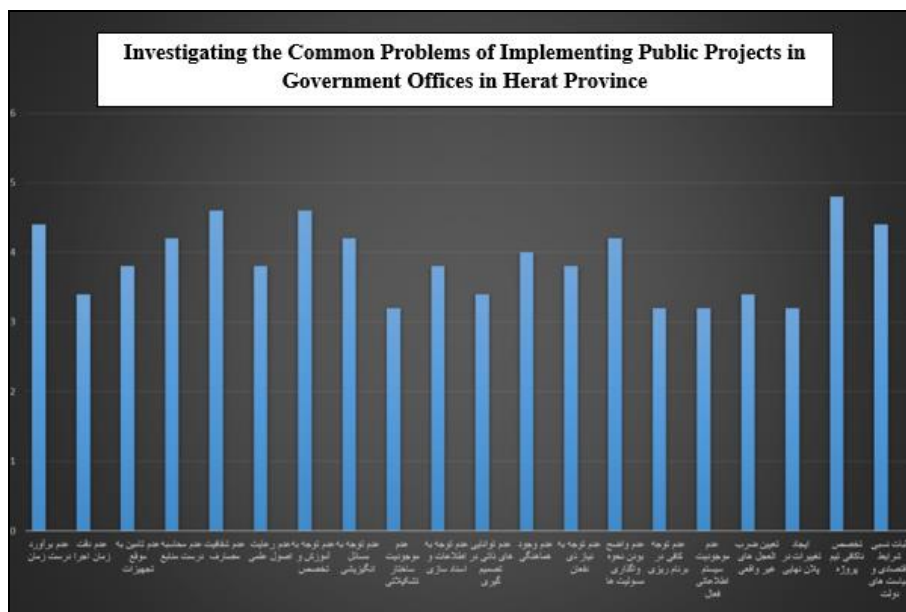
- Identify requirements
- Attention to the needs, diverse expectations of stakeholders, when the project is planned and implemented.
- Establishing a balance between the competing constraints of the project, including the following materials, but it’s not only to these cases (Shahroudi, 2004: 24).

Research findings

Common problems of project implementation: Based on the library and field studies conducted in this research, the main common problems in the implementation of utility projects with respect to three important components are

time, consumption and quality in projects, which are detailed more, can be categorized as follows:

1. Lack of accurate estimation of project implementation time
2. Inaccuracy in determining the time of projects
3. Lack of timely supply of equipment required for projects
4. Lack of accurate estimation and calculation of resources required in projects
5. Lack of transparency in approving project expenditures
6. Non-observance of scientific principles in project management
7. Lack of attention to training and expertise of human resources in projects
8. Lack of attention to the motivational issues of human resources in projects
9. Lack of proper organizational structure in projects
10. Lack of attention to gathering information and documenting, especially the implementation of projects
11. Inherent inability to make decisions in the number of project managers
12. Lack of proper coordination between project stakeholders
13. Lack of attention to the needs of key stakeholders during project implementation
14. Lack of clarity on how to delegate responsibilities in projects
15. Lack of sufficient attention in planning and strengthening offices within the project organization
16. Lack of active information system
17. Determining unrealistic deadlines
18. Make changes in the final plans of projects
19. Insufficient expertise of the project team
20. Relative stability of economic conditions and government policies in the implementation of projects in government offices in Herat can be mentioned.



Graph 1: The effectiveness of the identified problems in the implementation of projects. Based on 5 selected projects of Harirod River Department

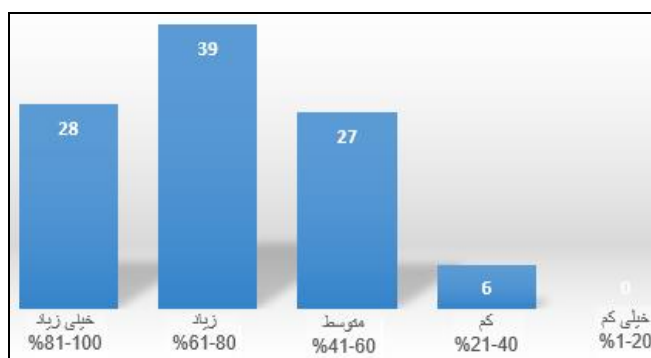
According to the basic variables of time, cost and quality of the project, the studied problems were summarized in the form of 20 components and 5 important managers and officials of the mentioned projects were surveyed in

connection with 5 important projects of Harirod Murghab River Department. The results obtained after graphic analysis, shows that the quality variable of projects is the main factor in the non-compliance of the quality standard

level, which is very high between 81-100% percent controls, which is based on the most obvious component, namely non-expert of project team, lack of attention to basic and specialized training of staff, relative stability of economic and political conditions and lack of transparency in cost estimation have been investigated. Similarly, the variable of expenditures in the second ranking with control of 81-60% percent, ie to a large extent based on the components of not calculating resources correctly, not estimating time correctly, not paying attention to motivational issues and not observing scientific principles of project management has been identified. The third factor is the time variable, which is based on the components, inaccuracy in determining the time of activities, setting non-deadlines.

Real and timely supply of equipment has been identified between the intervals of 40-40%, the average impact on the implementation of projects.

The project



Graph 2: The extent to which common problems affect public utility projects

Considering the main common problems in implementing the charitable projects of the General Directorate of Harirod Murghab River Basin, which are already listed in Graph 1, and based on the survey of 5 major parts of this directorate shown in Graph 2, we can analyse that the identified problems of this research is to implement projects to a large extent, which is between 61-80% percent in the implementation of High-ranking projects are highly effective.

Conclusion

In this article, attention is paid to the challenges of project implementation in Herat government offices, it should be noted that these challenges are not limited to what has been said, and what the project manager faces during the project implementation period is more than this. However, the generality of the challenges mentioned by the managers of the 5 projects under investigation has been confirmed. Currently, project managers in Herat government offices face numerous difficulties in implementing the principles of each of the basic variables of project management (time, cost and quality). In the field of project quality management, problems such as non-compliance with scientific principles and project quality standards, lack of appropriate organizational structure, lack of attention to training, expertise and motivational issues, lack of attention to documenting the project can be considered as the most common problems this section observed. In discussing project time management, challenges such as lack of Correct estimation of project execution time, lack of time to supply

the equipment, inaccuracy in scheduling project activities and setting unrealistic deadlines can be mentioned. Problems related to cost management can be in the form of activities such as, lack of accurate calculation in estimates and calculation of project resources, lack of transparency in estimates and the position of people in terms of accountability, inaccuracy in approving plans based on resources available in projects Can be considered as the main effective challenges of implementing public utility projects. Eventually It can be stated that the majority of project managers of government offices in Herat province have not been able to provide quality satisfaction to key stakeholders and complete the relevant projects on time, which in turn has led to lack of liquidity and ultimately without considering the relative stability of conditions. The economy and government policies have caused many delays and damage to projects.

Recommendations

The most important factor that has prolonged the projects of government offices in Herat, is the lack of a correct definition for projects and the inability to predict the continuous changes that occur during the project life cycle, so it is good for project managers in our country to think more and more accurately about effective solutions to challenges in their project organization. In general, the following items are considered as special suggestions:

Managers predict predictable change and make a reasonable connection between the effects of each change and the available alternatives.

The purpose of the project should be clear to the team so that they can choose the appropriate solution between the existing goals and conditions.

Establish communication and establish a communication system by holding meetings, reports and plans tailored to the project.

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