

Original Research Article

Role of strategic planning in project management in Kenya: A case of Constituency Development Fund (CDF) projects in Kakamega County, Kenya

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Abstract

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The objective of this study was to determine the role of strategic planning as a monitoring and evaluation tool in the management of projects. The study was carried out in Kakamega County which has 12 constituencies. Four constituencies were randomly sampled, from where five (5) CDF funded projects were purposively identified from each of the constituencies. Large projects that were targeted to cost over one million Kenya shillings were considered for sampling. Five committee members from each of the CDF projects (including chairmen and heads of institutions) were purposively sampled. Other respondents were purposively sampled from Ministries of works and health, community leaders and other stakeholders. Consequently, a total of 120 respondents were targeted out of which 106 respondents availed the data which were collected using questionnaires, document analysis, checklists and interview schedules. Data was analysed both descriptively and inferentially, using of SPSS and Microsoft Excel 2013® suites. Findings indicated that strategic plans were very crucial components of project management. The study concluded that there is need to incorporate strategic plans in project management. Respondents expressed that good strategic plans should be worked out and adhered to during project implementation and completion. Formulation of strategic plans should therefore be spearheaded by constituency stake holders. This study's outcomes show that those charged with the responsibility of carrying out project monitoring and evaluation (M and E) should be empowered with appropriate knowledge and skills for effective utilization of this tool.

Key words: Budget, Evaluation, Harambee and CDF, Logical framework, Monitoring, Project development, Stakeholders analysis, Strategic planning

Abbreviations and Acronyms

CDF: Constituency Development Fund; **ICLEI:** International Council for Local Environment Initiative; **KIIs:** Key Informant Interviews; **KSH:** Kenya shillings; **LFA:** Logical Framework Approach; **M:** Kenya shillings in millions; **M & E:** Monitoring and Evaluation; **NACOSTI:** National Commission of Science, Technology and Innovation; **NIMES:** National Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation System; **NORAD:** North American Aerospace Defense Command; **PMC:** Project Management Committee; **PM world:** Project Management World; **USAID:** United States in a NATION AID; **UN:** United Nations; **UNDP:** United Nation Development Programme; **WBG:** World Bank Group; X^2 : Chi square

INTRODUCTION

The Constituency Development Fund (CDF) was established through an act of parliament, CDF ACT in 2003 and reviewed in 2013. The main objective was to

put in place the legal framework for devolving national resources for development to community level. This entails funding development activities based on

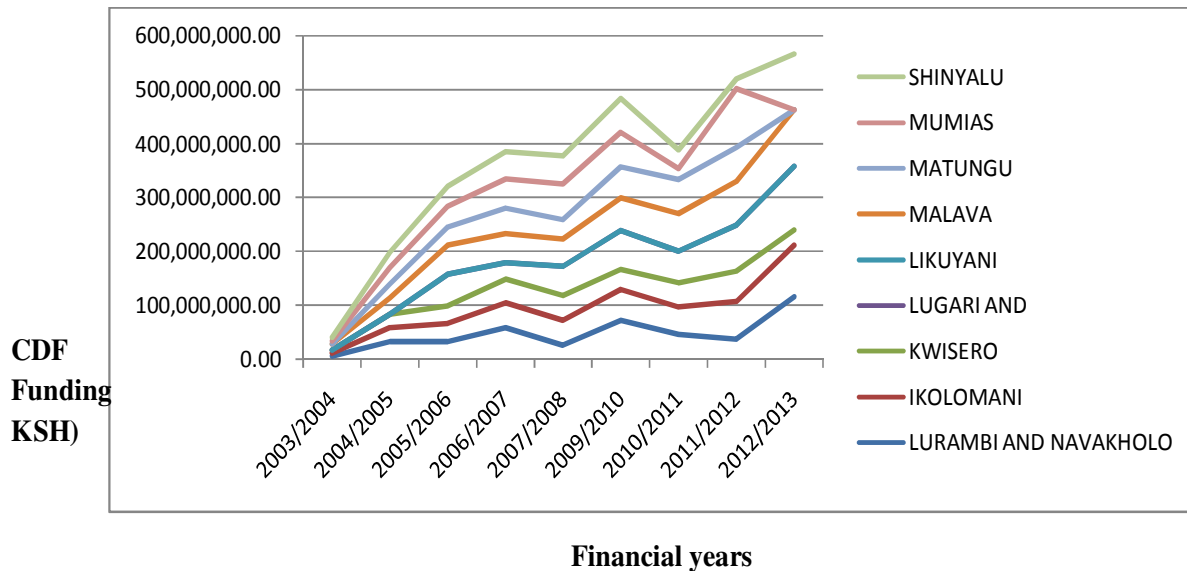


Figure 1. Trends in CDF funding of the constituencies in Kakamega county since 2003: Source CDF office

constituencies as the focal point. It was envisioned this approach would spur economic development at grassroots level. That would result in overall national and socio economic growth as local communities would be empowered to participate in development activities. Wabwire, (2010), observed that the implementation of the devolved government system to county levels as stipulated by the 2010 reviewed Kenyan constitution strengthened the strategic role of CDF in the devolved county governments. Due to the foregoing strategic role of CDF, there has been a steady increase in the allocation of the CDF funds to all the constituencies in Kenya as indicated in Table 1 for those in Kakamega county, the site of this study (Figure 1).

In spite of the foregoing, there have been a lot of challenges in the utilization of this resource which has negated the benefits of CDF activities. Amongst the challenges include inappropriate implementation of the projects resulting in some projects not being completed as planned and others not being completed at all. This is mainly attributable to the none utilization of M and E tools in project implementation (Mwanzia, 2004). According to Wabwire, (2010), there is need to establish a process that will enhance the impact of Monitoring and Evaluation on CDF projects in Kakamega County. This study therefore delved into the role of strategic planning as an M and E tool for effective planning, implementation, and completion of CDF projects.

Objective

The study objective was to establish the role of strategic plan in project management.

Research hypotheses

In order to answer the research question, the study tested for the following hypotheses

- (i) Null hypothesis - H_0 : The application of strategic plan does not influence the level of project management.
- (ii) Alternative hypothesis - H_a : application of strategic plan influences the level of project management.

Literature Review

Project monitoring is the continuous assessment of project implementation in relation to design schedules, and the use of inputs, infrastructure, and services by project beneficiaries (Simon *et al.*, 1986). Project evaluation is the periodic assessment of a project's relevance, performance, efficiency, and impact both expected and unexpected in relation to stated objectives (Simon *et al.*, 1996). Project monitoring and evaluation (M and E) provide managers and stakeholders with continuous feedback on implementation, interim and terminal evaluations. These are conducted on projects as ways to identify necessary adjustments in project design and to assess the projects' effects and their potential completion (Paul *et al.*, 2005). The efficient and informed utilization of project monitoring and evaluation tools greatly affects project outcomes and therefore it is important to analyse their utilization in various projects. This in turn informs both project managers and stakeholders on areas of improvement for the achievement of better outcomes and completion. According to WBR (1996), there are four main types of M&E tools which comprising; Strategic Plan, Logical

Framework, Budget and Stakeholders Analysis.

This study focused on the role of a strategic plan on project completion. According to Bryson (1995), strategic planning is an organization management activity used to set priorities, focus energy and resources strengthen operations. Strategic planning involves identification of most important options towards the realization of a practical vision (goal). A strategy is seen as the approach to be used step by step by an organization to most effectively accomplish its mission towards a practical vision (Mulwa, 2010). It is a set a procedures and tools designed to help leader's managers and planners think and act strategically.

Barry (1997) observes that strategic planning is a process not done off activity, but an 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. Strategic planning is an organization management activity that is used to set priorities, focus energy and resources strengthen operations. This ensures that employees and other stakeholders; (i) are working towards common goals (ii) have established agreement around intended outcomes or results, (iii) 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 completion and sustainability.

For example UNOPS, (2013) derives focus through its engagement acceptance process which is also a central component of the organization risk management system. The process assures that UNOPS only accepts projects that emphasize UNOPS strategic plan and relevant UN branches. Specifically this assessment checks that new projects offer effective contributions to national capacity development and incorporate the three dimensions of sustainability that is; (i) sustainable project management (ii) sustainable infrastructure (iii) and sustainable procurement. A case in point is where they ensure that all projects are screened and approved using minimum sustainability standards with higher sustainability targets negotiated wherever possible. It should be noted that project sustainability is not given the weight if deserved as an important aspect for projects management (Paul *et al.*, 2005).

According to Schilder (1997), strategic plan development requires consideration and articulation of values and priorities; the plan should reflect views expressed by all those involved in the process. States that have successfully designed and adopted plans included all those interested in the strategic planning process. For example, processes have been developed to involve programme managers, providers, legislators, and the public in the articulation of visions (Kumwar, *et al.*, 2004). Some states hold public meetings; others have

coupled meetings of policymakers with public opinion polls asking about the core values of citizens.

There are challenges facing CDF projects in Kenya. For instance, there is evidence that there are not satisfactory resources availed to complete the necessary internal and external oversight and audits which form part of the strategic planning yet it is in the 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 programme is subject to cumbersome process of coordination with other government agencies and is infiltrated with a lot of fraud and corruption. Consequently, there is need to develop procedures for effective cost planning in support of project implementation as it is necessary to address the politicized nature of the CDF funds. This is envisaged will ensure project completion regardless of the political leadership in place. In the prevailing scenarios CDF funds are dispersed to various projects without due referenced to neither strategic plans nor the time frame of the project (Baskin, 2010). Due to the foregoing, there is need to consider the role of a strategic plan amongst other tools of M and E in project management.

Study site

The study was conducted in Kakamega county, comprised of twelve constituencies; namely Kakamega North, Kakamega Central, Kakamega South, Kakamega East, Matete, Likuyani, Lugari, Navakholo, Butere Matungu, Mumias, Khwisero and Navakholo. It borders AusinGishu and Nandi in East, Trans- Nzoia to the North East, Siaya to the south. Siaya to the south west and Busia to the west as detailed on Figure 2 (GoK, 2008)

Sampling procedure

The study utilized both probabilistic and non-probabilistic sampling. Random sampling was used to arrive at a sample size of four constituencies.

The projects comprised mainly the; health facilities, community water projects, administration offices and education institutions. Five projects were purposely sampled from each of the four constituencies. Each project was managed by a committee of 8 members. According to Yamen, 1967, the preferred number of committee members was five hence each project availed five members. This translated to a sample size of $5 \times 4 \times 5 = 100$ respondents. Other respondents were purposely sampled from: Ministries of Works, Education, and Health, totaling 20 respondents. Overall total of the

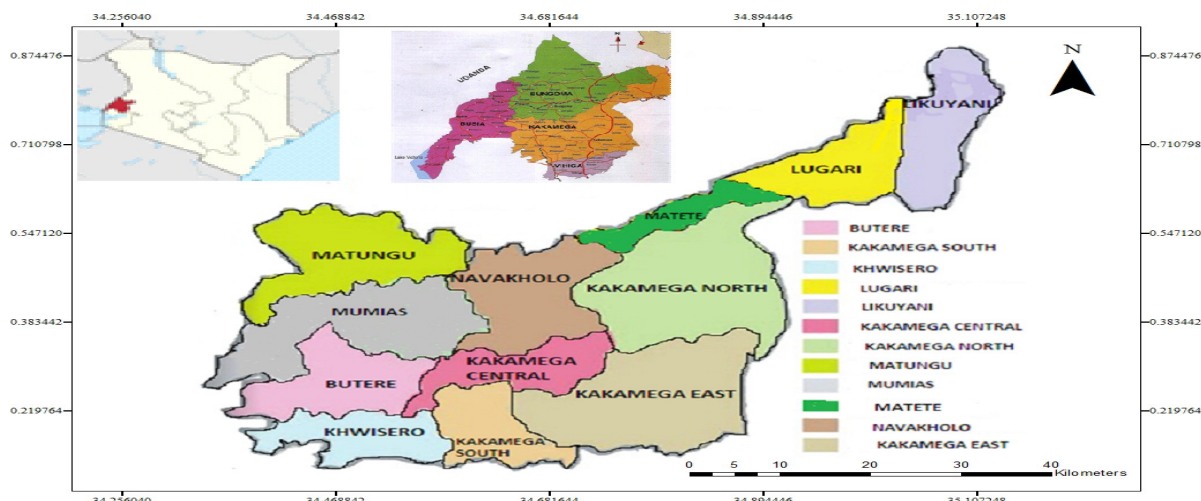


Figure 2. Appendix A: Map of Kakamega County: Source, Wikipedia

Table 1. Constituencies in the study.

Navakholo	Lurambi	Butere	Malava
Project 1 Namirama Girls, computer centre. Est. time 2008 – 2013, budget 28m	Project 1 Muslim Secondary School. Twin lab. Est. time 2012-2014, budget 31m	Project 1 Buchenya Girls. classrooms Est. time 2010-2011 budget 1.9m	Project 1 Bukhakunga Secondary School. classrooms Est. time 2012-2013. budget 1.4m.
Project 2 Chebuyusi High School. Resource centre Est. time 2008 – 2013 budget 18m	Project 2 Ikonyero Secondary School Est. time 2012-2013, tuition block, budget 18m	Project 2 Buchenya Water Project Est. time 2004-2013, budget 6.4m	Project 2 Emayuke Health Dispensary Est. time 2008-2009 budget 2.5m.
Project 3 Ingotse High School, library Est. time 2008 – 2013 budget 29m	Project 3 Emukaba AP Camp Est. time 2010 -2011, budget 1.6m.	Project 3 Butere Polytechnic Est. time 2010-2011 budget 2m.	Project 3 Samitsi Water Project Est. time 2008-2009, budget 2m
Project 4 Shinoi High School. Multipurpose & Dinning hall. Est. time 2012-2013 budget 21m	Project 4 Sakali health Mayakalo dispensary Est. time 2011-2012, budget 4m.	Project 4 Shitsitswi Health Centre Est. times 2008 – 2009 budget 4.5m.	Project 4 Muting'ong'o Health dispensary Est. time 2010-2011, budget 12m
Project 5 Ematia Health Dispensary Est. time 2006-2007, budget 4.5m	Project 5 Jinja corner AP Camp. Est. time 2011- 2012, budget 4m	Project 5 Shisaba Health Dispensary Est. time 2007 -2008, budget 4.5m.	Project 5 Embiakalo Health Dispensary Est. time 2012-2013, budget 11m

respondents was 120. Details of specific projects used are as indicated in Table 1 hereunder.

check lists, questionnaire, interview schedules and document analysis.

Data collection instruments

Both primary and secondary data was collected by use of

Primary data

Primary data of both qualitative and qualitative type was

collected by the researcher through observation checklist, interview schedules and questionnaire's. Interview schedules were used to interview key informants. The respondents responded to questions tailored to address their specific specialized areas. Such respondents comprised of Committee members, Ministry officials, CDF officers and heads of institutions community leaders. The researcher also made observation on the situation at the project sites and established position image with respondents in order to set deeper information on the topic. Using this approach produced good results.

Secondary data

Document analysis and secondary data was used in addition to primary data. Main sources of data such data were minutes of the committees, budgetary report, architectural plans amongst others. Document analysis was very essentials to display the gap between the intended purpose and actual outcome.

Data analysis

Data was analysed both descriptively and inferentially. Descriptive analysis included computation of means, relations, coordination and correlations between dependent and independent variables. Chi square (X^2) was used to test hypothesis. i.e whether there was correlation between completion levels of various projects and extent of utilization of strategic plans as an M and E tool. This was because quantitative data was of non-parametric nature. Chi square (X^2) was calculated using the formula below;

$$X^2 = \sum_{i=1}^n \frac{(O_i - E_i)^2}{E_i} \quad \text{Equation 3.2}$$

O - Observed

E – Expected

Significance was considered at 5% level.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A chi –Square test was done to test whether there was significant positive influence of strategic plans on the project completion and results indicated in the Table2

Table 2. Chi –Square test results

	The extent to which completion level of project has been influenced by strategic plan
Chi-Square	39.538 ^a
df	4
Asymp. Sig.	.000

a) 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 10.4.

b) 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 13.0.

From the table the X^2 values worked are highly significant and shown that there was significant positive influence of strategic plans on the project completion.

Operationalization of variables in respectof the objective of study

The responses from committee members addressing the main components embodied in typical strategic plan on extend to which strategic plan influenced project completion are summarized in Table 3

Committee members were interviewed about the influence of strategic plan on project completion they were given an opportunity to select from lowest scale of 'very low' to highest rating of 'very high'. Their respondents to various components of a typical strategic plan are shown in Table 4 and discussed hereunder.

Inclusion of budget in the Strategic Plan

A total of 88.9% percent expressed that inclusion of the budget in the strategic plan had high influence on project completion. This was further supported from responses from KIs comprised of heads on institutions and Ministry officials. It was noted that projects that did not have comprehensive budgets resulted in irregular and underfunding hence ended up stalling. Political influence was a critical intervening factor. It emerged that the respondents would prefer an all-inclusive budget that goes beyond the materials required for the project alone.

Adherence to the time line and budget schedules

About 72.2% observed that there was need to adhere to the time schedule during project implementation. This they observed impacted on the completion time. They expressed that when the project takes longer than it was initially scheduled it becomes very expensive by the time of completion. Implementation of a project should reflect time lines and budget estimate so that way forward can be discussed by stakeholders. If implementation of a project is not related to the plan in most cases it was haphazard in nature and leaves stakeholder without a tool to challenge neither contractor nor CDF management for regular funding. Consequently 51.9% preferred very high scale. They underscored the need for making use of the strategic plan all the time. As result accountability M&E can be systematically executed.

Table 3. Extend to which strategic plan influenced project completion

Objective	Independent variable	Dependent variable	Indicators	Scale	Data analysis
Establish extent to which use of strategic plan influenced level of project completion.	Use of strategic plan	Level of project completion	Adherence to plans detailed in Table 4 operational project	Ordinal correlation ratio	Descriptive analysis correlation

Table 4. Strategic plan findings from committee members

Percentages and frequency (f).	Very low		Low		Average		High		Very high	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Inclusion of Budget in the Strategic Plan.	3	5.6	2	3.7	1	1.9	19	35.2	29	53.7
Adherence to the time schedule	1	1.9	8	14.8	6	11.1	14	25.9	25	46.3
Inclusion of Monitoring & Evaluation in Strategic Plan.	1	1.9	3	5.6	5	9.3	17	31.5	28	51.9
Adherence to Project management chart	1	1.9	2	3.7	2	3.7	21	38.9	28	51.9
Stakeholders analysis and report	0		4	7.4	3	5.6	19	35.2	28	51.9
Contractor requirement and conditions.	2	3.7	5	9.3	4	7.4	19	35.2	24	44.4
Quality of and extent of Project Completion.	2	3.7	6	11.1	6	11.1	14	25.9	26	48.1
Relation to Project Plan	0		3	5.6	3	5.6	20	37.0	28	51.9
Application of Monitoring & Evaluation reports in relation to Project Completion	1	1.9	5	9.3	5	9.3	15	27.8	28	51.9
Specifications of Project	1	1.9	1	1.9	4	7.4	16	29.6	32	59.3
Future development Plan	2	3.7	2	3.7	7	13.0	12	22.2	31	57.4

Inclusion of M & E in the strategic plan

The component tested whether M and E had influence on project completion; it was noted that M and E should be part of strategic plan with clearly defined time lines a total of 83.4% of the responded in the affirmative. They recommended that the process should be all inclusive involving all stakeholders such as (PMCs) and community leaders. They further observed that both internal and external mechanisms of M and E should be considered in the strategic plan. Most respondents indicated that the strategic plan guides the project management committee, enhances quality of performance and improves on the utilization of resources. Consequently, the strategic plan should explicitly show at what stages M and E will be undertaken. Inconformity the PMC would prefer to undertake capacity building workshops and seminars in order to be more effective.

Adherence to project management chart

Fifty one point nine (96.8%) of the respondents felt that adherence to the project management charts plan should be mandatory in order for the project implementation to

run smoothly. Information from checklists revealed that about 50% of stalled projects had no the provisions of the project management chart that addressed aspects of management, time frame amongst others.

Stakeholders' analysis – report

A total of 87.1% of the respondents opine that stakeholder involvement was a crucial part of project management. They recommended that the process should be all inclusive involving all stakeholders such as (PMCs) and community leaders. They further observed that both internal and external mechanisms of M and E should be considered in the strategic plan. Most respondents indicated that the strategic plan guides the project management committee, enhances quality of performance and improves on the utilization of resources. Respondents further expressed that matters were addressed at an appropriate time without undue delays to avoid stalling of the projects in the reports. It is at the reporting time when they could make recommendations such as variation of mode of funding, change of the contractor and address other shortfalls promptly. Respondents further observed that where stakeholder's

reports are not adhered to, contractors tend to contravene terms and conditions especially regarding quality of materials and workmanship.

Contractor requirement and conditions

Contractor should work under certain specific terms and conditions which can be easily assessed using M&E tools. The strategic plan should have details of specifications expected of the project (Nyandemo, *et al*, 2010), hence the overwhelming 79.6% respondents indicated high and very high preference for it. Adherence to specifications ensures expected outcomes in scheduled timeframe. In essence would eliminate blame game between contractor, PMC, Ministries involved and CDF management over shortfalls that may arise. As a result the implementation would be smooth and project would be completed within scheduled time.

Quality and extent of project completion

Extent of project completion was a crucial as expressed by 74% of the respondents. It was noted that good strategic plan should show stages of completion at the stakeholders should evaluate and give a report. Thus a strategic plan should indicate the extent of project completion. This is very crucial as it assists stakeholders to monitor and evaluate different stages of progress. This is because it can be a point of reference by CDF which can influence further funding. It would make it easier to reflect completion level in relation to the budget. It was noted that the level of completion would affect timelines and budget adjustment which was evident in most of the stalled projects.

Specifications of project

The strategic plan should have details of specifications expected of the project hence an overwhelming 79.6% respondents indicated high and very high preference for it. Adherence to specifications would ensure expected outcomes in scheduled timeframe. In essence it would eliminate blame game between contractor, PMC, Ministry of works and CDF management over shortfalls that may arise. As a result the implementation would be smooth and project would be completed within scheduled time.

Quality and extent of project completion

In respect of the quality and of project implementation, it emerged that the quality of work during project implementation is the concern of both PMCs and the

financier (CDF management). Respondents underscored the importance of quality of work and could show the state of buildings in terms of quality hence 88.9% preferred at high and very high. Most of the stalled projects were projects which manifested low quality of workmanship. Thus the quality of workmanship was concern of every respondent. It was revealed that the quality of work affects the services to be derived from the project and its sustainability.

Relation to project plan

Implementation of a project should reflect time lines and budget estimate so that way forward can be discussed by stakeholders. If implementation of a project is not related to the plan in most cases it was haphazard in nature and leaves stakeholder without a tool to challenge the neither contractor nor CDF management for regular funding. Consequently 79.7% preferred high and very high scale. They underscored the need for making use of the strategic plan all the time. As result accountability M&E can be systematically executed. Seemingly that would improve on project management during implementation

Future development Plan

Concerning future development plan, it was noted that most of the projects do not include future developments plans in the strategic plans for example most the health facilities do not include maternity in their strategic plans. Seventy nine point six (79.6%) percent preferred future development plans to be part of strategic plan. For example most of the health facilities under this programme required future expansion to include maternity needs, police administration camps camps could be expanded to include offices for; assistant chiefs, agricultural officers amongst others. However this was not the case as they had not included them in their strategic plans. Budgets for extension and was rarely approved and funded.

Findings from key informant interviews

Table 5. Findings on the extent to which strategic plan influenced project completion as perceived by key informants are summarized in Table 5.

	Observ ed N	Expece d N	Residual	d ²	d ² /10.4
Very Low	2	10.4	-8.4	70.56	6.785
Low	5	10.4	-5.4	29.16	2.805
Not sure	3	10.4	-7.4	54.76	5.265
High	17	10.4	6.6	43.56	4.188
Very High	25	10.4	14.6	213.16	20.496
Total	52				39.538

$F = n-1 = 5-1=4$ where F is degrees of freedom

At 5% level 9.488

Calculated value 39.588

$$X^2 = \sum \frac{(O_i - E_i)^2}{E_i} = \sum \frac{d^2}{N} = \frac{70.50}{10.4} + \frac{29.16}{10.4} + \frac{54.76}{10.4} +$$

$$\frac{43.56}{10.4} + \frac{213.16}{10.4} = 39.538$$

The results show the correlation is significance hence the alternative hypothesis is accepted. This implies of strategic plan positively influences project completion.

Hypotheses testing

The findings from key informants were used to test hypotheses on role of strategic plan on project completion as follows:

Null hypothesis - H_0 : The application of strategic plan had no influence on the level of project completion.

Alternative hypothesis - H_a : application of strategic plan had influence on the level of project completion.

Using the chi-square test, the statistic availed the results Table 6.

Table 6. Strategic plan influence on project completion findings from the KILs

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual	d^2	$d^2/10.4$
Very Low	2	10.4	-8.4	70.56	6.785
Low	5	10.4	-5.4	29.16	2.805
Not sure	3	10.4	-7.4	54.76	5.265
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$$\frac{43.56}{10.4} + \frac{213.16}{10.4} = 39.538$$

Standard tables of X^2 give a value of 9.488 at 5% level with 4 degrees of freedom. Yet the calculate value is 39.538 is much higher than the calculated table value. The results show the correlation is significance hence the alternative hypothesis is accepted. This implies of strategic plan had positive influence project completion.

Most of PMC would like to be involved in the formulation of strategic plans and receive adequate funds from CDF in time to implement the projects.

The findings were inconformity with United Nations Officer of Project Services UNOPS (2013) requirement that strategic plan, energy and resources that employees and other stakeholders are working towards a common goal. UNOPS branches should in cooperate three dimensions of sustainability that sustainable management, sustainable infrastructure and sustainable procurement. Bryson (1995) states that strategic planning is a technical approach which 'fuses' political and technical concerns it fuses planning and decision making.

Strategic plan development requires consideration and articulation of values and priorities. The plan should reflect views expressed by all those involved in the process. The process should involve managers, providers, legislators and the public in articulation of visions. These findings were inconformity with government policy on CDF where the strategic plan formulation should involve stakeholders, CDF office before it was presented to parliamentary public finance for screening.

Findings on the extent of completion levels of CDF projects

Findings on the extent of completion levels of CDF projects in the county are as indicated in Table 7 and this was mainly attributable to complete absence of strategic plan or none adherence to the same.

Table 7. Completion level of sampled CDF projects in the county

Sampled Constituency / Projects	Budget Kshs	Expected time for completion	% Completed	Reasons for non-completion/completion
NAVAKH OLO				
Namirama Girls secondary School. computer center	28m	2008-2013	10	Lack of a to strategic plan and budget
Chebuyusi high school,. resource centre	18m	2008-2013	50	Lack of to strategic plan and budget
Ingotse high school. Library	29m	2008 – 2013	10	Absence of o strategic plan

Table 7. Continue

Shinoyi high school. Multipurpose/ dining hall	21m	2010-2013	50	Lack of adherence to strategic plan and budget
Ematia health dispensary	4.5m	2006-2007	50-100	Absence of strategic plan
LURAMBI				
Muslim secondary School. twin lab	31m	2012-2014	10	Lack of adherence to strategic plan and budget

CONCLUSION

It emerged that strategic plan had significant influence on project implementation and completion. Respondents expressed that good strategic plan should be worked out and adhered to during project implementation and completion. Formulation of strategic plan should therefore be spearheaded by the stake holders.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study established that those charged with the responsibility of carrying out M and E, comprising government officials, CDF management and staff from the Ministries were not empowered with appropriate skills and knowledge. Consequently, the study recommended that they should be appropriately empowered with the necessary knowledge in order to have the grasp of how this tool can be utilized.

Since the study established that strategic planning is an important component of project management, it is important that further research be undertaken to put in place a legal and institutional framework that would ensure that M and E tools are mandatory components of project management and implementation process.

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