COLLABORATIVE MONITORING AND EVALUATION PRACTICES AND PERFORMANCE OF COUNTY FUNDED PROJECTS IN UASIN GISHU COUNTY, KENYA

Musyimi Musili Charles.
Master of Project Monitoring and Evaluation, Post Graduate Student, Kenyatta University, Kenya
Dr. Alfayos Ondara.
Lecturer, Department of Management Science, Kenyatta University, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Since the inception of county governments which were created under the Article Six and specified in 1st Schedule of the Constitution of Kenya, there has been low uptake of collaborative monitoring and evaluation of projects leading to delay in project implementation, unmet stakeholder expectations and unsatisfactory work. Uasin Gishu County has been lagging behind in execution of its proposed projects with such delays attributed to insufficient and unqualified personnel, inadequate budgetary allocation to support M&E function, poor project planning and monitoring, and lack of participation from numerous project stakeholders, to name a few. These challenges have affected the execution of collaborative M&E practices in the County. Due to this backdrop, the research attempted to establish factors affecting utilization of collaborative M&E practices on County funded projects in the County Government of Uasin Gishu. The main purpose of this inquiry was to assess the effects of technical expertise, cost implications, stakeholder involvement and the existence of policy framework in performance of projects financed by the County. The researcher used a descriptive research approach with a target populace of 41 County officials drawn from various departments inclusive of stakeholders. The researcher adopted simple random selection method in picking of all sample units. Most of the information sought was obtained using a structured tool self-administered to the respondents. Statistical software was adopted in synthesizing the data where percent's, aggregated means as well as other statistical measures were generated, portrayed and displayed in tabular and diagrammatical forms. The study established that the level of expertise of project M&E staffs in the County was moderate; level of costs implied for project M&E was rated to be much high with a very high level of stakeholder involvement in projects M&E in the County. Technical expertise in utilization of collaborative M&E practices affected projects performance in the County to a moderate extent with policy frameworks in projects M&E having a moderate effect on project performance. Inadequate allocation of funds to implement collaborative M&E and M&E budget as a percent of development expenditure in every project was found to have effects on projects performance in Uasin Gishu County together with policy framework to great extents. The study concluded that cost implications contributed more to the increase of project performance in the County followed by technical expertise, policy frameworks and stakeholder involvement in that order. The study recommended that, to build effective and efficient collaborative monitoring and evaluation system, the County Government was required to commit its resources including personnel and financial, and develop policies that can support M&E function. For the County sponsored projects to realize full benefits, the project implementers should employ management staffs who have attained professional qualifications. The study recommends that resource utilization should be refocused to ensure that the projects are able to realize their intended benefits to the society. The M&E team should be composed of all stakeholders directly and indirectly affected by the county funded projects. To be relevant and

feasible, project management need to meet various characteristics coming from broader corporate considerations, such as consistency with the project's long-term aims, compatibility with existing funds, controllability, and endorsement by the residence The study recommends that the policy framework should be realistic and address actual needs. Relevant analysis of projects and policy evaluations should be conducted highlighting the previous initiatives' outcomes, as well as the merits and flaws of their execution.

Keywords: Collaborative monitoring and evaluation, technical expertise, cost implications, stakeholder involvement, policy framework, project performance.

INTRODUCTION

All projects involve several activities based on project management principles which provide the ground for managing project processes in entirety. According to Project Management (2017), management of projects entails the practical utilization of skills, expertise, techniques, tools as well as abilities in programmes and projects actions aimed at meeting the predetermined demand. Project goals are attained by applying and integrating selected project management aspects resulting to effective and efficient implementation of projects. M&E denotes a governance tool and framework that is put in place to ensure that the results of organizational policies, programs, and projects are attained by comparing the posted performance against initial plans and learning from past interventions to improve effectiveness of future implementations while still supporting public accountability. Collaborative monitoring and evaluation (M&E) have been utilized globally by institutions resulting to enhanced shared learning approach among the stakeholders, increased efficiency and building capacity with an intention of adopting the knowledge acquired to modify policies and actions in organizations (Pardev, 2016).

Collaborative M&E refers to the procedure where stakeholders across different levels participate to monitor or evaluate projects, programs, or policies sharing controls over the contents, processes, and outcomes of the M&E activities and take or identify remedial actions (Saiful, 2018). Collaborative M&E is not only crucial to tasks but it is a component in project design (Project Management Institute, 2017). M&E as a tool has been in existence and used world-wide over the period of time in management of projects where if used appropriately, it can offer perpetual responses regarding the implementation status of projects as well as help in pointing out achievements and possible challenges faced to facilitate corrective decision making. Saiful (2018) views M&E as a profound function in realizing projects objectives, goals and achievements of projects. In general, project M&E facilitates overall efficiency of project management, planning, as well as execution.

Pardev (2016) indicated that collaborative M&E is of great importance to not only the projects beneficiaries but also the donors, governing body and other units who directly or

indirectly benefit from the projects and it also ensures similar good practices are replicated across all the programs and projects. Yogarajah, Nigel and Page (2016) pointed that collaborative M&E offers continuous feedback that assist the parent organization trail implementation time lines of the projects to ascertain whether the project is on course, minimize cost overruns, factor in personnel as well as the financial and economic outcomes and analyze the planned against the actual targets. The overall objective of M&E is to provide a reliable mechanism to monitor and evaluate implementation of government projects, policies and programmes to address the inadequacies in provision of data and relevant information for policy formulation and planning especially at the lowest level of devolved units.

Globally, Saiful (2018) indicated that M&E employs suitable criteria such as bench marking against suitable standards or previous execution of similar undertakings. To Omeno and Sang (2018) Governments use M&E as intrinsic tool for managing implementation of government projects, programmes and policies, hence enhancing project performance. It aids in the development of performance tools that impact project performance through assessments that employ recorded lessons learned and discoveries to improve performance. Collaborative M&E has been utilized resulting to enhanced shared learning approach among the stakeholders, increased efficiency and building capacity with an intention of adopting the knowledge acquired to change organizations actions and policies. However, there are various factors that inhibit its full utilization in many organizations such as perceived benefits of the exercise, priorities of the participating groups, utilization of findings, readiness of the organization to accommodate divergent views from the stakeholders among others (Christopher, 2020).

In Ghana, M&E was adopted across many public entities in 2017. The M&E function was required to promote real time monitoring, coverage and utilization of information for evidence based engagements, learning and adaptation of implementation modalities (Based & Estimates, 2020). Within the Kenyan context, M&E of polices, programmes and projects was introduced in 2008 upon realization of Kenya Vision 2030 which replaced Economic Recovery Strategy (ERS) as the Government development blue print (Njama, 2015). Kenya's Vision 2030 blueprint was expected to be executed in five (5) year's plans known as Medium-Term Plan (MTPs) forming the basis for strengthening and providing a reliable mechanism to monitor and evaluate implementation of all government policies, programmes and projects. The reason why government oversight branch in charge of M&E was established was to address the inadequacy in provision of data and relevant information for policy formulation and planning especially at the lowest level of devolved units which included villages, ward and sub counties. The data collected through then Districts Annual Monitoring and Evaluation Reports (DAMER) were to be shared with the national government for decision making. However, such reports were not adequately disseminated to other stakeholders and relevant ministries leading to uncoordinated efforts towards implementation of projects (GoK, 2019).

In Kenya, M&E was embraced in various government organizations from the year 2017. The M&E function was required to promote real time monitoring, reporting and utilization of M&E evidence based information and reports for decision making as well as collaborative engagements, learning and adaptation of implementation modalities to projects (Based & Estimates, 2020). The approach of collaborative M&E also known has participatory was prompted by the need and desire to align programs and projects with the views and aspirations of the residents which has been highly accepted over the period of time resulting to working with and by the communities in order to ensure programs and projects serve the communities as envisaged (Sulemana & Simon, 2018).

According to CoK (2010), County governments were regarded as the drivers of balanced distribution of resources from the national exchequer to the lowest level of administration with the counties putting in place M&E systems to guarantee that resource distribution adhered to the values of openness, honesty, access to information, and accountability and management. Consequently, governments used M&E as intrinsic tool for managing implementation of government projects, programmes and policies, hence enhancing project performance. The County Government of Uasin Gishu inherited functions previously performed by the defunct local authorities and the national government departments at the defunct districts. Among these were the monitoring and evaluation function, which was mainly in form of administrative data collection systems, and within projects undertaken with specific funding from Government or development partners (Jamaal, 2018). According to Annual Progress Report (APR) 2019, Uasin Gishu County reported an absorption rate of 47 percent in development indicating a low growth towards implementation of projects across the county.

Some of the county funded projects by Uasin Gishu included: ECD classrooms, upgrading of roads to bitumen standards, installation of culverts, construction of bridges, construction of health facilities, retail markets, milk cooling plants, installation of outdoor LED screens, drilling and equipping of boreholes among others. It was revealed in the same report that most of these projects were ongoing while others had stalled. The slow progress was attributed to lack of collaborative M&E practices of the county funded projects to ensure timely completion and adherence to project schedules.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Christopher (2020) viewed M&E as a vital exercise conducted to track all county funded projects and ascertain the execution progress of such activities with a view to establishing the projects status and constrains experienced during implementation. At the national level, M&E has been in existence since 2008 upon realization of Kenya Vision 2030 which replaced Economic Recovery Strategy as the government development blue print (Jamaal, 2018). The experts of Kenya's Vision 2030 intended to implement it in five (5) years plans known as Medium Term Plan which formed the basis for strengthening National Integration Monitoring and Evaluation System (NIMES) in 2008 with an overall objective being to provide a reliable mechanism to monitor and evaluate implementation of government

projects, policies and programmes to address the inadequacies in provision of data and relevant information for policy formulation and planning especially at the lowest level of devolved units. However, such reports were inadequately disseminated to key stakeholders, organizations and ministries leading to uncoordinated and fragmented efforts towards implementation of projects depicting a clear picture of weak collaboration in line ministries when carrying out M&E exercise (Kihuha, 2018; Muli, 2016).

Upon transition to the system of devolved governance, the County Government of Uasin Gishu inherited functions previously performed by the defunct local authorities and the national government departments at the defunct districts. Among these were the M&E functions, which were mainly in form of administrative data collection systems, and within projects undertaken with specific funding from government or development partners (Jamaal, 2018). According to Biwott, Egesah and Ngeywo (2017), organizations implementing projects in the counties over the years had recorded increased funding but in many cases no assessments was carried out to establish whether programs and projects were implemented successfully or not. In 2012 Monitoring & Evaluation Directorate (MED) conducted a study on the status of M&E in the counties and found various challenges which included: inadequate policy and legal framework, inadequate funding for the M&E function, non-participation of stakeholders, inadequate technical capacities among others hence coordination of the various M&E functions within the county departments remained a daunting task.

Wanjiku (2015) focused her study on factors determining the performance of infrastructural road projects using Nyandarua county as a context and established that several challenges affected the execution of projects in the county. Jamaal (2018) established that failures in usage of participatory M&E emanates from inadequate capacities, lack of political good will and inadequate budgetary allocation to support the exercise. Otieno (2019) studied the potency of project M&E practice within the counties and public projects and found that a lot of resources go into development programmes and projects yet the County does not have a structured and collaborative way of tracking implementation and impacts of the said programmes/projects. These studies left contextual, conceptual and methodological gaps since they did not focus on the relationship between projects performance and collaborative M&E practices among projects funded by the counties. It is against this backdrop that the researcher sought to establish factors affecting the utilization of collaborative monitoring and evaluation practices and performance of county funded projects in the County Governments of Uasin Gishu, Kenya.

GENERAL OBJECTIVE

The main purpose of this study was to establish utilization of collaborative M&E practices and the performance of county funded projects in the County Government of Uasin Gishu, Kenya.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

i. To assess the effect of technical expertise on the performance of county funded projects in the County Government of Uasin Gishu, Kenya
ii. To identify the cost implications in the use of collaborative M&E practices and the performance of county funded projects in County Government of Uasin Gishu, Kenya
iii. To find out the extent to which stakeholder involvement affects the performance of county funded projects in County Government of Uasin Gishu, Kenya
iv. To establish the existence of policy framework that guide collaborative M&E practices of county funded projects in County Government of Uasin Gishu, Kenya.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Program Theory

The Program Theory was devised by Chen, H., Rossi, P., Quinn, M.P, and Weiss, C. in 1972. This theory's focus was on how to bring about change and who is responsible for it. It was known for its definitive process for resolving issues, and discussed the need of carrying out assessments to support the findings. The idea gave techniques for controlling evaluation's influential regions (Sethi & Philippines, 2012). Community care systems were configured and organized to cater for needs of a given society, and they were susceptible as well as dynamical to transformation in tandem with predefined circumstances in a variety of organizational operations. As a consequence, the program theory employed the logical model approach.

The Program Theory would be a more extensive edition of the logical structure. It was shown as a graphical scale to link to the logical model. Stakeholder interaction, senior management, and outcome evaluation were all aided by the logical model (Hosley, 2009). The evaluator can identify how and why the system works using theory-based assessments (Weiss, 2003; Birkmayer & Weiss, 2000). The overall objective is to provide a reliable mechanism to monitor and evaluate implementation of government projects, policies and programmes to address the inadequacies in provision of data and relevant information for policy formulation and planning especially at the lowest level of devolved units. This offers continuous feedback that assist the parent organization trail implementation time-lines of the project to ascertain whether the project is on course, minimize cost overruns, factor in personnel as well as the financial and economic outcomes and analyze the planned against the actual targets.

This theory offers continuous feedback that assist the parent organization trail implementation time-lines of the project to ascertain whether the project is on course, minimize cost overruns, factor in personnel as well as the financial and economic outcomes and analyze the planned against the actual targets. These approaches have been utilized resulting to enhanced shared learning approach among the stakeholders, increased efficiency and building capacity with an intention of adopting the knowledge acquired to change organizations actions and policies. The theory gives a conclusive image of primal and middle

adjustments required to achieve a long-term stated objective in the study (Anderson, 2005). Resultly, it gives a working model for a project that can be evaluated and modified via M&E. This theory aids in the development of intelligible monitoring and assessment systems.

Project Success Theory

Project Success Theory was developed in 2000 by Judgey. He asserts that the parameters to help in managing projects, making of decisions, evaluating projects as well as project successfulness in product and process need to be established from the start of such projects. It's best articulated at the start of projects with regard to key quantifiable criterion that may be used to assess the project's relative success or failure. Opportunity and risk are inextricably related to project success. Project goals are attained by applying and integrating selected project management aspects resulting to effective and efficient implementation of projects.

Christopher (2020) pointed that projects are inherently dangerous endeavors, and even when detected, certain project risks cannot be completely avoided or managed. Because risk occurrences may have an influence on project success. It is the definitive process for resolving issues, and discusses the need of carrying out assessments to support the findings. This offers continuous feedback that assist the parent organization trail implementation time-lines of the project to ascertain whether the project is on course, minimize cost overruns, factor in personnel as well as the financial and economic outcomes and analyze the planned against the actual targets. These approaches have been utilized resulting to enhanced shared learning approach among the stakeholders, increased efficiency and building capacity with an intention of adopting the knowledge acquired to change organizations actions and policies.

Opportunity and risk are inextricably related to project success. Project goals are attained by applying and integrating selected project management aspects resulting to effective and efficient implementation of projects. Organizations use M&E as intrinsic tool for managing implementation of government projects, programmes and policies. Collaborating offers a reliable mechanism to monitor and evaluate implementation of government projects, policies and programmes to address the inadequacies in provision of data and relevant information for policy formulation and planning especially at the lowest level of devolved units. County governments use M&E as intrinsic tool for managing implementation of government projects, programmes and policies, hence enhancing project performance.

Results Based Management Theory

The Results-Based Management (RBM) Theory was developed in Australia by Public Sector Authority in 1983. RBM puts emphasis on continuous monitoring processes accumulating learnt lessons in process shared on a regular basis to guide project execution actions and choices. Monitoring, according to Hwang and Lim (2013), was a crucial activity in the life of a project since was a continuous frequent organization of processes of taxing engagement of stakeholders, reproduction, critique, categorization, and reporting. This offered continuous

feedback that assisted the parent organization trail implementation time-lines of the project to ascertain whether the projects were on course.

RBM has been utilized resulting to enhanced shared learning approach among the stakeholders, increased efficiency and building capacity with an intention of adopting the knowledge acquired to change organizations actions and policies (Valadez and Bamberger, 2012). Project goals were attained by applying and integrating selected project management aspects resulting to effective and efficient implementation of projects. Sound project management initiatives enables individuals, and organizations in meeting their desired goals; increasing possibilities of success of projects; delivering the right services/products and within stipulated period of time among others. This offered continuous feedback that assisted the parent organization track implementation time lines of projects to determine whether the projects are headed to the right direction and whether there was any need to put corrective measure.

In this study, the idea aids in the development of performance monitoring tools that impact project performance positively through assessments that employ recorded lessons learned and discoveries to improve performance. The idea placed a greater focus on reporting to stakeholders and making management responsible for the project's result. The idea emphasizes long-term transformation through a well-structured planning process that employs skilled labor to affect project outcomes. RBM includes aspects for project performance monitoring that are connected to study factors, planning process, technical expertise, stakeholder and management engagement.

Theory of Change

The Theory of Change (TOC) is a dynamic and critical thinking approach that clarifies and underlies strategic planning by making the initiative explicit and transparent. It was created over time in a collaborative manner, following a logical framework that was strong and precise, and that could pass a stakeholder quality test (Vogel, 2012). A fundamental TOC, according to Anderson (2005), illustrates how a sequence of early and intermediate successes lays the scene for long-term results. The Theory acts as a lens, focusing the attention of the organization conducting a project on the measures that must be taken to attain the objectives. Governments use M&E as intrinsic tool for managing implementation of government projects, programmes and policies, hence enhancing project performance.

Project goals are attained by applying and integrating selected project management aspects resulting to effective and efficient implementation of projects. The idea placed a greater focus on reporting to stakeholders and making management responsible for the project's result. The idea emphasizes long-term transformation through a well-structured planning process that employs skilled labor to affect project outcomes. Donors and financiers can use the TOC to discover ways to enable justifiable adaptation and refocusing of program initiatives throughout implementation, while still giving stakeholders and communities time to benefit (Vogel, 2012).

A solid TOC is seen to be necessary for successful advocacy planning (Aspen, 2016), with the benefit of connecting ideas with both financiers and project recipients to achieve desired outcomes. There is a fundamental issue, according to Stein and Valters (2012), in that various companies use TOC to imply different things. Critics claim that TOC proponents' unwillingness to connect the Theory to any concrete meaning has led to individuals making unrealistic claims about the theory. If TOC is to be more than just another perplexing development, more clarity is required on a number of fronts, beginning with standard nomenclature and the usage and expectations of TOC methods. In this study, the theory guidees in understanding the influence of the independent factors under study on utilization of collaborative M&E on projects.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research design

The study used a descriptive research methodology to establish the usage of collaborative M&E practices and how such practices affect projects implementation in the county government of Uasin Gishu. When collecting the quantitative characteristics of the research, the design is used since it creates contents of what, when, why, where, and how (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2012). Further, it establishes a connection between variables, highlighting the need of investigating a scenario or an issue in order to understand the link between the variables.

Target Population

The study focused on county projects namely; four (4) trade/business projects (markets), six (6) health facilities (hospitals and dispensaries), seven (7) educational facilities (ECD and VTCs), and 10 water projects. The units of observation were the officers working with the county and stakeholders. The study involved the views and opinions of staffs working in various levels within the county government structure with a total population of 41 respondents identified, thus: six (6) sub county administrators, six (6) key stake holders, one (1) representative from each of the 16 county departments and three (3) technical officers from the department in charge of M&E at the County. In addition, the study sought opinions of projects beneficiaries of the above mentioned projects. They included 10 (ten) senior residents cutting across all sector (village elders, civic leaders, religious leaders).

Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

Simple random selection approach was utilized to pick the samples. The major reason for using this method was that it produces research data that can be extended to a wider population with statistically established margins of error. The researcher utilized the census technique of sampling to target the whole population of 41 respondents, including stakeholders. Census was employed due to the relatively minimal size of the objective populace which was heterogeneous hence results likely to be more accurate and reliable.

Research Instruments

Primary and secondary information was obtained when establishing utilization of collaborative M&E practices in the county. Research questionnaires were utilized in collection of primary information for the study with secondary information often available within libraries, research institutes, and on the internet sought. In addition, refinement was done hence improving the study's credibility and accuracy of data collected. Further, document analysis was used to get a significant amount of trustworthy information without having to interrogate a huge number of individuals. Secondary data was valuable in producing new data for the research from previously documented reports and was relied on because of its ability to provide historical phenomena, reports, government papers, and views.

Data Collection Procedure

Control measures were applied such as delivery books to ensure all questionnaires issued to the respondents were accounted. The researcher began by describing the function of each participant in the study and the necessity of giving accurate information in a cover letter accompanying the questionnaire. Both verbal and written consent were obtained before face to face interviews were conducted. Data was collected during working days and stipulated time. The pilot study was done in two stages thus; First, the questionnaire design was reviewed by peers who provided ideas on how to enhance the validity and realism of the data collection tool. Second, a sample of five (5) respondents from Nakuru County were chosen at random to complete the pilot version of the questionnaire with the main goal being to examine the study's validity and objectivity, as well as the technique and procedure for collecting data. The findings of the pilot were used to identify issues in understanding and answering the questions, with answers to the pilot giving possible suggestions for modifications in sentence design and the removal of a number of items from the questionnaire.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics elucidated the fundamental characteristics of data gathered on the variables under investigation and served as a springboard for further examination. To help with data analysis, the SPSS was utilized, and results were shown in tabular form or figures which were appropriate for simple comprehension and interpretation. Using the regression approach, regression analysis was carried out to evaluate the usage of joint M&E practices and performance of projects in the county government of Uasin Gishu.

RESEARCH RESULTS

The results of the study were based on 38 appropriately duly filled questionnaires, out of the 41 administered resulting to an outcome of 92.7 percent.

Technical Expertise and Project Performance

The first objective of the study focused on assessing the effect of technical expertise on the performance of county funded projects. In relation to this, 47.4 percent of the respondents reiterated that the level of expertise of M&E officers in the county was moderate with 55 percent of the respondents indicating that technical expertise affects project performance in the county to a moderate extent. A bigger proportion of the responses reiterated that availability of proficient technicians affects project to a great magnitude/extent with a mean score of 3.553 while project planning techniques scored 3.526 with inadequacy of technical officers scoring a mean of 3.526. Generally, it was evident that various aspects of technical capacities such as project planning techniques, technicians' proficiency and adequacy of technical officers affect projects performance in the County. Most of the garnered responses affirmed that when working with people who have requisite knowledge and skills it boosts the confidence of the members with a mean score of 3.610 and that if the employees lack required capacities, then routine training of such officers should be organized as shown by a mean of 3.594. However, there was neutrality from respondents when it comes to collaborative M&E and achievement of desired results as shown by a score of 3.345 and that in order to carry out M&E efficiently, there should be critical areas that should be given emphasis as it was indicated by a mean score of 3.280.

Cost Implications and Project Performance

The second objective of the study focused on establishing the cost implications in the utilization of collaborative M&E practices. Towards this end, 63.2 percent of the respondents pointed out that the level of costs implied when carrying out collaborative M&E practices was much high. Most of the gathered outcome indicated that inadequate allocation of funds to implement collaborative M&E practices affect projects performance in the county to a great magnitude/extent with a mean score of 3.734 and that M&E budget as a percent of development expenditure in every project affect projects performance to a great magnitude/extent scored 3.671. The least recorded a mean of 3.329 by alluding that insufficient budgetary allocation to projects affect projects to a moderate extent. Most of the responses posited agreement that budgetary allocation for M&E should not exceed 1 percent of the entire project cost with a mean of 3.999. When drawing a budget for development projects both parties should be involved for the purposes of transparency and cost benefit should be a priority area to avoid wastage recorded a mean of 3.644 and 3.422 respectively.

Stakeholder Involvement and Projects Performance

The third objective of the study sought to find out the extent to which stakeholder involvement during M&E practices affect the performance of county funded projects in the County Government of Uasin Gishu. To this, 44.7 percent of respondents alluded that there was a very much high level of stakeholder involvement in projects M&E. 56.3 percent, 32.8 percent and 10.9 percent of respondents recapped that stakeholder involvement affect projects performance in the County to a moderate, great, and little extend in that order. Most of the obtained responses opined that M&E consultations & meetings affect project performance in

the county to a great magnitude/extent while stakeholder awareness affect projects implementations to a great extent. Additionally, respondents indicated that both stakeholder teamwork which leads to projects ownership and sustainability and stakeholders' engagements in coordination of county projects affect projects performance to a moderate extend with a score of 3.610, 3.594, 3.482 and 3.403 in that order. Most of the respondents affirmed that the results and findings were disseminated to the stakeholders. The study also showed that there was stakeholder involvement in M&E decision making and involvement in field work processes resulting to timely completion of projects, enhanced projects ownership, and sustainability with a scores of 3.999, 3.688, 3.644 and 3.544 respectively.

Policy Frameworks and Project Performance

The last objective of the study aimed at establishing the existence and effectiveness of policy framework that guides collaborative M&E practices and performance of county funded projects in the County. In the aforementioned, 44.7 percent of the respondents indicated existence of policy framework that guides M&E function at the county and such document had moderate effect towards the performance of county projects despite of it being anchored in the law. Most responses showed that existence of M&E policy framework affected projects performance to a great extent translating to 40.5 percent. Majority of the respondents pointed out that M&E plans affect projects performance to a great extent followed closely by organizational hierarchies and the least was compliance with provisions in PFM Act 2012 and other related legal provisions with a mean of 3.610, 3.594 and 3.403 respectively. Most of the respondents largely agreed that there existed a policy framework guiding the implementation of collaborative M&E function at the county and that, the policy provided indicators of achievements with a mean score of 3.734 and 3.61. Additionally, strict adherence to M&E regulations and requirements set out in the framework garnered a score of 3.482 with 3.422 reflecting that policy frameworks were regarded as a means of creating sustainable change in development project.

65 percent of the respondents widely indicated that there was a high level of utilization of collaborative M&E practices. The study indicated that utilization of collaborative M&E practices affects timely completion of projects to a great extent followed by meeting the set targets and lastly projects being completed within the set budget with a scores of 3.644, 3.422 and 3.329 respectively.

Model Summary

Table 1: Model Summary

Item	Value
Model	1
R	0.872
R Square	0.760
Adjusted R Square	0.751
Std. Error of the Estimate	0.573

As shown in table 1, the findings indicated that adjusted *R-square* specified extent of the prediction of the dependent variable by the independent variable that was 0.751 hence pointing that there was a strong correlation. The values of the Adjusted *R-Squared* showed that after the model is adjusted for inefficiencies the independent variables would explain 75.1 percent of projects performance in the County.

Analysis of Variance

Table 2: ANOVA (b)

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	0.804	4	3.216	3.436	.015(a)
Residual	0.026	33	0.858		
Total	0.830	37	30.71		

In table 3 above, the results showed the relationship between the study variables and demonstrated the reliability of the model. The model was tested at 5 percent significance level with a 2 tailed test. The F value estimated at a 5 percent significance level was 3.436, with a significance value of 0.015, which was less than the crucial value produced from a 2 tailed test at the same significance level. This model's computed F was higher than the F critical (at 4 33, F critical=2.41). This was an indication of the model's overall importance. As a result, the County Government of Uasin Gishu concluded that there was a substantial link between collaborative M&E practices and project performance.

Regression Coefficients

Table 3: Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	4.778	0.453		10.5475	0.0429
Technical expertise	0.862	0.114	0.024	7.5614	0.0150
Cost implications	0.879	0.108	0.029	8.1389	0.0133
Stakeholder involvement	0.646	0.173	0.086	3.7341	0.0463
Policy frameworks	0.712	0.137	0.064	5.1971	0.0264

As illustrated in Table 3 above, the dependent and independent variables were used to create a regression equation. When tested at a 95 percent confidence level, all of the variables had a significance value of less than 0.05. It was a sign of how important the outcomes were. Further, the positive coefficient was derived from the variables, suggesting that the dependent and independent variables had a positive association as shown below;

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \varepsilon,$$

Therefore,

$$Y = 4.778 + 0.862X_1 + 0.879X_2 + 0.646X_3 + 0.712X_4$$

From the regression equation it meant that holding constant the predictor variables, the projects performance in the county would have a coefficient of 4.778 meaning that if all the factors were zero (0) the projects performance (Y) will be equal to 4.778 units. From the results, the regression coefficient for technical expertise was 0.862. This was supported by a significant value of 0.015 which was less than 0.05 indicating that there was positive and

significant relationship between technical expertise and project performance with a unit change in the technical expertise resulting to 0.862 times change in projects performance.
In addition, the cost implications were discovered to have a favorable and substantial correlation with project success. The significance of the link was demonstrated by a regression coefficient of 0.879 and a p-value of 0.0133 less than 0.05. According to the coefficient, a unit rise in cost implications would result in an increase in project performance of 0.879 times. Stakeholder involvement was seen to have a positive effect on the project performance with a regression coefficient and significance value of 0.646 and 0.0463 respectively less than 0.05 the critical value at 5 percent significance level. This therefore, showed that a unit change in stakeholder involvement would result to 0.646 change in project performance in the entire county.

Further, the regression model indicated that policy framework was positively related to project performance in the county with regression coefficient obtained being 0.7120 and a significant value of 0.0264 less than 0.05. This indicated a significant effect of policy framework on performance with a unit growth resulting to 0.7120 times increase in project performance in the county. The findings of this study therefore, clearly demonstrated that the cost implications largely contributed to the increase of project performance followed by technical expertise and policy frameworks with stakeholder involvement contributing the least.

CONCLUSIONS

The study concluded that there was a moderate level of expertise of project M&E officers in the county with its utilization in collaborative M&E affecting projects performance to a moderate extent. The various aspects of technical capacity that affected project performance included project planning techniques, technicians' proficiency and adequacy of technical officers. It was noted that, technical skills in collaborative M&E offered continuous feedback that assisted the parent organization track implementation time lines of the projects

The study deduces that collaborative M&E practices had a high cost implication hence affecting the performance of the county funded projects. Majorly, was a problem with budget expenditure on projects as well as allocation of funds for use when carrying out the M&E exercise however, the budgetary allocation to projects was relatively sufficient. To note was that, the M&E allocations were clearly defined from the main project budget, giving the M&E unit considerable autonomy in terms of resource usage. Additionally, it was noted that most of projects had been completed on time hence meeting the set objectives and this was attributed to lots of stakeholder involvement during M&E exercise, continuous feedback mechanisms and team work largely from the officers. The perceived benefits of the exercise also included utilization of findings and readiness of the organization to accommodate divergent views from the stakeholders.

Further, the study concluded that availability of policy framework to guide implementation of collaborative M&E had a great effect on project performance to a significance level. The

documented procedures and guidelines containing inputs, activities and outcomes indicators played a critical role to ensuring timely completion of projects, minimize costing as well as meet objectives with the framework being required to promote real time monitoring, reporting and utilization of M&E findings to support decision making, collaborative engagement and learning, and adaptation of implementation modalities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that, to build effective and efficient collaborative M&E practices, the county was required to engage human resources that can support M&E function. For the county funded projects to be implemented successfully, the project implementers should engage personnel with the necessary knowledge and skills with continuous training offered to build strong capacities.

Adequate budgetary allocation needed to be factored for smooth execution of county projects. From the findings, cost implications in M&E processes influenced performance of projects. It was suggested therefore, that a reasonable percentage be committed from the project budget to support projects supervision and carry our routine projects M&E activities. This will ensure timely completion as well as pointing out areas which may need urgent interventions.
Since M&E aids in the development of performance monitoring tools that impact project performance through assessments that employ recorded lessons learned and discoveries to improve performance, the study recommended that all key stakeholders be involved from the initial stages of project planning. This would enhance projects ownerships, set out expected outputs and outcomes and consider resource re-allocations to meet the identified shortages.

Further, it was recommended that the policy framework should be robust and address actual gaps. Relevant analysis of projects and policy evaluations should be conducted to highlight the outcomes of previous interventions, and the strengths and weaknesses of their implementation. The policy could encourage project designers to utilize design tools like the logical framework to pick indicators for monitoring project performance in a methodical manner. This will guarantee officers and other important stakeholders working towards a unified purpose and that the organization's direction may be adjusted in response to events that shape and influence who it serves, what it does, and why it does it. It should include all aspects of the anticipated consequences.

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