

# Critical success factors for local government project stakeholder management

Project  
stakeholder  
management

Charles Amoatey and Mawuena Vincent Kodzo Hayibor  
*Business School, Ghana Institute of Management and  
Public Administration, Achimota, Ghana*

143

Received 15 August 2016  
Revised 20 December 2016  
Accepted 12 February 2017

## Abstract

**Purpose** – The purpose of this paper is to investigate the critical success factors (CSFs) for effective project stakeholder management at the local government level in Ghana.

**Design/methodology/approach** – The study used data from questionnaires administered to project stakeholders for identifying and ranking CSFs.

**Findings** – The study identified the top five CSFs for stakeholder management at the local government level in Ghana to be: communicating with and engaging stakeholders; identifying stakeholders properly; formulating a clear project mission statement; keeping and promoting good relationships; and analyzing stakeholder conflicts and coalitions.

**Research limitations/implications** – Generalization of the findings should be done with caution since the scope of data collection was limited to district assemblies in the Greater Accra region of Ghana. Nevertheless the results of the study are, however, useful and indicative and can lend direction to future research.

**Practical implications** – This paper has contributed to the growing body of knowledge related to CSFs for local government projects. The results should help understand factors which are of priority to stakeholders when assessing their involvement in projects. Further, the findings could form the basis for competency development of local government personnel in specific areas where improvements are required.

**Originality/value** – The paper identified CSFs for effective project stakeholder management at the local level. Most studies on critical factors in project environments have focused on CSFs and project success and thus this study delves into an area which has not received much attention in the literature.

**Keywords** Critical success factors, Ghana, Participation, Stakeholder management, Project, Local government

**Paper type** Research paper

## 1. Introduction

Stakeholder management is one of the critical aspects of project management as it is a key contributing factor to the success or failure of a project. Cooper (2014) asserts that successful stakeholder management helps to control or prevent scope creep, ensure timeliness in project deliverables and mitigate issues that would otherwise delay the project.

In Ghana, local government represents the lowest tier of administration in the country. Districts in Ghana are second-level administrative subdivisions of Ghana, below the level of region. The local government system consists of a Regional Co-ordinating Council, a four-tier Metropolitan and a three-tier Municipal/District Assemblies Structure. The District Assemblies are either Metropolitan (population over 250,000), Municipal (population over 95,000) or District (population 75,000 and over). The District Assembly is established as a monolithic structure, and among other functions it is assigned the responsibility of the totality of government to bring about integration of political, administrative and developmental support needed to achieve a more equitable allocation of power, wealth, and geographically dispersed development in Ghana.

Projects at the local government level are considered as public sector projects, which come with their own unique challenges. These challenges may include the need to satisfy political interests while operating in an environment with political adversaries and the need to adhere to bureaucratic procedures, rules and regulations. Generally poor stakeholder management coupled with poor needs identification has been identified as one of the reasons



Built Environment Project and  
Asset Management  
Vol. 7 No. 2, 2017  
pp. 143-156  
© Emerald Publishing Limited  
2044-124X  
DOI 10.1108/BEPAM-07-2016-0030

for the failure of public sector projects. Penn (2006) established that failure to identify all stakeholder types and then manage them as stakeholders has been identified as one of the sources of failure of local government projects.

Several researchers (Pouloudi and Whitley, 1997; Loosemore, 2006; Bourne and Walker, 2006; Rowlinson and Cheung, 2008) have observed that problems of stakeholder management in construction projects often relate to inadequate engagement of stakeholders, project managers having unclear objectives of stakeholder management, difficulty to identify the “invisible” stakeholder, and inadequate communication with stakeholders.

Ghana is currently implementing its Decentralization Policy Framework and Action Plan (2010-2014) and has identified the need to build adequate capacity at the district level to ensure provision of quality and sustainable service delivery. Ahwoi *et al.* (2013) observed that decentralization reforms in Ghana have made great strides even though challenges still remain. Local governments in Ghana are becoming increasingly responsible for provision of services for their citizenry. Provision of services which were hitherto the preserve of central government ministries, agencies and departments based on the argument of no or low capacity at the local government level is now gradually exchanging hands. Consequently there is an increasing need to develop and maintain adequate capacity at the local government level capable of providing quality delivery of public and social services especially in areas such as water and sanitation, education, health and transportation.

As is typical of most projects, stakeholders of local government projects in Ghana are many and have varying and sometimes conflicting interests and expectations. Stakeholders of local government projects include staff of the relevant Metropolitan, Municipal or District Assembly (MMDA), beneficiary communities, traditional authorities, the contractor, the project sponsor, the project team, suppliers, civil society organizations and the relevant government line agency. Different expectations expressed include, staff of MMDAs hoping to complete their annual work plans within the approved budgets and satisfying some political interests, while beneficiary communities are inclined to ensuring that the project does not pose any environmental hazards. Civil society organizations on the other hand tend to be more concerned about the social impacts or benefits of such projects including laying emphasis on good governance and accountability. Project sponsors on their part are particular about the realization of project objectives within the stipulated project duration and approved budget coupled with achieving value for the funds spent.

The altruistic nature of community projects is major cause of often poor stakeholder engagement in such projects. A recent Ghanaian newspaper article captioned “Kpone traders kick against new market” perfectly illustrates effects of these phenomena. In this community project in Ghana, market women expressed dissatisfaction about a newly commissioned market in the area saying it does not meet the standard they were looking for in a modern market. The 128 stall-capacity market project was abandoned because the market women, a key stakeholder group, were ignored in all the decision-making stages of the project. The lack of proper identification of beneficiaries as key stakeholders in project management is one of the major causes of several completed local government infrastructural projects such as markets becoming white elephants in many communities.

This paper makes an assessment of the practice of stakeholder management of local government projects in Ghana. It identifies and prioritizes the critical success factors (CSFs) and measures for effective stakeholder management at the local government level. Most studies on critical factors in project environments have focused on CSFs and project success and thus this study delves into an area which has not receive much attention in the literature. Ghana is a key example of a highly functioning, institutionally embedded system of local governance in African (Dickovick and Riedl, 2010) and has shared this experience with other countries in the region and supported same in institutionalizing similar decentralization policies and programs. An analysis of the Ghana case show that Local

Governments are in the process of change to becoming much more responsible for projects in their areas. Therefore there is an organizational change problem in understanding the extent to which local governments or district assemblies are achieving adequate movement toward Project Management Capability and Maturity. This study provides a snapshot of current views of local governments, job of managing interests and expectation of both external and internal stakeholders. Therefore, in this paper, the concept of stakeholder management is viewed from project, program and organizational levels.

Again, as underscored by both Faga (2006) and Gareis (2010), local government organizations (LGOs) are not the normal project sponsors or clients in that there is a large-scale repetition of external stakeholder relationships with the local community whose views will be affected by all LGO activities, whether related to project or not. Therefore for the LGO, the problem in managing external (rather than project) stakeholders is a strategic, organizational one. They are often confronted by questions such as how do we manage our local stakeholders generally? How do we then adapt this to specific projects?

Overall, LGOs (as project sponsors) need to develop CSFs which measure their progress towards building capacities in areas such as stakeholder management. The LGO also needs some understanding of its overall stakeholder management through CSF. Within this context, the finding of this study on stakeholder management performance could become the basis for LGO competency development in specific areas where improvements are required. It is expected that the outcome of this research could be applied to other countries with similar country context.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. The next section discusses previous related studies on stakeholder management. This is followed by a presentation of the methodology of the study. The fourth section discusses the key findings from the study. The fifth section identifies measures for improving project stakeholder management. Finally, the research conclusions are presented.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1 Theoretical concept

A project stakeholder can be defined in many different ways. From the time when Freeman (1984) defined a stakeholder as “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of an organization’s objectives,” various definitions have evolved. The PM standards in project management (Project Management Institute, Inc., 2008) define stakeholders as: “Persons and organizations such as customers, sponsors, the performing organization, and the public that are actively involved in the project, or whose interests may be positively or negatively affected by the execution or completion of the project.”

Smith *et al.* (2001) defined stakeholders as representatives, direct and indirect, who may have an interest and could make a contribution to the proposed project. Olander and Landin (2005) referred to a project stakeholder as “a person or group of people who has a vested interest in the success of a project and the environment within which the project operates” (p. 321). Takim (2009) gave a more comprehensive definition of stakeholders “as being those who can influence the activities/final results of the project, whose lives or environment are positively or negatively affected by the project, and who receive direct and indirect benefit from it” (p. 168). The definition of stakeholder is important and consequential because it affects who and what counts (Mitchell *et al.*, 1997) in the stakeholder management process. It is, however, worth noting that although numerous studies have been devoted to examining the stakeholder concept, no single definition of a stakeholder has been universally accepted (Savage *et al.*, 1991).

Stakeholder management is considered a critical component to the successful delivery of any project, program or activity. In its simplest form, stakeholder management is defined as the process by which an individual establishes and maintains support from internal staff

members and external parties for a new product or project or change within the organization. It relates to the management of relationships with individuals or groups as well as a planned approach to engage stakeholders in the project's success (Ham, 2011). Projectsmart.co.uk. (2014) also defines it as the process of managing the expectation of anyone that has an interest in a project or will be affected by its deliverables or outputs. Gardner *et al.* (1986) gives a more elaborate definition of stakeholder management as the process of identifying stakeholder groups, the interests they represent, the amount of power they possess, and determining if they represent inhibiting or supporting factors toward the transformation. Donaldson and Preston (1995) define stakeholder management as "[...] simultaneous attention to the legitimate interests of all appropriate stakeholders, both in the establishment of organization structures and general policies and in case-by-case decision making" (p. 67).

Stakeholder participation processes generally allow people to influence the outcome of plans and projects. By definition, stakeholder participation is a mechanism by which the public is not only heard before the decision, but has an opportunity to influence the decision from the beginning to the end of the decision-making process (DEAT, 2002). The *African Development Bank's (ADB) handbook* on stakeholder consultation and participation in ADB operations (Bank, 2001) defines stakeholder participation in development as "the process through which people with an interest (stakeholders) influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources that affect them" (p. 2). Although there is no universally effective way to incorporate stakeholders, researchers and practitioners generally agree that stakeholder participation is important and has many benefits (Center, 2007).

### 2.2 CSFs for stakeholder management

Vinten (2000) noted that a crucial skill for managers of construction projects is to manage stakeholders' expectations. Further, Cleland (1995) claimed that failure to address stakeholder expectations can result in project failures. These authors posited that stakeholders have significant influence on project outcomes relating to cost, time, technical performance and stakeholder satisfaction (Zwikael *et al.*, 2005). Friedman and Miles (2002) and Elias *et al.* (2004) both acknowledged that stakeholders interest can vary over the life of a project due to their learning, changing values, and specific experiences. Bourne (2005) characterized stakeholders in construction projects as "people or gatherings who have an interest or can contribute some type of information or bolster, or can affect or be affected by, the project." Mitchell *et al.* (1997) investigated stakeholders' dynamics when he used three attributes in measuring the importance of a stakeholder: legitimacy – the moral or legal claim a stakeholder has to influence a particular project, power – their capacity to influence the outcome of a given project, and prgency – the degree to which their claims are urgent or compelling.

Rockart (1979) was the first to identify the essentials of stakeholder management, by developing the CSFs approach as used in this study. The author defined CSFs as "areas, in which results, if they are satisfactory, will ensure successful competitive performance for the organisation." According to Boynton and Zmud (1984), "CSFs are those thing that must go well to ensure success for the manager or an organization, and, therefore, they represent those managerial or enterprise areas, that must be give special or continual attention to bring about high performance." They argued that CSF should include issues vital to an organization's current operating activities and to its future success. Several studies (including Chan *et al.*, 2001; Jefferies *et al.*, 2002; Yu *et al.*, 2006) used this approach in assessing the performance of the management process.

In the domain of stakeholder management, several authors like Bakens *et al.* (2005), Jergeas *et al.* (2000), Karlsen (2008), Olander and Landin (2008) and Young (2006) affirm that

“correspondence” is a critical CSF and they additionally demonstrate that the relationship between the project group and stakeholders is imperative. Cleland and Ireland (2002) viewed CSFs as those activities and practices that should be addressed in order to ensure effective management of stakeholders. Karlsen (2008) affirms that five variables are vital to the arrangement of connections between the project group and the stakeholders; and Karlsen *et al.* (2008) recognize 14 elements as most critical for building trust between a project group and its stakeholders. Aaltonen *et al.* (2008) affirmed that the most crucial factor in project stakeholder management is managing the relationship between the project and its stakeholders and went on to propose CSFs for stakeholder management in construction projects. Jergeas *et al.* (2000) identified two aspects of improvements for managing stakeholders, which are: “communication with stakeholders and setting common goals, objectives and project priorities.” Yang *et al.* (2009, 2010) was very comprehensive and provides a good understanding of CSFs for project stakeholder management. The authors used an integrated approach involving literature review, interview and questionnaire and identified 15 CSFs for project stakeholder management.

Osseo-Asare *et al.* (2005) noted that the CSFs are closely linked to literature on “best practice.” They observed that several literature fail to acknowledge the limitations to transferability to new concepts. There is a critical need for better recognition of the contexts (time, settings, leaders) in which the factors have been established. The results from the literature review show that a range of practical approaches that can be used for stakeholder management has yet to be consolidated. Again, most studies focus only on issues of promotion of the relationships themselves, but few focus on analyzing the impact on the project resulting from those stakeholder relationship networks.

In this study, we attempt to identify unique CSFs which impact on effective project stakeholder management at the local government level. Another important contribution of this paper is the inclusion of perception of development partners (DPs) in the identify and ranking of the CSFs. In Ghana, DPs play a crucial role in the selection, funding and management of projects at levels of government.

### 3. Methodology

The following research methodology was using identifying the CSFs in stakeholder management at the local government level in Ghana.

#### 3.1 Research design

The study used a survey approach for data gathering. The respondents were clients, project sponsors including DPs, consultants, contractors, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community members commonly referred to as opinion leaders. Clients were primarily from various government organizations while consultants and contractors were mainly from the private sector with experience in local government projects. DPs and NGOs supporting local government projects were also identified. The research flow follows the procedure in the studies of Walker (1997) and Chan *et al.* (2004).

#### 3.2 Sampling technique and size

Based on the purpose of the study, its qualitative nature and the need to have a representative sample, the purposive sampling method (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005) was adopted. This method was adopted as it required a deliberate and careful selection of target respondents who belonged to groups that could provide relevant and factual information by means of a questionnaire survey. We estimated the total number of all qualified respondents (both external and internal stakeholders) from the case study MMDA to be about 120. In all, 120 questionnaires were administered to potential respondents, 92 completed questionnaires

were received representing a 77 percent response rate, which is consistent with “the norm of 20-30% that pertains to most questionnaire surveys in the construction industry” (Akintoye, 2000; Dulaimi *et al.*, 2003). The breakdown of respondents was: 37 from client organizations, 26 from consultants, 12 from DPs, six from contractors, six from community members within the Municipality and five from representatives of NGOs.

### 3.3 Data collection

Primary data were collected from field surveys using structured questionnaire as well as interviews with key resource persons from the Municipality. The structured questionnaire comprised mainly close ended questions with very few open-ended questions. The close ended questions were designed to ensure respondents provided definite information required for the purpose of the study while the open-ended questions were designed to elicit information in relation to respondents' own ideas and opinions particularly based on their project experience at the local government level. The questionnaire consisted of three main sections. The first section elicited standard demographic information from respondents i.e. stakeholder grouping they belong to and years of experience working on projects especially at the community (local government) level. The second section identified stages within the project life-cycle when stakeholder groups are identified as partners in the project. Final section, asked more detailed questions which required respondents to rate a set of CSFs in project stakeholder management summarized from the work of Yang *et al.* (2009, 2010). In all 15 CSFs were identified and grouped under categories, namely:

- (1) stakeholder estimation factors: assessing stakeholders behavior, predicting stakeholders' behavior accurately, assessing stakeholder attributes, analyzing stakeholder conflicts and coalitions;
- (2) stakeholder information input factors: formulating a clear project mission statement, identifying stakeholders properly, understanding stakeholders' interest areas and exploring stakeholders' needs and constraints;
- (3) sustainable support factors: compromising conflicts among stakeholders, formulating appropriate strategies and predicting stakeholders' reactions to strategy implementation; and
- (4) project manager decision-making factors: keeping and promoting good relationships, analyzing changes in stakeholder influences and relationships, communicating with and engaging stakeholders, managing stakeholders through CSR.

Prior to sending out the questionnaires, a pilot study was conducted with two project stakeholders; all of whom agreed to the appropriateness of the 15 CSFs. Each of the 15 CSFs were scored and ranking by the stakeholder groups. Data obtained from the questionnaire survey were inputted and analyzed with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences and Microsoft Excel computer software.

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Background information

The demographic information of the respondents given in Table I shows that the client and consultant groups together accounted for more than half of the respondents.

In relation to work experience with projects in general, majority of the respondents (44 percent) had between five to ten years of experience. Similarly majority of the respondents (38 percent) had five to ten years of experience working on projects at the community level, though 37 percent of respondents had less than five years of

**Table I.**  
Demographic information of respondents

Demographic characteristic	Frequency	%
<i>Stakeholder group</i>		
Client	37	40.2
Consultant	26	28.3
Contractor	6	6.5
Community	6	6.5
NGO	5	5.4
Development partner	12	13.0
Total	92	100.0
<i>Number of years of experience working on projects</i>		
0-5 years	19	20.7
6-10 years	44	47.8
11-20 years	18	19.6
More than 20 years	11	12.0
Total	92	100.0
<i>Number of years of experience working on projects at the community level</i>		
0-5 years	37	40.2
6-10 years	38	41.3
11-20 years	12	13.0
More than 20 years	5	5.4
Total	92	100.0

experience working at this level. This may seem to suggest that most respondents with five to ten years of experience had this through working on projects at the local government level, a scenario which was considered beneficial to this study.

#### 4.2 Stakeholder management CSFs

This section examines the perceptions of project stakeholders (namely, clients, contractors, consultants and DPs) on the CSFs in project management at the local government level in Ghana. Table II lists and ranks the 15 identified factors of project stakeholder management. As shown in Table II, respondents gave the top five CSFs for stakeholder management at the local government level in Ghana as: communicating with and engaging stakeholders; identifying stakeholders properly; formulating a clear project mission statement; keeping and promoting good relationships; and analyzing stakeholder conflicts and coalitions.

A one-way between-groups analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to test the hypothesis of no significant difference in the perceptions of the different stakeholder groups regarding the CSFs for stakeholder management at the local government in Ghana. The significance level of the analysis was set at a  $p$ -value of 0.05, as utilized by Cohen (1992) cited in Dulaimi *et al.* (2003), which is the conventional risk level. According to Dulaimi *et al.* (2002), the inference to be drawn from a significance level  $> 0.05$  is that the null hypothesis of the equality of population means can be accepted and that it can be concluded that the populations have rated in a similar manner. Table II summarizes the results of the ANOVA.

The top five CSFs are discussed below:

*Communicating with and engaging with stakeholders.* “Communicating with and engaging stakeholders” was overall ranked as the most CSF for effective project stakeholder management. This is largely in agreement with the finding in the study conducted by Yang, *et al.* (2009) where the same factor was ranked second as a CSF. Together, communication and stakeholder engagement result in more inclusiveness and transparency in decision-making; more likely support for difficult planning challenges; reaching consensual solutions; and avoiding conflicts and stalemates. Several authors have observed that, the main result of applying good

**Table II.**  
Respondents  
perceptions on critical  
success factors for  
stakeholder  
management

Rank	Critical success factor	Full sample Overall		Client (n = 37)		Consultant (n = 26)		Contractor (n = 6)		NGO (n = 5)		Community (n = 6)		Devt. partners (n = 12)		F Stat	Level of sig. (p-value)	Significant difference (yes or no)	
		MS	Rank	MS	Rank	MS	Rank	MS	Rank	MS	Rank	MS	Rank	MS	Rank				
<i>Stakeholder estimation factors</i>																			
7	Assessing stakeholders behavior	4.36	4.32	8	4.33	1	4.33	8	4.75	9	4.00	11	4.17	11	2.566	0.060	No		
8	Predicting stakeholders' behavior accurately	4.23	4.08	11	4.58	10	4.50	6	5.25	3	4.83	1	4.25	7	0.607	0.612	No		
10	Assessing stakeholder attributes	4.17	4.24	10	4.58	10	4.33	8	3.75	14	4.17	10	4.25	7	1.428	0.240	No		
5	Analyzing stakeholder conflicts and coalitions	4.42	4.36	7	4.83	5	4.67	2	5.5	2	4.67	2	4.33	6	2.393	0.097	No		
<i>Stakeholder information input factors</i>																			
3	Formulating a clear project mission statement	4.51	4.59	2	4.96	2	4.67	2	5.25	3	4.33	7	4.25	7	1.093	0.356	No		
2	Identifying stakeholders properly	4.54	4.57	3	4.95	2	4.67	2	4.75	9	4.67	2	4.58	1	0.718	0.544	No		
6	Understanding stakeholders' interest areas	4.42	4.41	5	4.79	6	4.50	6	5.25	3	4.50	5	4.50	2	0.229	0.876	No		
11	Exploring stakeholders' needs and constraints	4.15	4.32	8	4.63	9	3.00	12	4.00	13	4.33	7	4.25	7	0.731	0.536	No		
<i>Sustainable support factors</i>																			
15	Compromising conflicts among stakeholders	3.36	3.47	15	3.83	15	2.67	14	3.25	15	3.33	15	3.33	15	0.686	0.604	No		
9	Formulating appropriate strategies	4.22	4.41	5	4.79	6	2.50	15	5.25	3	4.00	11	4.17	11	0.809	0.492	No		
13	Predicting stakeholders' reactions to strategy implementation	3.87	3.76	14	4.46	12	3.00	12	5.75	1	4.33	7	3.58	14	1.302	0.276	No		
<i>Project manager decision-making factors</i>																			
4	Keeping and promoting good relationships	4.50	4.54	4	4.75	8	4.83	1	5.25	3	4.67	2	4.50	2	0.093	0.911	No		
12	Analyzing changes in stakeholder influences and relationships	4.08	4.05	13	4.45	12	3.67	10	4.75	9	4.00	11	4.45	4	1.602	0.195	No		
1	Communicating with and engaging stakeholders	4.58	4.68	1	4.95	2	4.67	2	5.25	3	4.50	5	4.45	4	1.083	0.343	No		
14	Managing stakeholders through CSR	3.87	4.06	12	4.17	14	3.67	10	4.5	12	3.50	14	3.73	13	1.338	0.267	No		



communication and engagement strategies in planning should be to create a wide public support for nature-based solutions to societal challenges that are both lasting and sustainable. Finally, Weaver (2007) advocated that project managers should be highly skilled negotiators and communicators capable of managing individual stakeholder's expectations and creating a positive culture change within the overall organization.

*Identifying stakeholders properly.* The CSF ranked second in the study "identifying stakeholders properly" was also ranked fifth in the previous study by Yang *et al.* (2009). The value of proper identification of stakeholders during project designs allows for adequate understanding of their needs and better chance of the project meeting stakeholders unique expectations.

*Formulating a clear project mission statement.* However, "formulating a clear project mission statement" was ranked third in this study was ranked twelfth by Yang *et al.* (2009). Formation of a clear mission statement is a necessary requirement for effective stakeholder management and project success. As noted by Winch (2000) the complexity of client organizations and the social, economic, and regulatory environment in which the projects operate means that "the strategic definition of the project mission is inevitably politicized" (Winch, 2000). To emphasize the need for significance of better understanding of project objectives, Jergeas *et al.* (2000) observed that "setting common goals, objectives and project priorities" is significant for improving stakeholder management and for ensuring that project objectives are achieved.

*Keeping and promoting good relationships.* "Keeping and promoting good relationships" was ranked fourth by respondents and ranked sixth in the study by Yang *et al.* (2009). This is consistent with finding of Jergeas *et al.* (2000) who concluded that successful relationships between the project and its stakeholders are vital for successful delivery of projects and meeting stakeholder expectations (Cleland, 1986; Savage *et al.*, 1991; Hartmann, 2002). Finally, Karlsen *et al.* (2008) and others noted that trust and commitment among stakeholders can be built and maintained by an efficient relationships management (Pinto, 1998; Bourne, 2005).

*Analyzing stakeholder conflicts and coalitions.* "Analyzing stakeholder conflicts and coalitions" was ranked fifth and seventh by this study and the previous study, respectively. Conflict occurs whenever disagreements exist in a social situation (Schermerhorn *et al.*, 2003). Weible (2006) acknowledged that there is a growing recognition that public policy controversies are driven more by value differences among stakeholders than by technical deficiencies, because stakeholders are motivated to convert their beliefs into policy, filter out dissonant information, and structure their interactions within homogeneous advocacy coalitions. Frooman (1999) proposed that project managers should know the potential conflicts stemming from divergent interests and also search for possible coalitions among stakeholders.

## 5. Limitation of study

Generalization of the findings should be done with caution since the scope of data collection was limited to only district assemblies in the Greater Accra region of Ghana. Nevertheless the results are, however, useful and indicative and can lend direction to future research. Again, the study's findings, to a large extent, appear to be consistent with findings from previous studies relating to stakeholder needs, expectations, influence, participation and management of projects. Despite the shortcoming with scope of data, the findings provide empirical evidence on the context-specific feature of local government stakeholder management. As in Yang *et al.* (2009), we observed from the findings of this paper that the selection of approaches suitable for a particular situation should be dependent on the nature of the project and objectives of the engagement. Again there is no single, most effective approach and usually a number of alternative approaches are combined to analyze and engage stakeholders.

## 6. Conclusion

This study set out to identify the CSFs and measures for effective project stakeholder management at the local government level from the perspectives of various stakeholder groups, namely, clients, consultants, contractors, DPs, NGOs and community members.

The results indicate that project management teams at the local government level often fail to properly identify some stakeholders from the early stages of the project. We identified the top five CSFs for stakeholder management at the local government level in Ghana as: communicating with and engaging stakeholders; identifying stakeholders properly; formulating a clear project mission statement, keeping and promoting good relationships; and analyzing stakeholder conflicts and coalitions. There were no statistically significant differences in how all six different stakeholder groups view the CSFs for stakeholder management. Consequently it was generally agreed by all that these factors are somehow linked and critical in managing stakeholders to ensure the success of local government projects in Ghana. Though this study identified similar factors from existing literature, these CSFs are ranked differently by stakeholders in the Ghana context. The results indicate that prioritization of the critical factors for successful stakeholder management at local governments demands significantly on the context. This means there is a critical need for better recognition of the contexts (time, settings, leaders) in which the factors have been established and applied.

The paper's contribution to literature has both practical and theoretical implications. First, this research work has contributed to the growing body of knowledge related to CSFs for local government projects. The results should clarify factors which are of priority to stakeholders when assessing their involvement in projects. In terms of practical application, LGOs could conduct regular trend analysis of their performance on these success factors and use this knowledge in establishing and implementing performance enhancement strategy for local government personnel in Ghana. Within this context, the findings of this study on stakeholder management performance could become the basis for LGO competency development in specific areas where improvements are required. Further research could be conducted with data from other regions of the country to compare and validate these findings.

## References

- Aaltonen, K., Jaakko, K. and Tuomas, O. (2008), "Stakeholder salience in global projects", *International Journal of Project Management*, Vol. 26 No. 5, pp. 509-516, doi: 10.1016/j.ijproman.2008.05.004.
- Ahwoi, K., Issachar, J. and Deku, K. (2013), *Review of Progress of Decentralization Reform in Ghana*, Accra.
- Akintoye, A. (2000), "Analysis of factors influencing project cost estimating practice", *Construction Management and Economics*, Vol. 18 No. 1, pp. 77-89.
- Bakens, W., Foliente, G. and Jasuja, M. (2005), "Engaging stakeholders in performance-based building: lessons from the performance-based building (PeBBu) network", *Building Research & Information*, Vol. 33 No. 2, pp. 149-158.
- Bank, A.D. (2001), "Handbook on Stakeholder Consultation and Participation in ADB operations", The African Development Bank, Abidjan, Ivory Coast.
- Bourne, L. (2005), "Project relationship management and the stakeholder Circle™", PhD thesis, RMIT University.
- Bourne, L. and Walker, D.H.T. (2006), "Visualizing stakeholder influence – two Australian examples", *Project Management Journal*, Vol. 37 No. 1, pp. 5-22.
- Boynlon, A.C. and Zmud, R.W. (1984), "An assessment of critical success factors", *Sloan Management Review*, Vol. 25 No. 4, pp. 17-27.
- Center, N.C. (2007), "Introduction to stakeholder participation", Social Science Tools for Coastal Programs, available at: [http://coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/\\_/pdf/stakeholder.pdf?redirect=301ocm](http://coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/_/pdf/stakeholder.pdf?redirect=301ocm) (accessed July 1, 2016).

- Chan, P.C.A., Ho, C.K.D. and Tam, C.M. (2001), "Design and build project success factors: multivariate analysis", *Journal of Construction Engineering and Management*, Vol. 129 No. 2, pp. 93-100, doi: 10.1061/(ASCE)0733-9364(2001)127:2(93).
- Chan, A.P.C., Scott, D. and Chan, A.P.L. (2004), "Factors affecting the success of a construction project", *Journal of Construction Engineering and Management*, Vol. 130 No. 1, pp. 153-155.
- Cleland, D.I. (1986), "Project stakeholder management", *Project Management Journal*, Vol. 17 No. 4, pp. 36-44.
- Cleland, D.I. (1995), "Leadership and the project management body of knowledge", *International Journal of Project Management*, Vol. 13 No. 2, pp. 82-88, doi: 10.1016/0263-7863(94)00018-8.
- Cleland, D.I. and Ireland, R.L. (2002), *Project Management: Strategic Design and Implementation*, McGraw-Hill, New York, NY.
- Cohen, W.W. (1992), "Using distribution-free learning theory to analyze solution path caching mechanisms", *Computational Intelligence*, Vol. 8, pp. 336-375.
- Cooper, B. (2014), "Corporate education group: what you must know about stakeholder management", available at: [www.corpedgroup.com/resources/pm/WhatMustKnowStakeholder.asp](http://www.corpedgroup.com/resources/pm/WhatMustKnowStakeholder.asp) (accessed February 15, 2016).
- DEAT (2002), "Retrieved from Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT)", available at: [www.environment.gov.za/Services/documents/Publications/eia\\_info\\_series\\_stakeholder](http://www.environment.gov.za/Services/documents/Publications/eia_info_series_stakeholder) (accessed February 15, 2017).
- Dickovick, J.T. and Riedl, R.B. (2010), *Comparative Assessment of Decentralization in Africa: Final Report and Summary of Findings*, United States Agency for International Development, Washington, DC.
- Donaldson, T. and Preston, L.E. (1995), "The stakeholder theory of the corporation: concepts, evidence, and implications", *The Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 20 No. 1, pp. 65-91.
- Dulaimi, M., Ling, F. and Bajracharya, A. (2003), "Organisational motivation and inter-organisational interaction in construction innovation in Singapore", *Construction Management and Economics*, Vol. 21, pp. 307-318.
- Dulaimi, M.F., Ling, F.Y.Y., Ofori, G. and De Silva, N. (2002), "Enhancing integration and innovation in construction", *Building Research and Information*, Vol. 30 No. 4, pp. 237-247.
- Elias, A.A., Jackson, L.S. and Cavana, R.Y. (2004), "Changing positions and interests of stakeholders in environmental conflict: a New Zealand transport infrastructure case", *Asia Pacific Viewpoint*, Vol. 45 No. 1, pp. 87-104.
- Faga, B. (2006), *Designing Public Consensus, the Civic Theater of Community Participation for Architects, Landscape Architects, Planners and Urban Designers*, John Wiley, Hoboken, NJ.
- Freeman, E. (1984), *Strategic Management: a Stakeholder Approach*, Pitman Inc., Boston, MA.
- Friedman, A.L. and Miles, S. (2002), "Developing stakeholder theory", *Journal of Management Studies*, Vol. 39, pp. 1-21, available at: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=309217>
- Frooman, J. (1999), "Stakeholder influence strategies", *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 24 No. 2, pp. 191-205, doi: 10.2307/259074.
- Gardner, J.R., Rachlin, R. and Sweeny, A. (1986), *Handbook of Strategic Planning*, John Wiley, New York, NY.
- Gareis, R. (2010), "Changes of organizations by projects", *International Journal of Project Management*, Vol. 28, pp. 314-327.
- Ham, E. (2011), "Product management: training and expertise", Brainmates, available at: [www.brainmates.com.au/brainrants/some-practical-tools-for-stakeholder-management](http://www.brainmates.com.au/brainrants/some-practical-tools-for-stakeholder-management) (accessed July 14, 2016).
- Hartmann, F.T. (2002), "The role of trust in project management", in Slevin, D.P., Cleland, D.I. and Pinto, J.K. (Eds), *Frontiers of Project Management Research*, PMI, Newtown Square, PA, pp. 225-235.

- Jefferies, M., Gameson, R. and Rowlinson, S. (2002), "Critical success factors of the BOOT procurement system: reflection from the Stadium Australia case study", *Engineering, Construction and Architectural*, Vol. 9 No. 4, pp. 352-361, doi: 10.1046/j.1365-232X.20 M02a.0n0a2g4e9m.exn.
- Jergeas, G., Williamson, E., Skulmoski, G. and Thomas, J. (2000), "Stakeholder management on construction projects", *AACE International Transaction*, pp. 12.1-12.5.
- Karlsen, J.T. (2008), "Forming relationships with stakeholders in engineering projects", *European Journal of Industrial Engineering*, Vol. 2 No. 1, pp. 35-49.
- Karlsen, J.T., Graee, K. and Massaoud, M.J. (2008), "Building trust in project-stakeholder relationships", *Baltic Journal of Management*, Vol. 3 No. 1, pp. 7-22.
- Leedy, P.D. and Ormrod, J.E. (2005), *Practical Research: Planning and Design*, Pearson Education Inc, New York, NY.
- Loosemore, M. (2006), *Managing Project Risks in the Management of Complex Projects*, Pryke S and Smith H. Blackwell.
- Mitchell, R.K., Agle, B.R. and Wood, D.J. (1997), "Toward a theory of stakeholder identification and salience: defining the principle of who and what really counts", *The Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 22, pp. 853-886.
- Olander, S. and Landin, A. (2005), "Evaluation of stakeholder influence in the implementation of construction projects", *International Journal of Project Management* No. 23, pp. 321-328.
- Olander, S. and Landin, A. (2008), "A comparative study of factors affecting the external stakeholder management process", *Construction Management and Economics*, Vol. 26 No. 6, p. 553, doi: 10.1080/01446190701821810.
- Osseo-Asare, A.E., Longbottom, D. and Murphy, W.D. (2005), "Leadership best practices for sustaining quality in UK higher education from the perspective of the EFQM excellence model", *Quality Assurance in Education*, Vol. 13 No. 2, pp. 148-170.
- Penn, R. (2006), *Speech to the PMPA*, London.
- Pinto, J.K. (1998), *Project Management Handbook. The Project Management Institute*, Jossey-Bass Inc., San Francisco, CA.
- Pouloudi, A. and Whitley, E. (1997), "Stakeholder identification in inter-organizational systems: gaining insights for drug use", *European Journal of Information System*.
- Project Management Institute, Inc. (2008), *A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK Guide)*, 4th ed., PMI, PA, p. 23.
- Projectsmart.co.uk (2014), "Projectsmart.co.uk", available at: [www.projectsmart.co.uk/stakeholder-management.php](http://www.projectsmart.co.uk/stakeholder-management.php)
- Rockart, J. (1979), "Chief executives define their own data needs", *Harvard Business Review*, Vol. 57 No. 2, pp. 81-93.
- Rowlinson, S. and Cheung, Y. (2008), "Stakeholder management through empowerment: modeling project success", *Construction Management and Economics*, Vol. 26 No. 6, pp. 611-623.
- Savage, G.T., Nix, T.W., Whitehead, C.J. and Blair, J.D. (1991), "Strategies for assessing and managing organizational stakeholders", *Academy of Management Executive*, Vol. 5 No. 2, pp. 61-75.
- Schermerhorn, J.R., Hunt, J.G. and Osborn, R.N. (2003), *Organizational Behaviour*, 8th ed., John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Smith, J., Love, P. and Wyatt, R. (2001), "To build or not to build? Assessing the strategic needs of construction industry clients and their stakeholders", *Structural Survey*, Vol. 19 No. 2, pp. 121-132.
- Takim, R. (2009, May), "The management of stakeholders' needs and expectations in the development of construction project in Malaysia", *Modern Applied Science*.
- Vinten, G. (2000), "The stakeholder manager", *Management Decision*, Vol. 289 No. 6, pp. 377-387.
- Walker, D.H.T. (1997), "Choosing an appropriate research methodology", *Construction Management*, Vol. 15 No. 2, pp. 149-159.

- Weaver, P. (2007), *Getting the "Soft Stuff" Right – Effective Communication is Key to Successful Project Outcome!*, – PMI Global Congress (North America), October 6-9.
- Weible, C.M. (2006), "An advocacy coalition framework approach to stakeholder analysis: understanding the political context of California marine protected area policy", *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, Vol. 17, pp. 95-117.
- Winch, G.M. (2000), "Innovativeness in British and French construction: the evidence from transmanche-link", *Construction Management and Economics*, Vol. 18 No. 7, pp. 807-818.
- Yang, J., Shen, G., Drew, D. and Ho, M. (2010), "Critical success factors for stakeholder management: construction practitioners' perspectives", *Journal of Construction Engineering and Management*, Vol. 136 No. 7, pp. 778-786.
- Yang, J., Shen, Q.G., Drew, D.S. and Ho, M.F. (2009), "Critical success factors for stakeholders management: construction practitioners' perspectives", *Journal of Construction Engineering and Management*, Vol. 136, pp. 778-786.
- Yang, J., Shen, G.Q., Ho, M., Drew, D.S. and Chan, A.P. (2009), "Exploring critical success factors for stakeholder management in construction projects", *Journal of Civil Engineering and Management*, Vol. 15 No. 4, pp. 337-348, available at: [www.jcem.vgtu.lt](http://www.jcem.vgtu.lt)
- Young, T.L. (2006), *Successful Project Management*, Kogan Page Ltd, London.
- Yu, T.W., Shen, Q.P., Kelly, J. and Hunter, K. (2006), "Investigation of critical success factors in construction project briefing by way of content analysis", *Journal of Construction Engineering and Management*, Vol. 132 No. 11, pp. 1178-1186.
- Zwikaël, O., Shimizu, K. and Globerson, S. (2005), "Cultural differences in project management processes: a field study", *International Journal of Project Management*, Vol. 23 No. 6, pp. 454-462.

### Further reading

- Ayatah, A.K. (2012), *Examining Stakeholder Management Challenges and their Impact on Project Management in the Case of Advocacy and Empowerment NGOs in the Upper East Region of Ghana*, Accra.
- Bourne, L. and Walker, D. (2005), "Visualising and mapping stakeholder influence", *Management Decision*, Vol. 43 No. 5, pp. 649-660.
- Dada, M.O. (2013), "Expected success factors for public sector projects in Nigeria: a stakeholder analysis", *Organizational, Technology and Management in Construction: An International Journal*, No. 5, pp. 852-859, doi: 10.5592/otmcj.2013.2.4.
- Epp, A. (2013), "Assessing the impact of stakeholder engagement on perceptions of DMO performance", International Centre for Responsible Tourism Occasional Paper (28), available at: [www.icrtourism.org](http://www.icrtourism.org) (accessed July 1, 2013).
- Freeman, R.E. and McVea, J. (2001), *A Stakeholder Approach to Strategic Management*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford.
- Fuchs, D., Kalfagianni, A. and Havinga, T. (2011, September), "Actors in private food governance: the legitimacy of retail standards and multistakeholder initiatives with civil society participation", *Agriculture and Human Values*, Vol. 28 No. 3, pp. 353-367.
- Ghana Statistical Services (2012), *2010 Population & Housing Census: Summary Report of Final Results*, The Ghana Statistical Service, Accra, Ghana.
- Grunert, S. and König, M. (2012), "Customers, employees, NGOs- which stakeholders do really count? A holistic conceptual framework for stakeholder prioritization and expectation management", *Arbeitspapier*, Vol. 15 No. 1.
- Johnson, G., Scholes, K. and Whittington, R. (2008), *Exploring Corporate Strategy. Text & Cases*, 8th ed., Prentice Hall Financial Times, Harlow.
- Love, P.E., Skitmore, R.M. and Earl, G. (1998), "Selecting a suitable procurement method for a building project", *Construction Management and Economics*, Vol. 16 No. 2, pp. 221-233.

- MindTools, L. (1996), "Essential tools for an excellent career", available at: [www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newPPM\\_07.htm](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newPPM_07.htm) (accessed April 7, 2016).
- Olander, S. (2007), "Stakeholder impact analysis in construction project", *Construction Management and Economics*, No. 25, pp. 277-287.
- Sutterfield, J.S., Friday-Stroud, S.S. and Shivers-Blackwell, S.L. (2006), "A case study of project and stakeholder management failures: lessons learned", *Project Management Journal*, Vol. 37 No. 5, pp. 26-35.
- Utting, P. (2002), "Regulating business via multistakeholder initiatives: a preliminary assessment", *Voluntary Approaches to Corporate Responsibility: Readings and a Resource Guide*, The UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS) and UNRISD Geneva, May.
- Wideman, M. (1998), "How to motivate all stakeholders to work together", in Cleland, D.I. (Ed.), *Field Guide to Project Management*, Van Nostrand Reinhold, New York, NY, pp. 212-216.
- Winch, G. and Bonke, S. (2002), "Project stakeholder mapping: analysing the interests of project stakeholders", in Slevin, D.P., Cleland, D.I. and Pinto, J.K. (Eds), *The Frontiers of Project Management Research*, Project Management Institute Inc, Newtown Square.
- Wong, K. and Aspinwall, E. (2005), "An empirical study of the important factors for knowledge management adoption in the SME sector", *Journal of Knowledge Management*, Vol. 9 No. 3, pp. 64-82.

**Corresponding author**

Charles Amoatey can be contacted at: [camoatey@gimpa.edu.gh](mailto:camoatey@gimpa.edu.gh)

---

For instructions on how to order reprints of this article, please visit our website:

[www.emeraldgroupublishing.com/licensing/reprints.htm](http://www.emeraldgroupublishing.com/licensing/reprints.htm)

Or contact us for further details: [permissions@emeraldinsight.com](mailto:permissions@emeraldinsight.com)

Reproduced with permission of copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.