



CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS OF IFI-FUNDED TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS IN UZBEKISTAN

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Abstract: International Financial Institution (IFI)-funded transport infrastructure projects play a significant role in supporting economic development and regional connectivity in Uzbekistan. While previous studies have primarily focused on implementation risks and project failures, limited attention has been given to the factors contributing to successful project delivery. This study examines the critical success factors affecting the performance of IFI-funded transport infrastructure projects in Uzbekistan through a review of existing literature and analysis of project implementation practices. The findings indicate that comprehensive project preparation, institutional capacity, stakeholder coordination, efficient procurement processes, and effective project governance are among the key determinants of project success. The study provides practical insights for improving the effectiveness and sustainability of future infrastructure investments financed by international development partners.

Keywords: transport infrastructure, critical success factors, project governance, international financial institutions, project management, Uzbekistan.

Introduction.

Transport infrastructure plays one of the most vital roles in promoting economic growth, regional connectivity and social development of a country. Recently, Uzbekistan has significantly increased its transport sector's investment and project portfolios with the support of international financial institutions (IFIs), including the Asian Development Bank (ADB), Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), the World Bank (WB) and etc. While previous studies have primarily focused on implementation risks and project failures, understanding the factors that contribute to successful project delivery is equally important.



Project success is one of the major topics of discussion in the project management literature. According to Ikam Diallo and Thuillier (2012), successful implementation of development projects depends on effective project design, monitoring systems, stakeholder coordination, and institutional capacity. Similarly, Flyvberg (2014) argues that adequate management structures, realistic planning, and efficient risk mitigation are crucial for the successful delivery of mega infrastructure projects.

The purpose of this study is to identify the critical success factors that influence the implementation of IFI-funded transport projects in Uzbekistan and to provide recommendations for improving project performance.

Research Methodology

This study uses a qualitative research approach based in a review of academic literature and practical experience from IFI-funded transport infrastructure projects implemented in Uzbekistan. The analysis relies on existing studies on infrastructure project management, project governance and development finance.

A comparative analysis was conducted to identify the most frequently cited success factors in international literature and evaluate their relevance within the context of transport infrastructure projects financed by multilateral development banks.

Main Findings and Discussion

During the analysis, five main success factors that drive project implementation progress were identified. These findings are consistent with previous research on infrastructure project management and development.

Project Preparation and Planning

One of the most important determinants of project success is project preparation. Flyvberg in his 2014 research “What You Should Know About Megaprojects and Why” states that optimistic forecasting, inadequate planning and insufficient feasibility assessments often lead to cost overruns and time extensions in infrastructure projects. Likewise, Osei-Kyei and Chan (2015) identify project planning and clear project objectives among the most cited critical success factors in construction and infrastructure projects. In the contexts of this research, comprehensive preparation helps determine realistic budgets, adequate procurement plan and schedules and implementation strategies before the commencement of works. The majority of investment plans for current projects include a component if future project preparations with the help of international project preparation consultants and companies.

Institutional Capacity

Project performance is found to be directly influenced by the implementing entity. Ikam Diallo and Thuillier in their 2012 study of World Bank-funded projects, emphasized that institutional environment, monitoring activities and staff competencies significantly influence project outcomes. Similarly, Pinto and Slevin (1987) highlight that managerial capacity and organizational support are very important for project success. In Uzbekistan, strengthening the technical and administrative capacity of Project Implementation Units (PIUs) can improve decision-making processes, reporting quality and compliance with both IFI and local requirements. Moreover, in recent projects, IFIs started to include the Institutional capacity strengthening as a project component to emphasize the importance of strengthening the institutional capacity of local implementation agencies.

Stakeholder Coordination and Communication

Proper stakeholder coordination is important for successful infrastructure delivery. Transport projects usually involve government agencies, contractors, consultants, local communities and international donors, each with different levels of responsibility and interest. Wand et al. (2020) identify stakeholder management and communication as the most commonly cited factors in infrastructure megaprojects. Moreover, proactive stakeholder engagement is found to improve trust, reduce conflict and facilitate project implementation (Bourne, 2015). Therefore, outlining clear communication channels and coordination mechanisms is critical for minimizing delays and ensuring project alignment with initial plan.

Procurement and Contract Management

Implementations project progress fully rely on successful procurement activities and their further contract management. Delays during bidding stages can significantly affect not only the overall project timeline but also financial performance. According to Chan, Scott and Lam's study from 2002, adequate contract understanding and administration, as well as transparent and timely procurement management contribute to project success. In addition, IFIs strongly emphasize transparency, healthy competition, and accountability within procurement systems. Effective contract management enables timely issue resolution, performance monitoring, and mitigation of implementational risks associated with claims and construction delays.

Project Governance and Monitoring

Project Governance provides the institutional framework through which decisions are made and project performance is monitored. Loopholes in governance, that include but not limited to unclear responsibilities and weak oversight mechanism,



often lead to poor infrastructure project outcomes (Khan et al., 2019). This study is also supported by Muller (2009) who argues that project efficiency, accountability and strategic alignment are directly influenced by governance structures. Continuous monitoring and evaluation help the project teams to identify challenges at an early stage and adopt corrective actions before serious deviations happen. These findings are also consistent with the study of Ika et al. (2012), who highlight monitoring and supervision as critical success factors in development projects.

Conclusion

This article shows that the success of project implementation depends on combination of technical, institutional, and managerial factors. The most significant success factors include comprehensive project preparation, strong institutional capacity, effective stakeholder coordination, efficient procurement and contract management and robust governance mechanisms.

Improvement of these areas can help improve project performance, boost the effectiveness of direct international investment, and contribute to sustainable development of Uzbekistan's transport infrastructure.

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