



Impact of Monitoring and Evaluation Practices on Compliance at Rwanda's Great Lakes Trade Facilitation Project

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of monitoring and evaluation practices on compliance activities with reference to Ministry of Trade and Industry. Specifically, the study sought to establish the role of technical expertise of monitoring and evaluation, monitoring and evaluation planning process and challenges in monitoring and evaluation practices on compliance activities of Great Lakes Trade Facilitation Project. The study also aimed at improving monitoring and evaluation practices in relation to compliance activities. A descriptive research design using census approach was used. The target population comprised of employees of Ministry of Trade and Industry with a sampled size of 96 employees in monitoring and evaluation divisions. Data were collected using questionnaire, interview guide and desk review. Data was edited, categorized, coded and computerized. Results showed that 52% strongly agreed that technical expertise of monitoring and evaluation practice on compliance activities play a role in technology awareness. Sixty three percent of the respondents strongly agreed that monitoring and evaluation planning processes contribute in identifying compliance performance and enhances project quality. The study concluded that technical expertise of monitoring and evaluation practice on compliance activities plays a role in technology awareness in Great Lakes Trade Facilitation Project in MINICOM. The study additionally concluded that M&E planning process on compliance activities contributes in identifying compliance performance enhancement through planning the implementation process in Great Lakes Trade Facilitation Project in MINICOM. The study recommended the Ministry of Trade and Industry to practice more M&E planning process on compliance. Community participation should be promoted because it gives the individuals a feeling of having a place in the execution of a project and this helps to ensure that guidelines are kept up.

Keywords: *Monitoring and Evaluation, Compliance Activities, Theory of Change, Results Based Management*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Monitoring and evaluation practices are tools to check what is being done and whether the project is making a difference. These systems allow project managers to calculate how to allocate resources to achieve the best results (Shapiro, 2011). In this regard, a lot of donor and government resources are provided to Great Lakes Trade Facilitation Project in MINICOM to implement projects in order to promote implementation of compliance activities. Not only does best monitoring and evaluation practices require that projects are monitored but also project stakeholders require compliance for resource use and impact, good project performance and organizational learning are vital. There were reports decrying the inadequate compliance in monitoring and evaluation practices of trading projects implemented in MINICOM.

The auditor general's report of 2017 declared that the serious lack of compliance transparency affects implementation of monitoring and evaluation practices. Activities under Great Lakes Trade Facilitation Projects are categorized through a process of environmental screening under one of the following environmental impact categories: A, B, C, as defined in the World Bank safeguard policy for Environmental Assessment OP 4.0.1. Activities proposed under GLTFP are classified as category B. The Environmental Social Management Framework (ESMF) was prepared to ensure that potential negative environmental and socioeconomic impacts are identified during project implementation prior to approval of individual components, and that appropriate measures are taken to avoid, minimize and mitigate such negative impacts.

1.1 Research Objectives

This study emphasizes on the following objectives:

- i. To establish the role of technical expertise of monitoring and evaluation on compliance activities
- ii. To determine the contribution of monitoring and evaluation planning process on compliance activities
- iii. To identify the challenges in monitoring and evaluation practices on compliance activities of Great Lakes Trade Facilitation Project in MINICOM

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Review of Empirical Studies

Previous studies have been conducted on monitoring and evaluation and compliance activities. In this regards, Crawford and Bryce (2013) argue that monitoring and evaluation is shown as a center instrument intended to improving project management quality, taking into account that in the short time and in medium term, the management of complex projects will involve relating procedures from the financial related view point, that are required to adhere to the criteria of effectiveness, sustainability. The activities of monitoring ensures both project managers and staff in understanding whether the projects are advancing as determined according to Houston, (2008). In this manner, monitoring helps the foundation for limiting time alongside cost overruns, while at the same time guaranteeing that the necessary standard quality is achieved in the usage of the project. On a similar note evaluation is a tool for helping project planners and developers in assessing the degree which the projects have accomplished the goals that are set forth in the documents related with the project (Crawford & Bryce, 2013).

Hwang and Lim (2013) studied project performance comparable to its monitoring and evaluation practices, fund management, activity scheduling and quality performance and concluded that this relationship management could result to the accomplishment of the project. The elements were monitoring project coordination and design training and the institutional setting. They expounded the consistent theory and practice that most noticeable project achievement factor for the project supervisors are design and monitoring. International Fund for Agricultural Development, IFAD (2012) declared that monitoring and evaluation is a significant achievement factor for a project.

UNDP (2012) did an assessment to discover the performance of development projects using project monitoring, evaluation and planning. UNDP was sharp in project execution and development results. According to UNDP, this would have made value for their customers. To help the study they audited along with 2008-2011 the strategic plan to recreate findings. Specific case studies were done from five nations, Argentina, Egypt, Indonesia, Moldava and Zambia. There were 365 reactions and various work area audits of related writing according to Houston (2008).

Monitoring and evaluation are especially significant practices at any project stage. It permits a continuous review of project effectiveness. Lack of definition of project is a failure to clarify project objectives but also legislative statements of project goals are regularly vague and even opposing especially in social legislation where the aims are not clear and often represent difficulty in implementing monitoring and evaluation practices (Houston, 2008). Absence of community inclusion in project initiation and monitoring may result into arrangements and helpless project performance. This could present security hazard for the project itself as its wellbeing can't be ensured. Community participation will give individuals a feeling of belonging in the performance of a project and help to ensure that standards are maintained.

2.2. Theoretical Framework

In conducting the present study, four theories seemed to be relevant. These are Theory of Change, Program Theory, Result Based Management and Phasing Theory. According to Schwandt (2012) Theory of Change framework for the project can then help to guide stakeholder's engagement approaches, communication influencing, co-production strategies and monitoring tracking progress towards impact inside the lifetime of the project. Theory of Change mindset was relevant to the present study since it encourages the project group to react to changes in the context as a part of adoptive management. The Program Theory was created by Huey Chen, Peter Rossi, Michael Quinn Patton and Carol Weiss in 1950 and Hwang and Lim in 2013. The focus of this theory is how to bring change, and who is answerable for the change. Logical models frequently used to represent to the Program Theory shows how the overall logic is utilized in an intervention The application by the proponents to this theory was on how to relate program theories to evaluation for several years (Sethi & Philippines (2012). This theory was used in this study because it enables the evaluator to understand why and how the program is working.

The Results Based Management characterizes definitive outcomes and simultaneously requires monitoring just as self-appraisal of progress to feasible outcomes, including recording execution (UNDP, 2012). It underlines monitoring as a procedure and exercises from the monitoring procedure talked about occasionally. The theory centers on reasonable change through a well-structured arranging process with the utilization of ability to work to impact the project execution.

Finally, Phasing Theory requires clear goals and objectives from the beginning and well-articulated decision points at each project end phase where there is ambiguity about local policy, capability or guarantee then an initial pilot phase leading to a number subsequent phase that moves the business cases according to Kalali (2011). This theory was applied to the present study owing its ability to estimate financial resources done during planning for implementation of monitoring and evaluation as Dyason (2010) stated is a key aspect of planning to weigh the budget needs. The above theory enabled the researcher to establish the conceptual framework as follows:

2.3 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework is presented in Figure 1

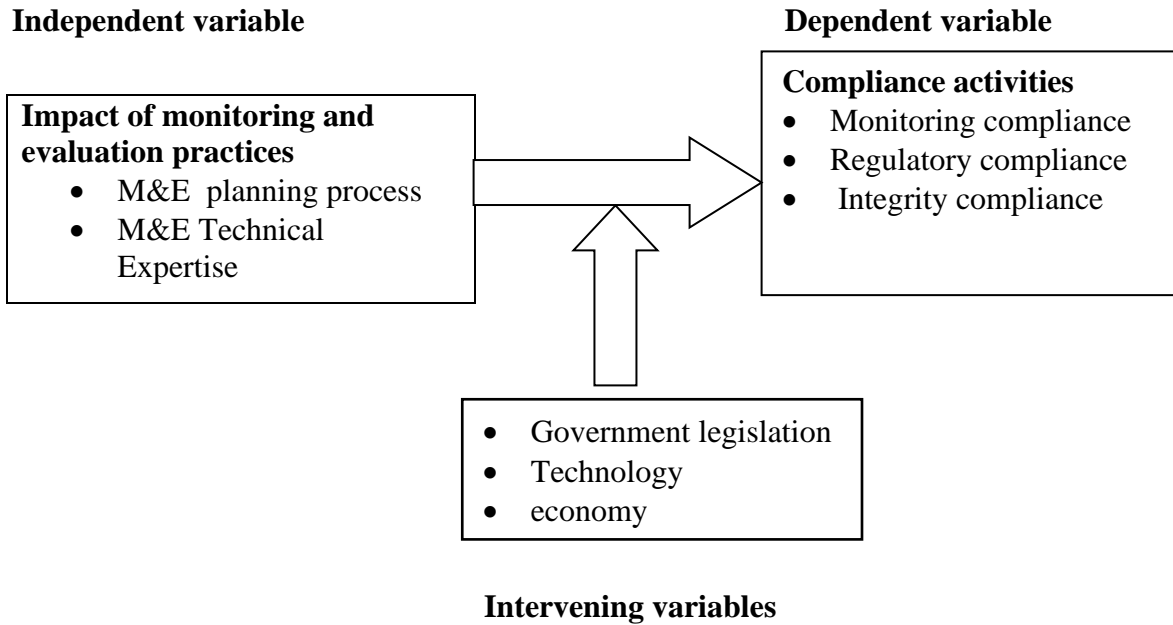


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

Source : Researcher (2020)

The impact of monitoring and evaluation as an independent variable consists of two indicators: monitoring and evaluation planning process and monitoring and evaluation technical expertise which are monitoring and evaluation practices that corresponds to the performance of compliance activities. This means once the monitoring and evaluation practices are implemented this will lead to the great performance of compliance activities as stated above External factors also influence the the impact of monitoring and evaluation on compliance activities.

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used the descriptive method with both qualitative and quantitative approaches. This guaranteed that understanding is improved by incorporating various methods of knowing. The study targeted 96 employees from the Ministry of Trade and Industry using a census approach because the population was small. For quantitative data analysis, descriptive and inferential statistics were used while qualitative data analysis applied content analysis.

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 The role of technical expertise of monitoring and evaluation on compliance activities

Table 1 presents the views on whether role of technical expertise of monitoring and evaluation practices on compliance activities

Table 1: Views on whether role of technical expertise of monitoring and evaluation practices on compliance activities

Views	Strongly agree		Agree		Not sure		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Technology awareness												
Supporting project team	50	52	20	21	17	18	9	9	0	0	96	100
In handling projects effectively and efficiently	49	51	19	20	17	18	11	11	0	0	96	100
Team work	48	50	18	19	10	10	20	21	0	0	96	100

Results in Table 1 indicate that fifty two percent strongly agreed that technical expertise of monitoring and evaluation practice on compliance activities play a role in technology awareness while 21% agreed and 18% were not sure and 9% disagreed. Fifty one percent strongly agreed that technical expertise of monitoring and evaluation practices on compliance activities plays a role in supporting project team in handling projects efficiently and effectively while 20% agreed, 18% were not sure and 11% disagreed. Fifty percent strongly agreed that technical expertise of monitoring and evaluation practice on compliance activities plays a role in team work while 19% agreed, 10% were not sure and 21% disagreed.

4.2 The contribution of monitoring and evaluation planning process on compliance activities

Table 2 depicts views on contribution of M&E planning process on compliance activities

Table 2: Views on contribution of M&E planning process on compliance activities

Views	Strongly agree		Agree		Not sure		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Helps identify compliance performance enhancement through planning implementation process	60	63	30	31	2	2	4	4	0	0	96	100
Offer control tools that advance capability of planning	39	41	19	20	17	18	21	22	0	0	96	100
Project performance	48	50	18	19	10	10	20	21	0	0	96	100

Results illustrates in Table 2 indicate that sixty-three of the respondents strongly agreed that M&E planning process on compliance activities contributes in identifying compliance performance enhancement through planning implementation process while 31% agreed and 2% were not sure and 4% disagreed. Forty one percent strongly agreed that M&E planning process on compliance activities contributes in offering control tools that advance capability of planning while 20% agreed, 18% were not sure and 22% disagreed. Fifty percent strongly agreed that M&E planning process on compliance activities contributes to project performance while 19% agreed, 10% were not sure and 21% disagreed. Indeed M&E planning process on compliance activities contributes in identifying compliance performance enhancement through planning implementation process in Great Lakes Trade Facilitation Project in MINICOM because monitoring and evaluation planning process enables compliance activities which can improve compliance transparency.

4.3 Challenges in monitoring and evaluation practices on compliance activities of Great Lakes Trade Facilitation Project in MINICOM

Table 3 illustrates the views on challenges in monitoring and evaluation practices on compliance activities of Great Lakes Trade Facilitation Project in MINICOM

Table 1: Views on challenges in monitoring and evaluation practices on compliance activities of Great Lakes Trade Facilitation Project in MINICOM

Views	Strongly agree		Agree		Not sure		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Absence of community initiation in project inception and monitoring may result into shady bargains also, helpless project execution	70	73	26	27	0	0	0	0	0	0	96	100
Lack of definition of project is a failure to clarify project objectives	39	41	19	20	17	18	21	22	0	0	96	100
Fraud	48	50	18	19	10	10	20	21	0	0	96	100

Results above in Table 3 demonstrate that seventy three percent of the respondents strongly agreed that challenges in monitoring and evaluation practices on compliance activities in Great Lakes Trade Facilitation Project in MINICOM are absence of community initiation in the project inception and monitoring that may lead to shady consequences while 27% agreed and no one disagreed. Forty one percent strongly agreed that that challenges in monitoring and evaluation practices on compliance activities of Great Lakes Trade Facilitation Project in MINICOM are lack of definition of project and a failure to clarify project objectives while 20% agreed, 18% were not sure 22% disagreed. Fifty percent strongly agreed that that challenges in monitoring and evaluation practices on compliance activities of Great Lakes Trade Facilitation Project in MINICOM are fraudulent while 19% agreed 10% were not sure and 21% disagreed. The absence of community involvement is a challenge because it takes away a sense of belonging which can hinder monitoring evaluation transparency in relation to compliance activities.

5.0 DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

The results on establishing the role of technical expertise of monitoring and evaluation on compliance activities concur with the study of Valadez and Bamberger (2012). According to the study, technical expertise brings technology awareness which is important in project monitoring and evaluation practices on compliance activities due to greater challenges in today's technology-enabled project. This is especially where technological tools are used in project monitoring and evaluation practices. In this vein, technical expertise of monitoring and evaluation practice on compliance activities play a role in technology awareness in Great Lakes Trade Facilitation Project in MINICOM because they adopt new technological skills through technical expertise training for technical expertise monitoring and evaluation practice.

Results on determination of the contribution of monitoring and evaluation planning process on compliance activities did not contradict the observation of Mackay (2007) who denoted that monitoring and evaluation planning process brings identification of compliance activities that can lead to compliance performance which is important in project monitoring and evaluation practices on compliance activities due to greater challenges in today's compliance-enabled project.

Results on the identification of the challenges in monitoring and evaluation practices on compliance activities of Great Lakes Trade Facilitation Project in MINICOM is relevant since it

is line with findings of Aaltonen and Ikavalko (2001) who specified that the absence of community inclusion in project inception and monitoring may lead into shady consequences and poor project execution as a major challenge because the challenge could pose security risk for the project itself as its safety cannot be guaranteed. Community participation will give the people a sense of belonging in the execution of a project and help to guarantee that standards are maintained.

6.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study findings, it was concluded that technical expertise of monitoring and evaluation practice on compliance activities plays a role in technology awareness in Great Lakes Trade Facilitation Project in MINICOM. However, this is especially where technological tools are used in project monitoring and evaluation practices. The study additionally concluded that M&E planning process on compliance activities contributes in identifying compliance performance enhancement through planning the implementation process in Great Lakes Trade Facilitation Project in MINICOM. Further, monitoring and evaluation planning process brings identification of compliance activities that can lead to compliance performance which is pertinent in project monitoring and evaluation practices on compliance activities due to greater challenges in today's compliance-enabled project where compliance activities are used in project monitoring and evaluation practices. The study recommended the Ministry of Trade and Industry to practice more M&E planning process on compliance. Community participation should be promoted because it gives the individuals a feeling of having a place in the execution of a project and this helps to ensure that guidelines are kept up. Future studies should be carried out on the contribution of monitoring and evaluation practices on compliance project success.

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