

# Effect of Monitoring and Evaluation Practices on Project Implementation in Rwanda: Case of Feed the Future Program in Rwanda

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**Running Title:** *Effect of Monitoring and Evaluation Practices on Project Implementation*

**Abstract:** *This study aimed to assess the effect of monitoring and evaluation practices on the implementation of the development projects in Rwanda. It identified the extent to which monitoring and evaluation practices in the form of (monitoring skills, stakeholder involvement, information system and report) affect the implementation of the development projects. It was also explored the mediating effect of the management support towards M&E and the implementation of the development projects shedding the light of the feed the future. To achieve the study's objectives, the researcher used a descriptive research design with a mixed method approach. Qualitative and Quantitative data were gathered from the sample of 156 respondents from program (Managers and M&E, stakeholders), using close ended questionnaire and was analyzed with the help of SPSS (version 25) therefore, regression and correlations analysis were used to show the relationship between the dependent variable and independent variables. The findings of the study revealed that monitoring and evaluation planning process ( $B=.793$ ,  $t=13.912$ ,  $P=.000$ ), technical expertise ( $B=.862$ ,  $t=14.75$ ,  $P=.000$ ), management support ( $B=.856$ ,  $t=20.497$ ,  $P=.000$ ) and stakeholder involvement positively affected the project implementation and helped to show the extent to which staff with monitoring skills in Feed the future project, who are practicing M&E technical activities, generating M&E reports in timely manner, getting support from management and information system was significantly affected the implementation of the development projects. Also, the findings contribute to the knowledge gap in the literature as this study is one of the studies that focused on the success of the implementation of development project and due to the significance of monitoring and evaluation practices, it is also a recommendation of this study that adequate and standardized monitoring and evaluation training sessions should be prepared on all levels of project management.*

**Keywords:** Monitoring and Evaluation Practices, project implementation, Feed the Future

## 1. Introduction

Generally, and globally, the primary purpose of Monitoring and Evaluation (M & E) is to measure the degree to which a project is implemented as planned and how successfully it achieves its intended results. The operation design describes how inputs and activities will result in outputs, and how the operation designers expect these outputs to result in the desired outcomes and impacts. M&E answers questions about how well a project or strategy is working and identifies the conditions that will determine whether a conservation action succeeds or fails (Kihuna, 2018).

M&E (Monitoring and Evaluation) is a highly valuable tool in any project work activities. It provides a vital mechanism of how any project works and activities can be measured and how it can help to the achievement of project objectives and ultimate attainment of goals which in the end lead to a successful performance of an organization (Maalim & Kisimbii, 2017). The monitoring and evaluation process is one of the factors that contribute to the project's success. Other practices implemented in the M&E process, such as management support, stakeholder involvement, employee skills, perfect training programs, successful information technology use, and the production of timely and useful reports, lead to successful and sustainable development project objectives (Anyieni & Areri, 2016). In Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005), indicated that the capacity of planning, managing implementing and account

for results of policies and programs is critical for attaining development objectives and goals from different analysis and dialogues through implementation of the plan. Better M&E is seen as a basic component for more effectiveness aid and public sector management. Monitoring and evaluation practices in NGOs are crucial in identifying the organization's achievements and effectiveness of its projects, the practices account for greater transparency and accountability (World Bank, 2011). M&E is helping organizations to track, analyze and report on relevant information and data throughout the life cycle of a project. In the year 2011 a study was carried out by UNDP to assess the role of M&E practices on the performance of development projects and to find out what needs changed to enhance project performance. The scope of the study included all geographical regions, global and corporate levels of management done from five countries, Argentina, Egypt, Indonesia, Moldova and Zambia. Feed the Future is multi - year strategies outline the five - year strategic planning for the U. S Government's global hunger and food security initiative, feed the future program in Rwanda is an umbrella of projects include Hinga Weze, Orora wihaze, Nguriza nshore and others founded by USAID Rwanda to improve lives of people which need to determine if resources provided as donor such as USAID Rwanda are being used efficiently and effectively. The study found out that M&E practices are very crucial in project implementation in all NGOs not only in Africa but also worldwide. The study recommended for a knowledge

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management system, staff capacities evaluation and full participation of management for a successful projects implementation and the organization which brings the accountability for project outcomes (UNDP, 2011). Thus, this research project aimed at identifying the effect of M&E on success of the projects. If you do not plan effectively, M&E is impossible to accurately identify if the work is going in the right manner, make claims about the progress and success of the project implementation, and give input to improve future interventions (UNDP, 2009). This study tried to investigate the effect of monitoring and evaluation practices on the implementation of the Feed the futures in Rwanda. It was also, the mediating effect of management support between M&E and development project implementation using the conceptual model developed in this study. Furthermore, it may pave the way for future research into the extent to which a given institution's M&E practices adequately address human quality in both their M&E practices and on their projects. thus, human resources are the most important factors influencing the success or failure of development projects

### Research objectives

- To examine the extent to which planning process in M&E affect the project implementation.
- To analyze the effect of technical expertise in M&E on the project implementation.
- To ascertain the effect of stakeholder's involvement on the project implementation.
- To analyze the effect of project management support on the project implementation.

### Research Hypotheses

- $H_01$ : Planning process has no significant effect on the project implementation

$H_11$ : Planning process has significant effect on the project implementation
- $H_02$ : Technical expertise in M&E has no significant effect on the project implementation

$H_12$ : Technical expertise in M&E has significant effect on the project implementation
- $H_03$ : Stakeholder involvement has no significant effect on the project implementation

$H_13$ : Stakeholder involvement has significant effect on the project implementation
- $H_04$ : Project management support has no significant effect on the project implementation

$H_14$ : Project management support has significant effect on the project implementation

## 2. Theoretical Background

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) have become a global rational practice across organizations, including NGOs and governments, according to (Molapo Lebogang, 2019). Studies conducted in Kenya revealed a number of successful projects, including the Youth Enterprise Development Fund project, with the goal this project was to increase economic opportunities for youth so that they could participate in the construction of their country. (International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources., 2004).

There appears to be agreement across M&E and project implementation in such a way that monitoring and evaluation affect project implementation and contribute to project success (Akano et al., 2015). As a result, this project sought success because it achieved its objectives by teaching the local community how to grow their own food (World Bank & IMF, 2005). Monitoring and evaluation practices ensure that project/program results at the levels of impact, outcome, output, process, and input can be quantified in order to provide a framework for accountability and to aid in making informed decisions at the program and policy levels (Wan, Wan, Skudai, & Lumpur, 2003). Monitoring and evaluation are essential practices at any project stage because they allow for an ongoing review of project implementation. Several variables influence project implementation, including monitoring skills of staff, technical activities, information system (use of technology), and report, as well as management support acting as a mediate variable in the study. To ensure effective M&E practice, it is therefore necessary to have officials or consultants who are highly skilled in M&E. The heart of the M&E system is understanding the skills required and the capacity of people involved in M&E practices, including addressing capacity gaps through structured capacity development programs (Uidelines, 2005). M&E's effectiveness is determined by its technical activities. Dayson (2010) confirmed the importance of M&E technical activities in a study by defining monitoring as the collection and analysis of information about a given program or intervention, whereas evaluation is an assessment whose focus is to answer questions about the program or intervention. This study employed the use of descriptive statistics with the findings being that a majority of the respondents indicated that there was lack of monitoring and evaluation practices in the various projects which they formed part of. On the other hand, a study by Muhammad et al (2012) on project performance, with the variables, Project Planning, Implementation and Controlling Processes in Malaysia College of Computer Sciences and Information, Aljuf University, noted project management offers an organization with control tools that advance its capability of planning, implementing, and controlling its project activities. A study by Sunanda (2015) Faculty of Built Environment, Australia highlighted on Project manager multi - layered tasks that expressively influenced the project performance. Other studies had recognized four skills for effective project managers, they include mental, human, stakeholders, and technical skills, along with their other skill competencies.

The study was to determine whether project technical skills influence project implementation. Data collected from project team members using a questionnaire assessment method. The study results showed that project team leads technical skills impact project implementation. Project excellent performance impacted by several skill components, which include visioning, sensitivity intelligence, interactive skill, dynamic leadership, interpersonal influence, integrity, quality management, and document and agreement administration. There is a big gap for skilled M & E professionals, capacity building of M & E systems, and harmonization of project management courses and technical support (Gorgens and Kusek, 2009). Human

capitals on the project should have clear job description as well as designation matching their skill. In case they are insufficient then training assessment needs for the necessary skills should be agreed. For projects, using staff posted to work out in the field and undertake project activities on their own there is need for regular and intensive onsite supervision. The field personnel require the comfort of management support and necessary guidance in their day today project execution (Ramesh, 2012).

### 3. Research Methodology

The researcher used a descriptive and analytical research based on both quantitative data. The purpose of using descriptive research design is to ensure that issues related to quality management and implementation of development project are described and analyzed to permit reliable conclusions and The target population refers to the complete listing of all the items or individuals with at least one common thing in any field of the study (Kothari, 2014). Therefore, this study targeted 256 respondents from feed the future including hinga weze, orora wihaze and huguka dukore workers, department managers and senior management teams responsible for managing and implementing the projects in Burera district as consequence

this study adopted random sampling method from which 156 respondents were selected randomly to answer the structured questionnaire distributed during the data collection. Therefore, administration of data collection research instrument was done due by the research personally and was given to 156 respondents and the data collected were analyzed by using Correlation analysis and linear regression when testing the study hypothesis and determine the relationship between study variables.

### 4. Presentation of Finding and Discussion

#### 1. H<sub>1</sub>1: Monitoring and evaluation planning process has significant effect on project implementation

The hypothesis tested if monitoring and evaluation planning process carried a significant effect on project implementation, the dependent variable project implementation was regressed on predicting M&E planning process to test the hypothesis H<sub>1</sub>1: PLP significantly predicted IMP,  $F(1, 153) = 196.682, P = .000$ , which indicated that PLP can play a significant effect on project implantation, PLP ( $B = .793, t = 13.912, P = .000$ ) these results clearly direct the positive affect of PLP. Moreover,  $R^2 = .562$  Depicts that the model explained 56.2% Of variance in IMP. The table below summarized the results.

**Table 1:** Regression for the effect of M&E Planning Process on Project Implementation

hypothesis	Regression weights	Beta coefficient	R <sup>2</sup>	F	t - value	p - value	Hypothesis conclusion
H <sub>1</sub> 1	PLP - IMP	.793	.562	196.682	13.912	.000	Accepted

Source: Primary Data, (2022)

#### 2. H<sub>3</sub>1: Monitoring and evaluation technical expertise has significant effect on project implementation

The hypothesis tested if monitoring and evaluation planning process carried a significant effect on project implementation, the dependent variable project implementation was regressed on predicting M&E planning process to test the hypothesis H<sub>1</sub>1: TE significantly predicted

IMP,  $F(1, 153) = 220.576, P = .000$ , which indicated that TE can play a significant effect on project implantation, TE ( $B = .862, t = 14.75, P = .000$ ) these results clearly direct the positive affect of TE. Moreover,  $R^2 = .590$  Depicts that the model explained 59.0% Of variance in IMP. The table below summarized the results.

**Table 2:** Regression for the effect of M&E Technical Expertise on Project Implementation

hypothesis	Regression weights	Beta coefficient	R <sup>2</sup>	F	t - value	p - value	Hypothesis conclusion
H <sub>1</sub> 2	TE - IMP	.862	.590	220.576	14.75	.000	Accepted

Source: Primary Data, (2022)

#### 3. H<sub>4</sub>1: Monitoring and evaluation management support has significant effect on project implementation

The hypothesis tested if monitoring and evaluation planning process carried a significant effect on project implementation, the dependent variable project implementation was regressed on predicting M&E planning process to test the hypothesis H<sub>1</sub>3: MS significantly

predicted IMP,  $F(1, 153) = 420.128, P = .000$ , which indicated that MS can play a significant effect on project implantation, MS ( $B = .856, t = 20.497, P = .000$ ) these results clearly direct the positive affect of PLP. Moreover,  $R^2 = .733$  Depicts that the model explained 73.3% Of variance in IMP. The table below summarized the results.

**Table 3:** Regression for the effect of M&E management support involvement on Project Implementation

hypothesis	Regression weights	Beta coefficient	R <sup>2</sup>	F	t - value	p - value	Hypothesis conclusion
H <sub>1</sub> 3	MS - IMP	.957	.733	420.128	20.362	.000	Accepted

Source: Primary Data, (2022)

#### 4. H<sub>4</sub>1: Monitoring and evaluation stakeholder involvement has significant effect on project implementation

The hypothesis tested if monitoring and evaluation planning process carried a significant effect on project implementation, the dependent variable project

implementation was regressed on predicting M&E stakeholder involvement to test the hypothesis H<sub>1</sub>4: STI significantly predicted IMP,  $F(1, 153) = 462.682, P = .000$ , which indicated that STI can play a significant effect on project implantation, STI ( $B = .856, t = 20.497, P = .000$ ) these results clearly direct the positive affect of STI. Moreover,

R<sup>2</sup>=.751 Depicts that the model explained 75.1% Of variance in IMP. The table below summarized the results.

**Table 4:** Regression for the effect of M&E stakeholder involvement on Project Implementation

hypothesis	Regression weights	Beta coefficient	R <sup>2</sup>	F	t - value	p - value	Hypothesis conclusion
H <sub>4</sub>	STI - IMP	.768	.751	462.682	21.333	.000	Accepted

Source: Primary Data, (2022)

## 5. Conclusion and Discussion

The study established that for all of the respondents, the monitoring and evaluation planning process like choosing and applying a proper planning tools and ability to delegate responsibilities possess a significant positive effect on project implementation. The researcher discovered that the project management team should have the capacity to apply an appropriate planning tool and able to assign responsibilities appropriately in order to exploit all other expertise that may be within their project personnel.

A regression was run to predict project implementation from monitoring and evaluation planning process. The model was statistically significant predicted project implementation (F (1, 153) =196.682,  $\beta$ = 0.793 p (.000) <.05, R<sup>2</sup> = 0.562) the influence of monitoring and evaluation planning process was significant. Multicollinearity problem does not exist in the model as VIF for variable was 1.000 < 10 (or Tolerance > 0.1). Therefore, we failed to accept the null hypothesis while accepting the alternative hypothesis that monitoring and evaluation planning process has significant influence on project implementation., The model was statistically significantly predicted project implementation (F (1, 153) =220.576,  $\beta$ = 0.862, p (.000) <.05, R<sup>2</sup> = 0.590) the effect of monitoring and evaluation technical expertise was significant. Multicollinearity problem does not exist in the model as VIF for variable was 1.000 < 10 (or Tolerance > 0.1). Therefore, we failed to accept the null hypothesis while accepting the alternative hypothesis that monitoring and evaluation technical expertise have significant influence on project implementation. The model statistically significantly predicted project performance (F (1, 153) = 255.710,  $\beta$ = 0.957, p (.000) <.05, R<sup>2</sup> = 0.733) the influence conflict management skills was significant. Multicollinearity problem does not exist in the model as VIF for variable was 1.000 < 10 (or Tolerance > 0.1). Therefore, we failed to accept the null hypothesis while accepting the alternative hypothesis that conflict management skills have significant influence on project performance. The model was statistically significantly predicted project implementation (F (1, 153) =462.682,  $\beta$ = 0.768, p (.000) <.05, R<sup>2</sup> = 0.751) the effect of stakeholder involvement was significant. Multicollinearity problem does not exist in the model as VIF for variable was 1.000 < 10 (or Tolerance > 0.1). Therefore, we failed to accept the null hypothesis while accepting the alternative hypothesis that monitoring and evaluation stakeholder involvement has significant effect on project implementation.

## 6. Recommendations for Further Research

In order to enhance the implementation of projects, the emphasis should not be put only on maintain cost, schedule and scope. All aspects of project management should put a considerable amount of effort in promoting soft skills. Several creative ways can be developed to familiarize the

importance of soft skills in management of projects and their performance. The study recommends that there are issues which need to be addressed in order to improve the effectiveness of projects. Budgets should be increased for the trainings about soft skills for their role to be realized in all forms of projects. Project managers need not to stick only to hard skills of project management, but also to increase the awareness on the significance of soft skills as well. This in fact explains why some projects fail, yet in the processes to recruit related staff's various technical skills were highly recommended. Organizations where projects belong need to come out and encourage these soft skills whenever identified in any of the project team members, and it is their role to create working environment that enables the use of such skills.

There is also a need to conduct deep and thorough researches on project management and implementation specifically, and all best practices involved. This is because of the big hand that projects have in actualizing various socio - economic transformations needed. Hence, every relevant research conducted can help in highlighting some of the necessities in terms of project implementation. Due to the significance of monitoring and evaluation practices, it is also a recommendation of this study that adequate and standardized monitoring and evaluation training sessions should be prepared on all levels of project management.

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