

## Why Many Government Projects Are Incomplete

### *“A study for Institute of Project Management Professionals Establishment”*

**Author Dr. David Ackah, PhD. Editor Dr. Samuel Kweku Maindson Been, Phd.**

#### **Author**

*Dr. David Ackah is Ghanaian Professional Holds Ph.D. in Economic Development in Africa, MSc. Economics from the United State of America, Bachelor Degree in Accounting, Post Graduate Diploma in Logistics and Supply Chain Management, Post Graduate Diploma in Project Management, & Post Graduate Diploma in Customer Relationship Management. He also holds a Diploma in Marketing from Institute of Commercial Management (ICM UK), Standard Diploma in Sales Management from Managing & Marketing Sales Association (MAMSA UK) and a certificate in Marketing & Salesmanship from the Institute of Export and Shipping Management. He is Certified Project Consultant (CPMC) from the Institute of Project Management Professionals, Fellow Member of Chartered Institute of Project Management Nigeria, Fellow Member of Chartered Institute of Supply Chain Management, USA, and Fellow Member of Chartered Institute of Customer Relationship Management, USA. He is the Editor-in-Chief for Dama International Journal of Researchers and Senior Faculty Member of Akamia University, USA. He is currently serving as the President of IPMP, in charge of administrative and accounting procedures as well as planning the long-term auditing strategy for the onward development of the Institute of Project Management Professionals. He provides operational support, monitoring and periodic review of administrative auditing to ensure the achievement of the vision and goals of the Institute. He is an author of five Internationally Published Books in the areas of Business, and about fifty-five Articles Published in the International domain. He has a total University teaching experience of five years, and a total professional experience of 8 years in Manufacturing, Pharma marketing, Sales/Distribution, administration, Economics & finance.*

#### **Abstract**

*Project incompleteness can be minimized when the factors causing them are identified. The objective of this study was therefore to identify the various factors that affect completion of government projects, the effects of incompleteness on the delivery of government projects, and assess and identify the most critical incompleteness factors that affect government project delivery in Ghana. Incompleteness of a government project can therefore be defined as the late completion of work as compared to the planned schedule or contract schedule. It could possibly be interpreted as a loss of time. "Time" refers to the duration for completing the project. Time in a project is the project period or in contract administration, it is the contract period. When the project period is delayed, it means the project cannot be completed within original schedule. Incompleteness in project would lead to either: extension of time; non-completion; termination of contract; or a combination of two or more of the factors mentioned above. Incompleteness in projects may be caused by the project stakeholders, the project manager or project contractor, the project consultants, etc. Assigning responsibility for project incompleteness is critical to the allocation of responsibility for time related costs. Lost productivity or loss of productivity is one the most important causes of incompleteness among the various causes of projects. Incompleteness can be minimized when their causes are identified. Identification of the factors that contributed to the causes of project incompleteness has been studied by numerous researchers in several countries. It is common knowledge that our project industry in this country has been bedeviled with a lot of uncompleted projects.*

### **I. Introduction**

Many government projects are not completed on the schedule project time duration in Ghana, this is because delay is a common problem in the global project industry in Africa especially in Ghana, affecting development of the project industry in particular and of the overall economy of countries in general. Especially in developing countries, like Ghana the project construction industry has some shortcomings such as poor understanding of the project, lack of modern equipment, incompetent contractors, etc. This problem can easily occur and lead to a negative impact on the result of the project as cost overrun, poor quality and lack of safety. Ghana, is known as one of the middle income developing economy in West Africa and the World at large, does not escape the problem of delay in project completion. The project industry is one of the most booming industries in the economic growth of Ghana. Many projects have completed, going on and many future ones. The incompleteness of projects is the challenge often faced in the course of executing government projects in Ghana. Moreover, with the government building projects (road and bridge projects, the hydropower projects, the thermal power projects, or the low income housing projects) the project incompleteness become more serious. This problem directly affects the lives, social welfare of the people as well as the other negative social impacts of the people of Ghana. In Ghana, it is very few cases that government projects are completed on the time or deadline specified in the contract. There are many large projects suffered the incompleteness, suspension or abandonment include: Keta Sea Defense project, Human Overpass on many of Accra, & Kumasi Roads (eg. Adenta – Atomic Junction), the Commodity Storage in Takoradi, the Railways Projects, Kumasi Komfo Anokye Hospital Building Projects, the Bui Dam, etc. Thus, in order to avoid the project incompleteness, the root causes of delay should be identified, which help practitioners to give solutions for countering the project incompleteness and lessening the causes related to the incompleteness. According **Martin J. Williams (2016)**, using an original database of over 14,000 small development projects in Ghana, I estimate that

approximately one-third of projects that start are never completed, consuming nearly one-fifth of all local government capital spending.

**A. Major Government Projects in Ghana**

- Buildings Roads,
- Water & Sewage,
- Schools, Hospitals, & Government Offices,
- Rails, etc

**B. Factors Responsible for incompleteness of Government Projects in Ghana**

Many reasons have been cited for causes of project failure in Ghana and Ghana government projects in particular. These include socio-political, economic, technological, knowledge, macro and micro-global (AfDB, 2006, Moderator's Report, 2007), project management education (Moderators Report, 2007; Amponsah, 2010). In the survey, it was noted that the following are the factors responsible for the project incompleteness in Ghana government projects:

- Information delays, and lack of information exchange between the project stakeholder & project manager
- Lack of project knowledge and incompetent project manager & consultant
- Lack of knowledge in project procurement, sourcing, bidding & contracting among project procurement managers
- Difficulties in financing project by project stakeholders & project contractor
- Misunderstanding of project scope & design by the project consultant
- Shortage of project equipment of contractor
- Lack of strictness and binding in the contract documents
- Lack of understanding of technique and constructional legislation of project stakeholder
- Long waiting time due to owner's authority decentralization in approving design, cost estimate (complying with legal process), approving payment, payment to contractors of completed works, approving bidding results, approving adjustments
- Complex geological condition, and Changes in government regulation and laws
- Lack of continuous updating of the project implementation process by owner

**C. Solutions of Avoiding or Minimizing Delays**

- Selecting the contractors with competence and experience in similar projects
- The need for training programs for project managers, consultant, contractors & stakeholders about project management skills & leadership
- Clear information and communication channels
- Urging acceleration of site activities and asking the stakeholders to comply with the signed contracts
- Asking the stakeholders to regularly report on the schedule, status, and plan of the project implementation
- Selecting the supervision consultants with competence, professionalism, professional ethic, and prestige
- Converting the public projects into public-private projects or private projects to mobilize private capital
- Publicity, plainness, and seriousness in selecting the contractors
- Asking contractors to focus high-level human resources for key projects
- Focusing allocate capital for key and urgent projects, projects that are likely to end soon
- Routine inspection of the supervision consultant's reports
- Publicity, plainness, and seriousness in selecting the supervision consultants
- Accurate initial cost estimates
- Selecting the supervision consultants that are unconnected with the contractors
- Strengthening inspection, oversight as well as strengthening the cooperation between the owner and the consultants Increasing the budget for supervision contract
- Routine inspection of the contractor manpower compared with contracts or bid documents
- Having the reasonable disbursement plan for each stage of the project
- Visiting and learning the similar projects to improve the level of engineers and workers

## II. Conclusions

This study focused on why many government projects are not completed on the schedule project time duration to determine the most influential (important) factors from contractors, project management practitioners and general public. We estimate that the money spent on non-completed projects by local governments alone would be enough to fully construct 667 additional three-room schools serving over 73,000 children, every year. The results indicated that contractors, project management practitioners and general public agreed the top overall rankings for the causes in the order of importance were as follows: project financing, project planning & administration, project procurement, project contracting bidding and project material supply

## III. Recommendation

The researcher then recommended for project management body of institution to training and regulate the project stakeholders and practitioners.

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