THE CULTURE OF PROJECT MANAGEMENT IMMATURITY IN PUBLIC SECTOR INFRASTRUCTURE ORGANIZATIONS - THE CASE OF WOB

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ABSTRACT

Public sector infrastructure organizations responsible for infrastructure development in South Africa, which include infrastructure departments, parastatal organizations and other statutory organizations qualify as project-oriented organizations (POO). Project management (PM) within their activities is considered to be a core competence and this competence has to be explicitly developed by these organizations. There are strong indications to suggest that these organizations’ PM competencies leave a lot to be desired. On face value they purport to be fully fledged project oriented organizations and performing as mature PM organizations, while in reality they are enmeshed in the culture of PM incompetence by default. This paper reports on a study, which was carried out in one of the largest infrastructure department in South Africa. The focus is on one of the largest programmes managed by the department. In order to determine the department’s PM maturity, an evaluation of the performance of the programme was carried out in relation to department’s mandate. It is found that the programme in its current form could be described as a ‘white elephant’ and a programme, which does not have an appropriate organisation structure, appropriate and sufficient staff to carry its objectives. Generally, it is quite clear that the programme control system is very weak or non existent, hence the existence of sketchy standards, policies, procedures, decision rules, and reporting requirements to monitor and control its various initiatives – PM immaturity characteristics seem to dominate the management of the programme and departmental managers responsible for the programme are not conscious of these immaturity characteristics. There are strong indications to suggest that the department is still marking time at Level 1 of PM Maturity. Recommendations are made which will help the department to move up the ladder of PM Maturity and shed the culture of PM immaturity thus capable of managing the programme.

Keywords: Culture, infrastructure organisations, project management immaturity, public sector, project management competence

1. INTRODUCTION

South Africa is a country of 45 million people, classified as an upper middle income country by the World Bank and ranked 120 out of 177 countries on the United Nations Human Development Index (World Bank 2005 and 2005a). Classification and ranking provides a picture of a country with one of the most skewed economic set-up, where most of the very poor people are black and the majority rich are white. This gives a true reflection of the apartheid policies then before 1994. Furthermore,
South Africa is by far the largest economy contributing in excess of 66 percent to the overall Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) region. The economy of South Africa experienced expansion in recent years fuelling a boom in the construction industry that is manifesting itself in the shortage of skills and construction material manufacturing constraints. Since 1994, the Department of Public Work (DPW) has championed a range of initiatives and has co-coordinated the development of a comprehensive construction industry development policy. Towards the end of 1995, the department generated a position paper entitled, “Establishing an enabling environment to ensure that the activities of the reconstruction and development programme (RDP) and related initiatives by Government are realised in the construction and allied industries” for consideration by Government. Early in 1996, the DPW was mandated by the government to lead the initiative in conjunction with all infrastructure government departments – South African infrastructure departments (SAIDs), which in addition to itself, include the Department of Housing (DoH), Department of Local Government (DoLG), Department of Transport (DoT), and the Department of Water Affairs & Forestry (DWAF).

Through further research, the DPW produced a discussion document, which formed the basis for a round of consultation workshops with industry stakeholders, and this resulted in the formulation of a Green Paper (DPW 1997). The Green Paper was released for broad comment in November 1997. In line with the Green Paper proposals, an Inter-ministerial Task Team on Construction Industry Development was appointed by the DPW on behalf of the Infrastructure Departments. The task team was drawn from the private sector, organised labour and the public sector.

Following discussion on the Task Team’s review of comments on the Green Paper, a White Paper (the Construction Industry Policy) was produced in 1999 (DPW 1999). The policy, which could be referred to as a South African Construction Industry development map, spells out its strategic aim as:

“.....to establish an enabling environment in which the objectives of reconstruction, development and growth are realised in the industry.”

The policy also spells out its vision as:

“....to promote stability, foster economic growth and international competitiveness, create sustainable employment, and to address historical imbalances as new industry capacity for industry development is generated.”

While the DPW was responsible for co-coordinating the development, monitoring and dissemination of Government policy for construction development, different departments are charged with the implementation of various programmes outlined in the policy. These programmes fall under the SAIDs.

From the foregoing, it is clear that infrastructure departments forming part of a broader public sector need to aim towards good practices in contributing to the South African construction industry and development in general. The human resource capacity issue makes the situation even more demanding. Between 1994 and 2001, the number of civil servants decreased from 1.2 to just over a million (CIDB 2004).
The resulting capacity constraints have significantly affected infrastructure departments such that almost 25% of these infrastructure departments procurement budget is now spent on private sector experts providing policy advice and project management services, but without internal capacity to manage these external consultants. The need for project management expertise within all infrastructure departments has become so fundamental in order to deal with an enormous responsibility of managing a huge number of programmes.

The number of projects falling under every infrastructure department as indicated in Table 1 is so huge that the only way to coordinate and deal with these projects under a high level of staff turnover and limited budgets is for the departments to be fully fledged project oriented organizations (POOs).

### Table 1. Infrastructure Departments Programmes and Projects (2004/5)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infrastructure Department</th>
<th>Number of Programmes</th>
<th>Number of Projects (approx.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department of Public Works (DPW)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Housing (DoH)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Local Government (DoLG)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Transport (DoT)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Water Affairs &amp; Forestry (DWAF)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: www.gcis.gov.za/docs/annual/2005/pll.pdf*

The South African government capacity constraints in infrastructure departments are not peculiar to South Africa. They seem to be common almost in all non-industrialized countries (Fay and Yepes 2003; Harris 2003; Parker and Kirkpatrick 2004). It is very important therefore to note that the findings reported in this paper could be used towards addressing capacity constraints in other non-industrialized countries.

As indicated in Table 1, South African infrastructure departments (SAIDs) are under pressure to improve performance in order to address developmental constraints facing the country. The fact that the SAIDs are structured along programmes and consequently projects, strongly suggest that they are project oriented departments or the success of these infrastructure departments (IDs) is contingent on being able to make predictions and commitments relative to their services and products. Their project management competence is fundamental to make this a reality. This Project management competence is extensively referred to as ‘project management maturity’ in various theory and practice literature (for example in Skulmonski and Ginger 2000; Broadman, Johnson 1995; Kaplan and Norton 1992; Lynch and Cross 1995). The need for the SAIDs to function fully as project oriented departments is one of the alternative ways to succeed. According to Schlichter (1999), project management (PM) has led a number of organizations to be more effective and efficient in delivery of their products and services, more accurate budgeting and scheduling, improved productivity, and improved customer relationships. All these are fundamental if the SAIDs are to meet their mission and vision.
Going through the SAIDs Annual reports, it is clear that Florac, Robert and Carleton’s (1997) questions are forming the framework of each and every report. Every infrastructure department seems to ask Florac, Robert and Carleton’s (1997) questions:

“Are we achieving the results we desire?” “Are we meeting our customer’s success criteria?” and “Are we achieving our desired return on investment?”

But how do they (the SAIDs) know if their management approaches are appropriate and will consequently lead projects to meeting set objectives embodied in their policy mandate? A project management competence or maturity assessment can provide the basis to evaluate progress in pursuit of best-in-class project management status.

According to the CIDB (2004) public sector capacity is a key constraint to the realization of investment potential, delivery of infrastructure and industry’s sustainable development. It argues that as a largest single industry client, the public sector is dispersed and spans all three spheres of government and this challenge can only be met with a systematic management approach. Looking at the public sector business set-up of SAIDs, which is organized in programmes and consequently into projects as indicated in Table 1, there is no doubt that these public sector POOs must embrace their core competence in order to have a sound systematic management approach. Core competences as defined by Prahalad and Hamel (1990) and Hamel (1994) are an organisation’s fundamental capabilities, an integration of skills that are competitively unique. This means that these capabilities are difficult to imitate. The core competences enable the organization to deliver a fundamental customer/or stakeholder benefit and therefore contribute to the long-term survival of the organization. Embracing core competencies therefore, means adopting a PM maturity culture. The salient question to be asked at this point is: What is a PM maturity culture?

This paper aims to answer this question by presenting survey results from a case study of a major national programme being managed by one of the South African infrastructure departments (SAIDs). In order to maintain the department’s anonymity it is referred to in this paper as WOB. The management of the programme (which will be referred to as KProg) is scrutinized in order to establish the ministry’s PM maturity culture. In order to determine WOB’s PM maturity culture, an evaluation of the performance of the KProg was carried out in relation to WOB’s mandate. A clear reflection is made on KProg’s original intent of advancing the transformation process of the construction industry and diversifying its shareholding structure.

This paper is organized as follows. First, a theory and practice of PM competence culture review and the purpose of this paper are presented. Then, the key results of the Case Study are presented and discussed. These results are also compared with previous results presented in the theory and practice review. Finally, the paper concludes with a brief summary of the salient findings and some of their implications.
2. PM MATURITY CULTURE – THEORY AND PRACTICE

According to Seymour and Fellows (1999), culture is acknowledged to be rooted in people’s minds – their ideas, beliefs and values. They argue that belief lie at the core and become hierarchical – ordered into a value structure which underpins behaviours, thereby creating the other manifestation of culture. The principal argument of this paper regarding ‘PM maturity culture’ accepts this argument, and adopts the definition of culture based on developments of ‘culture’ definition since the middle of the 20th Century as argued by Barthorpe, Duncan and Miller (1999). Since the primary focus of this paper is on construction industry practices, the arguments discussed in this paper are based on organisational culture definition, by Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) and Hofstede (1980).

According to Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952), organisational culture describes:

“….patterns, explicit and implicit of and for behaviour acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiment in artifacts; the essential-core of culture and consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture-systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other as conditioning elements of future action.”

Hofstede (1980) adds another dimension of distinction between members of the organisation, by defining organisational culture as:

“….the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one category of people from another.”

From the above two definitions, it could be argued that officials in SAIDs are not free to act in ways which they perceive to be most beneficial in managing programmes and consequently their respective projects. Constraints are imposed to yield a decision environment of bounded rationality (Simon, 1960). This, according to Seymour and Fellows (1999), is through the particular situation and norms of behaviour – both explicit (pressures from stakeholders, government procedures, departmental organisational set-up, law) and implicit (moral codes etc.) – there are strong indications to suggest that the culture of ‘PM immaturity’ has taken root due to various pressures originating from stakeholders and government’s enormous challenge of trying to deliver various services within a very short space of time.

According to Dinsmore (1999), an organization’s project maturity level:

“….is a measure of its effectiveness in delivering projects (or programmes – author’s emphasis)”

Strengthening Dinsmore’s (1999) definition, Gareis and Huemann (2000) define PM competence as:
“...the ability to perform the project management process efficiently.”

Gareis and Huemann (2000) further argue that the PM competence relates to specific PM tasks to be fulfilled, and it exists if there is PM knowledge as well as PM experience. In the POO, PM competences can be differentiated for individuals, for project teams and for the organization.

From the foregoing, it is fair to say that the PM maturity culture of an organization is primarily determined by establishing how PM competent an organization is. When you refer to PM competence, you are at the same time referring to PM maturity culture. At present, the best way of assessing an organization PM maturity culture or PM competence level is through PM competence models.

Existing PM competence models (PM maturity models) or assessment approaches are based on the Carnegie-Mellon University Capability Maturity Model (CMM) for software development, prepared in conjunction with the Software Engineering Institute (SEI). Details of this model are described elsewhere (Humphrey 1989; Paulk, Curtis and Chrissis 1991). According to Gareis and Huemann (2000), during the late 1990s several specific PM competence models to describe and measure the organizational PM competence were developed (Ibbs and Kwak 1997; Goldsmith 1997; Fincher and Levin 1997; Hartmann 1998). Most of these are based on the Project Management Institute (PMI) Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK). Dinsmore (1999) and Gareis and Huemann (2000) argue that traditional competence models use four to five steps to describe and measure the competence to perform a specific in an organization. The scale usually used is initial, repeatable, defined, managed and optimized according to the SEICMM (Paulk, Curtis and Chrissis 1991) or initial, repeatable, managed, distributed and sustained (Bolles 2002). Bolles’s (2002) levels have been adopted for this study as indicated in Table 2.

Table 2. PM maturity culture characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial (I)</td>
<td>No formal methodology for managing projects; projects are managed ad-hoc and success is not repeatable; no formal training and education exists; projects are typically late and over budget if completed; no review process; no project authorization process; and project risk assessment is nonexistent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeatable (II)</td>
<td>POO structure is established at some levels; standard methodology is created and distributed; PM fundamentals are provided at all levels; project portfolio management has been implemented; 25-50% of project deliveries are successful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managed (III)</td>
<td>POO structure is established enterprise-wide; PM qualification programme is in place; internal intranet is used extensively for all PM functions; virtual and real-time project status reporting is common; PM education and training is a requirement at all levels; 50-75% of project deliveries are successful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distributed (IV)</td>
<td>Principles of a learning organization are a norm; executives and managers PM qualified; all project managers are required to complete internal/certification programme; 75-95% of project deliveries are successful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustained (V)</td>
<td>Management by projects is an organization philosophy; executives and managers PM qualified; all project managers are required to complete internal/certification programme; 99% of project deliveries are successful.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Bolles (2002)
Although retaining the traditional competence model as indicated in Table 2, this study has added ‘the spider’s web’ principles, developed by the ‘Projektmanagement Group’ in Vienna, where PM sub processes are considered in the study in order to clearly understand how WOB is organized and specifically on how her PM processes relate to managing KProg. Details of the Vienna model are described in detail elsewhere (Gareis and Huemann 1998).

From the background information described above, it is fair to argue that the success of SAIDs is contingent on being able to make predictions and commitments relative to its services and products. Consequently, PM maturity culture is of interest to PM professionals at an infrastructure department level like WOB since having a PM maturity culture is viewed as one that is having a conducive environment to move on the maturity ladder from Level I to higher levels in order to meet its commitments in terms of its services and products (for example in managing KProg).

In the process of maturing (embracing the PM maturity culture) across maturity levels indicated in Table 2, Bolles (2002) argues that organizations and individuals either gain or lose ground, but they never stand still. But when an organization shows characteristics of not losing or gaining ground, then it is considered to be in a stand still position and it is considered to embrace a PM immaturity culture. But this conclusion needs to be qualified by looking at the type of organization and its support base. For public organizations with an appropriate support base from the government like the SAIDs, remaining within levels I and II without gaining ground beyond Level II is considered to be in a PM immaturity culture zone. Based on this argument it could be said that if a public organization shows movements (gaining or losing) between Level II and Level V, but without moving below Level II or showing signs of standing still in Level II, then it is considered to embrace a PM maturity culture. This interpretation of maturity culture will be used in the study to determine where WOB stands between two extreme points of ‘mature culture’ and ‘immature culture’ by analyzing its performance in managing KProg.

When analyzing ‘mature culture’ and ‘immature culture’ in those organizations which are supposed to be project-oriented organizations (POO) like the SAIDs, it is important to remember that maturity or immaturity in PM is not just required by individuals, but also by project teams and organizations. Hence these have to correlate (Gareis and Huemann 2000). The PM maturity culture of individuals performing project roles, such as project sponsor, programme manager, project manager or project team member, have to be in accordance with the PM maturity culture of the organization as a whole. The PM maturity culture of individuals, project teams and organization can be described, measured and further developed through determining PM maturity levels shown in Table 2. Since PM is considered as a core competence in strengthening the PM maturity culture in a POO, this competence has to be explicitly developed by the organization.

A Project Oriented Organization (POO) – the characteristics
In order for an organization to qualify as a POO, which is a condition for the need to embrace a PM maturity culture, an organization should have the following characteristics (Gareis and Huemann (2000) : management by projects must be an organizational strategy; adoption of temporary organizations for the performance of complex processes; it must manage a portfolio of different project types; it must have
specific permanent organizations to provide integrative functions; it must apply a 'new management paradigm'; it must have an explicit project management culture; and it must perceive itself to be project oriented.

Based on the above seven characteristics, it is important that a POO must consider projects as tools to perform complex projects and as strategic options for organizational design. Furthermore, it is important to note that management by project is the organizational strategy of organizations dealing with an increasingly complex environment. This environment is affected by a number of forces originating from the project itself, the organization sponsoring the project, and organizations involved in project implementation, the sector or industry relevant to the service or product resulting from the project, forces from the country/economy and forces coming from the world environment on economics, politics and other social pressures. In the process of balancing project parameters (quality-Q; Cost-C; schedule-S; utility-U) within health and safety (H&S) and environmental (E) requirements, the stakeholders’ requirements are addressed. This complex environment is described in Figure 1.

By applying management by projects, the organization will be able to embrace a PM maturity culture and sail through the forces (Gareis and Huemann 2000), indicated in Figure 1 and pursue the following objectives: Organisational differentiation and decentralization of management responsibility; Quality planning, control and assurance by project team work and holistic project definitions; Goal orientation and personnel development; and Organisation of organisational learning by projects. In order to embrace PM good practices, the POO is characterized by the existence of an explicit PM maturity culture, such as a set of PM-related values, norms and procedures. (Dinsmore 1999; Gareis and Huemann 2000).

In conclusion, a review of theory and practice suggests that a PM maturity culture is not just required by individuals in a POO like WOB, but also by project teams and by organizations. A review suggests also that PM is a core competence of a POO and this competence has to be explicitly developed by the organization.
3. CASE STUDY DATA

In order to have representative data on *PM maturity culture* in SAIDs, an intensive scrutiny was made on the 5 SAIDs PM portfolio (see Table 1), both from the scale of work they are involved in and the importance of their activities across the country (looking at 3 tiers of the public sector – *local authority, provincial and national*). The department – WOB was thus identified as the most fulfilling of the two criteria.

Within WOB, a similar criteria to the one used to select a focus department was used, but focusing on identifying a single programme, which has depth in terms of what is supposed to be accomplished (scale of work) and the position of the programme when looked at across the three levels of the public sector (across local authority, provincial and national – looking at the programme boundaries). KProg was identified as the largest programme within WOB and across other SAIDs based on the criteria.

In this research a thorough literature review (theory and practice) in KProg primary business area was carried out. Structured interviews based on a questionnaire (33 questions) were carried out to KProg clients identified from existing KProg database. The sample was randomly chosen from a total of 3817 KProg clients and consisted of 458 clients, about 12% of the clients on the KProg client database. The survey included questions on the general background of the respondents and their projects, as well questions on their formal skills in the types of businesses they were involved in, their organizations profiles, duration in the business, types of projects they were involved in, geographical area operation, level of business involvement, problems facing them and their businesses, their sources of finance, and their evaluation of KProg performance (including reasons behind their dissatisfaction).

Structured interviews were carried out also with regional KProg managers (39 questions). The survey included questions on KProg development from its inception to its current phase, achievements (on KProg objectives and tools used to meet them), processes used in monitoring their clients (including updating of KProg database), their assessment of WOB as the KProg parent department on the extent to which it has succeeded in accessing clients across the country (more in rural areas), appropriateness of existing documentation in managing clients, performance of their clients, policy on client relations management, client complaint procedures and training of clients.

Other relevant National WOB key officers were interviewed through structured open-ended questions (between 13 -19 questions depending on the relevance of the question). Questions were focused on the relationship between KProg and other programmes within WOB, processes in addressing KProg clients, and the ideal strategies to improve KProg.

Another set of structured interviews were carried out with senior officers of two randomly selected institutions (1 private and 1 public) offering financial support to KProg clients (13 questions). Questions focused on their policy on the support of KProg clients and tools used to measure success of their support to KProg clients.

A one day KProg clients’ organizations workshop, where 13 randomly selected representatives of KProg clients organizations drawn from all over the country
attended. The original intention of the workshop was to supplement the questionnaire based interviews to KProg clients described above by reviewing the various objectives of KProg and assess whether it was meeting these objectives, its strengths and weaknesses, problems hindering it from fulfilling its mission and possible solutions to those problems. To this end a series of issues aligned with the programme was complied and an interactive process planned which it was hoped would yield valuable input. Participants however objected to what they called ‘a piecemeal review of KProg’ and its performance, likening it to *rearranging deck chairs on the Titanic*. In the unanimous opinion of the participants, the programme had been overtaken by events and they preferred a strategic, comprehensive evaluation, which they hoped would lead to a major overhaul.

**Research Method**

Although structured interviews and a workshop were used in this research survey to deal with respondents within the research territory, the foundation of the study was focused on conducting a qualitative research – *through a case study*. Following in Priest, Roberts and Wood’s (2002a and b) foot steps, it is important to note that one of the most challenging aspects of conducting qualitative research lies in the analysis of the data. Furthermore, the author was confronted with the challenge of satisfying the ‘*quantitative research believers*’ who strongly argue that quantitative research is the only reliable approach and the ‘*case study skeptics*’ who feel that case studies do not provide an appropriate base towards reliable findings. The ‘*quantitative research believers*’ and part of the ‘*case study skeptics*’ will feel comfortable that the author has intensively used structured questionnaires to collect data. Another section of ‘*case study skeptics*’ will still know how a case study and one case study for that matter can represent a study on 5 SAIDs. The strengths of one case study representing five SAIDs have been dealt with above and the only issue to be argued here is the strength of using the case study method for this research project.

The case study method has a long and respected history in the social sciences. Yin (1994), for example, points to the classic case studies by Whyte (1943) on the ‘Cornerville’ community and Allison (1971) on the Cuban missile crisis. There have also been seminal examples of case research within the management literature. Gibb and Wilkins (1991), for example cite Blau’s (1955), Gouldner’s (1954) and Dalton’s (1959) work on bureaucracy. According to Perren and Ram (2004), the philosophy and implications of the case-study method have received considerable attention in the methodological literature (e.g. Eisenhardt 1989, 1991; Gibb and Wilkins 1991; Ragin and Becker 1992; Stake 1994; Gomm, Hammersley and Foster 2000) and there are a number of standard texts on the approach (e.g. Stake 1995; Yin 1994). Based on these findings, which are widely accepted across the world (Perren and Ram 2004), the author feels strongly that the method used in this study is sound and the way in which it was selected is balanced. Furthermore, three different approaches were used to analyse and interpret data. These are: *grounded theory analysis, content analysis, and narrative analysis*. In order to remain focused to the letter of these approaches, Priest, Roberts and Wood’s (2002a and b) principles were followed closely.
Survey Findings

KProg clients survey results

The following responses were obtained from a questionnaire survey of a randomly selected sample of KProg clients. In many of the questions the responses do not total 438 as some respondent chose not to answer the question.

- **Company profile: type of firm**

  The most popular type of firm for the respondents was the closed corporation, followed by sole proprietorships. Partnerships trust firms; private limited firms and non-profit organisations were not popular. Surprisingly, given the reported small nature of KProg client firms, Close corporations outnumbered sole proprietorships by almost 7.5 to 1.

- **Geographical area of operation**

  This question aimed at identifying the geographical scope of operations of the firm, and the responses were categorised according to whether the KProg clients indicated they carried out jobs in and out of the country, anywhere within the country, within a number of provinces, in only one province, within a city or municipality or within a district or region. The results show that most of the KProg clients have a provincial scope of operations, with 82% of them carrying out works within one province. Only one KProg client carried out work out of the country, in Botswana.

- **Main problems faced by KProg clients**

  KProg clients ranked ‘lack of steady work opportunities’ as the biggest problem facing them, followed by ‘slow progress payments’, ‘credit and cash flow problems’, ‘complicated tendering procedures’, and the ‘lack of financial and managerial skills’. The ‘lack of technical skills’ and the ‘lack of experience’ were not seen as significant.

- **Managerial skills and training required**

  The skill or training KProg clients would like to acquire most to help them in their businesses (Table 5) are tendering skills, identified by 223 KProg clients (51%), financial management skills (51%) and project management skills (50%).

- **Evaluation of KProg on the basis of expectations**

  Most KProg clients either agreed with or disagreed with the assessments of KProg, with few adopting a neutral stance as indicated in Table 3. Opinion was generally split between those who assessed KProg favourably and those who saw it in unfavourable light. It can be concluded that KProg performs poorly in facilitating its clients to access credit facilities, and in facilitating KProg clients to acquire knowledge in competitive estimating techniques and business management. It is seen more favourably in facilitating KProg clients to access training and has best reviews in providing work opportunities and mobilising support nationally for KProg clients. Overall, however, opinion is divided as to KProg’s performance.
Table 3 Assessment of KProg’s performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Fully met with my expectations</th>
<th>Nearly met with my expectations</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Through the WOB, KProg is providing work opportunities and mobilising support nationally for its clients</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KProg is facilitating for its clients to access credit facilities</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KProg is facilitating for its clients to access training</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KProg is facilitating its clients to acquire knowledge in competitive estimating techniques and business management</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Satisfaction with the administration of KProg**

The largest group, 41%, considered themselves very satisfied with the administration of KProg, 10% ‘quite satisfied’, 15% saw KProg’s performance as just ‘Satisfactory’ 1% were ‘Somewhat dissatisfied’, and 32% were ‘Very dissatisfied’.

- **Overall assessment of KProg (its long-term usefulness)**

KProg is seen as an excellent tool for long-term business success by 28 % of KProg clients; and as beneficial by 15% of them. Eighteen percent are neutral, 19% see its performance as a long term tool as fair and 23% as poor. These figures show a fairly even split between positive and negative views on KProg.

- **KProg database as a tool for KProg clients’ assessment**

Almost half (48%) the respondents interviewed were very satisfied with the database as a tool for their assessment, monitoring and management. This is a favourable review considering that only 22 % were ‘somewhat dissatisfied’ to ‘very dissatisfied’ with the database. Similar reasons were advanced for dissatisfaction with the database as are advanced for the overall assessment of KProg.

- **Help Desk Facilitator ability to provide advice and assistance**

The Help Desk Facilitator was viewed as ‘very satisfactory’ by 54% of the respondents, as ‘quite satisfactory’ by 10%. Its performance was seen as ‘somewhat unsatisfactory’ by 2% and very unsatisfactory’ by 16 % of the respondents. Though in the minority this is still a significant number, nonetheless.
Workshop with KProg clients’ organisations

The original intention of the workshop was to review the various objectives of the KProg and assess whether it was meeting these objectives, its strengths and weaknesses, problems hindering it from fulfilling its mission and possible solutions to those problems. To this end a series of issues aligned with the programme was compiled and an interactive process planned which it was hoped would yield valuable input. Participants however objected to what they referred to as ‘a piecemeal review of KProg’ and its performance, likening it to rearranging deck chairs on the Titanic. In the unanimous opinion of the participants they felt that the programme had been overtaken by events and they preferred a strategic, comprehensive evaluation, which they hoped would lead to what is called ‘a major overhaul’.

While acknowledging the need for KProg as an intervention to level the playing ground in SACI, participants had numerous criticisms of the programme. These ranged from KProg in ability to build on the strengths of the existing emerging clients, its inability to bring the KProg clients organisations on board ‘ab initio’, to KProg’s little emphasis on the need to develop KProg clients and pull them from whatever their entry level was to an exit level predetermined where they could then be independent of KProg.

Summary of findings: regional officers responsible for KProg

The managers identified KProg major weakness as the blanket acceptance of every client who had applied without physically visiting the client business office to check and verify information and capacity. There was no limit to number of clients entering the programme, little or no attempt at a screening process and no focus so the targeted market became too broad. This created problems later on in terms of poor KProg client performance and client dissatisfaction. Other issues included KProg mechanism for monitoring clients, which was either poor or non-existent and the vagueness of KProg mandate, and

4. CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study described above provide a strong indication to show that WOB does not seem to have the ability to make predictions and commitments relative to its services. There are strong indications to suggest based on the department’s premiere programme (KProg) management that WOB does not possess sufficient skills and abilities to manage its programme as a POO. On the PM Maturity culture level, it seems to have remained within levels I and II. Level I characteristics are more dominant to WOB. Although the PM maturity culture evolves over time as the organisation’s PM maturity increases, WOB’s progress for the last 7 years, suggest otherwise. During this period it seems to have lost more from Level II and stagnated at Level I (see Table 2). The PM immaturity culture seems to dominate its business. Under these circumstances, the position of WOB need to be re-assessed and re-organisation of its framework in order to embrace a PM maturity culture.

According to this study, which could be described as mirror for other SAIDs, it seems fair to conclude that government m departments responsible for infrastructure seem to have good intentions and basic ideas on how to deal with implementation of various responsibilities within their mandate. The choice to organise around projects is an
appropriate one, but the choice needs to be supported by other requirements in order to deliver their projects. For these public sector organisations to benefit from this choice of organising around projects (becoming true POO), they need to fully embrace the PM maturity culture as a dominant culture, where individual and team learning have to be organized. Instruments for the further embracing of the PM maturity culture have to be differentiated for individuals, teams and the organisation as a whole.

For WOB and other infrastructure departments in non-industrialized countries the lesson to be learnt from this study is that organizing around programmes and projects (as project oriented organization – POO) is an appropriate way of fulfilling their mandate under conditions of high staff turnover and limited budgets. But being able to function as a POO and fulfil the department/ministry’s mandate and move smoothly to higher levels of the PM maturity culture ladder, requires the creation of an environment for successful projects or ‘building project management centre of excellence’. While the details in terms of the required methodologies, tools and training for an appropriate POO are found elsewhere (e.g. in Bolles 2002; Graham and Englund 2004), a brief process (in 7 steps) is given here (Graham and Englund 2004) as: 1st step: Developing a senior management support: breaking people out of their old unit/section management habits and instil practices that support project management; 2nd step: Developing a structure for independent input; 3rd step: Developing a process for project selection; 4th step: Developing upper manager’s abilities in managing project managers; 5th step: Establishing a project manager’s development programme; 6th step: Making project management a career position; and 7th step: Developing a project learning organisation. Going through these steps will help the organisation to focus on the organisational framework and be able to identify project management process gaps among other issues discussed above contributing to PM immaturity.

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