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Partnership Planning and Managerial Performance: A Case of The Edmund Rice Project in Mukuru Kwa Ruben, Embakasi Sub-County, Nairobi City County, Kenya

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Abstract: A critical component in monitoring and evaluation is planning, which is instrumental in providing the required guidance and support needed for performance. This study sought to investigate the role of partnership in planning and its effect on managerial performance in the Edmund Rice project in Mukuru Kwa Ruben, Embakasi sub-county, Nairobi, Kenya. A descriptive cross-sectional approach design was utilized as it is easier to observe ease in capturing the relationship between the existing variables. The target population was of directors, managers, accountants, employees, volunteers, and beneficiaries, which translated to a total of 380 participants. The stratified sampling technique was adopted in the selection of respondents based on their cadre. Thereafter, simple random sampling was incorporated until the sample was realized within the cadre. Descriptive statistics were determined through means, percentages, frequencies, and standard deviation. Inferential statistics were determined through correlation analysis and regression analysis. The level of statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$. Thematic analysis was used for the analysis of qualitative data. The findings showed that partnership planning had a significant association with the organization's performance ($p < 0.014$). ANOVA results revealed that partnership planning has an important influence on project performance, with an F-value of 0.007 and a p-value of 0.014. The qualitative data also revealed that partnerships are crucial processes in attaining the objectives of the organization. Partnerships in planning are crucial for performance through consultations among teams, strengthening open communication, which improves execution and collaboration. Further studies should explore how partnership in planning predicts on-time delivery of projects and whether the relationship is influenced by other factors.

Key Words: Partnership, Planning, Managerial Performance, Capacity Building, Community-Based Organizations, Monitoring and Evaluation

1.1 Introduction

A fundamental component that influences the performance of a community-based organization is monitoring and evaluation. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) largely depend on monitoring and evaluation as a crucial aspect of project management (Rumenya & Kisimbi, 2020). Karanja & Yusuf (2018) stipulate that monitoring is a key approach that serves as a crucial tool in determining and

assessing the effectiveness of a program. It is later evaluated to ensure that it meets the intended goals and objectives. Kelly (2019) posits that non-governmental organizations encounter tremendous pressure to showcase the development and success to their donors based on the funding provided. Globally, NGOs that fail to meet their objectives and goals demonstrate an inability to track their progress and fill the potential gaps. Highly ranked projects fail as a result of poor planning, insufficient support, poor commitment from top management, and poor monitoring and evaluation (Stretton, 2018).

Africa is the beneficiary of various NGO programs which are designed to alleviate the population from various social, health-related, and financial issues, among others. However, the effectiveness of these programs is mostly hampered by poor monitoring and evaluation approaches (Tantoh et al., 2020). Additionally, properly trained individuals are essential in ensuring that all processes within the program are properly implemented to ensure the effectiveness of the program and the realization of the objectives (Simister, 2019). A study conducted in Rwanda also stipulated that programs with weak monitoring and evaluation practices have higher chances of poor performance regarding timelines, utilization of resources, and scope (Marc et al., 2022).

In Kenya, Nderitu et al. (2025) revealed that youth-related projects were mostly affected by poor management and evaluation approaches. The researchers also advocated for a policy that provides training for the youth to develop their monitoring and evaluation skills, which would translate to improved performance of their projects. Hassan et al. (2020) also posited that most projects in the country fail as a result of poor skills from the project implementers and a lack of monitoring from the shareholders. Therefore, this study sought to investigate the role of partnership in planning mechanisms and its impact on managerial performance.

1.2 Literature Review

In this section, theoretical and empirical reviews are presented

1.2.1 Theoretical Framework

Stakeholder Theory

The stakeholder theory was developed by Edward Freeman, An American philosopher in 1984. The framework targeted organizations and businesses by arguing out that they should create value for their stakeholders. The theory mainly emphasizes on the importance of ethical management by encouraging businesses to focus on other responsibilities that are beyond profit generation. These includes the impact of their activities on their employees, suppliers, community and environment (Mahajan et al., 2023). According to the theory, businesses have a moral obligation that focuses on serving all its stakeholders. The decision-making processes should also focus on creating balance and dealing with the different interests of the groups. Additionally, companies must prioritize the wellbeing of their stakeholders to achieve long-term success and more importantly sustainability (Harrison et al., 2019).

1.2.2 Empirical Review

Performance of Organizations

The effectiveness with which an organization accomplishes its objectives and produces the desired results is measured by its organizational performance. Effectiveness, sustainability, and a clear alignment of resources, procedures, and goals are characteristics of high-performing companies. A number of variables affect performance, such as leadership, resource distribution, strategic planning, and flexibility in the face of change (Kalogiannidis, 2021). Setting specific goals, tracking results, and making data-

driven decisions to close gaps and maximize outcomes are all components of effective performance management. Performance-focused organizations make sure that every procedure and action advances their overarching mission by coordinating their operations with strategic objectives. Operational effectiveness, accountability, and the ability to provide consistent, quantifiable results are important components of performance (Musheke & Phiri, 2021).

Partnership in Planning and Performance

The Community-based organizational projects are unique and multidisciplinary and have features of the standards projects. The CBO projects have life cycles and face times, work within the costs and quality constraints, and place high demands on specific tools and techniques for their implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. For instance, the programs under the project, such as social justice and advocacy, education, health, capacity building, and psychosocial support, face several problems that weaken the specific program. The CBOs face institutional and sustainability problems that include capacity-building issues, regular and increasing costs of the projects, large-scale corruption, and a lack of political support and goodwill in operation (Goncharenko, 2019). In addition, the inability of the organization to bring about sustainable activities, donors and recipients' lack of performance of implementation, and weakened performance and evaluation mechanisms are among the potential problems (Hassan et al., 2020; Stretton, 2018). Various studies have pointed out that many projects fail due to ineffective planning, inability to monitor the progress, and failure to periodically evaluate the breakthrough in the specific programs and identify the potential setbacks (Davies, 2019).

1.3 The Conceptual Framework

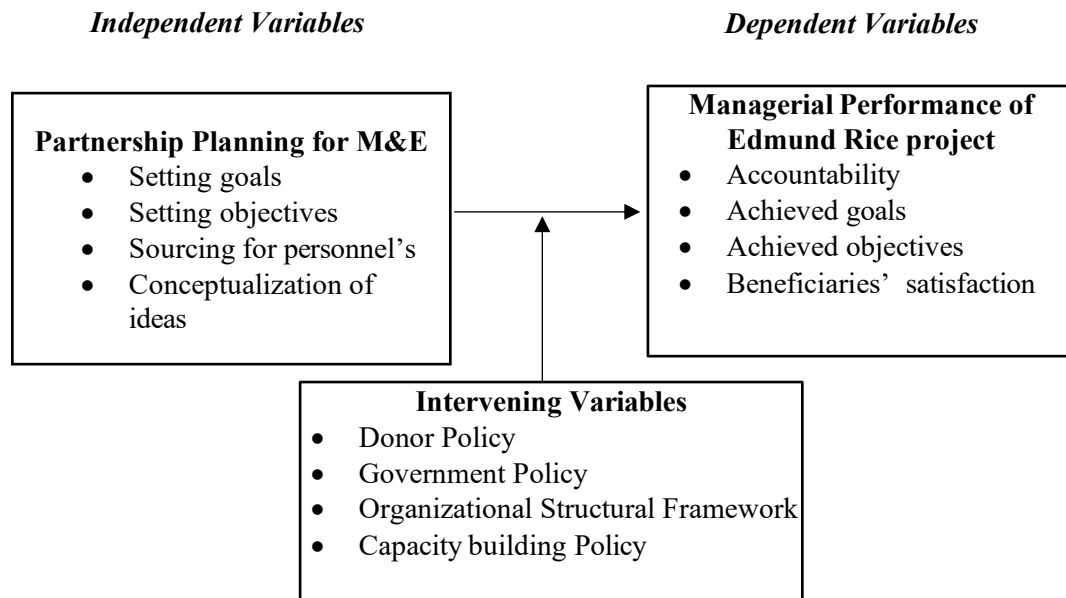


Figure 1: *Conceptual Framework*

Source: *Researcher, 2024*

1.4 Research Methodology

Research design serves as a blueprint through which a particular study is conducted (Creswell, 2017). A descriptive cross-sectional approach design was utilized as it is easier to observe ease in capturing the

relationship between the existing variables. This design was also suitable as it enables faster collection of data and it is not costly as it is implemented over a short period of time. The Edmund Rice Ruben center is a nonprofit and faith-based organization striving to empower the Mukuru Community by providing quality education, health, social justice and advocacy, and financial and psychosocial services to families and children within the area. It focuses on implementing community development programs for 700,000 residents living in extreme poverty in a harsh environment in the slums region, Embakasi Sub County, Nairobi County (Edmund Rice Foundation, 2025). The target population was composed of employees and stakeholders who work in Edmund Rice projects. These are composed of directors, managers, accountants, employees, volunteers and beneficiaries which translated to a total of 380 participants. Sampling is a process that is characterized by the selection of a subset of the population that took part in the study and who were instrumental in drawing conclusions regarding the general population (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2019). Stratified sampling technique was adopted in the selection of respondents based on their cadre. Thereafter, simple random sampling was incorporated until the sample was realized within the cadre.

Slovin's sample size calculation formula was used to calculate the sample size.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

n = sample size

N = population size

e = level of precision (5%). Or error term

Hence

$$\frac{380}{\frac{(1 + 380(0.05 * 0.05))}{380}} = \frac{380}{1.875} = 191 \text{ respondents}$$

Table 1: Sampling Frame

Category	Target Population	Sample size
Directors	10	5
Managers	6	3
Project managers	15	8
Accountants	6	3
Subordinate employees	130	65
Volunteers	50	25
Beneficiaries	163	82
Totals	380	191

Source: Field work, 2024

A data collection instrument is a tool that is used in the collection of data for the purpose of the research study (Creswell, 2017). A semi-structured questionnaire was used in the collection of data from the respondents. All questionnaires were assessed for completeness before they were entered in the data analysis software. Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 26 was used in the analysis of data. Nvivo 14 was used for the purpose of qualitative data. Descriptive statistics was

determined through means, percentages, frequencies and standard deviation. Inferential statistics was determined through correlation analysis and regression analysis. The level of statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$. Thematic analysis was used for the analysis of qualitative data.

1.5 Results and Discussion

This section presents the findings from the study that captures respondents' background information, the descriptive analysis, the correlation and inferential statistics.

Demographic Factors

A majority of the respondents were male ($n=93$, 58.1%), between the age of 30-39 years ($n=70$, 43.8%) who had been working in the projects for 6-10 years ($n=63$, 39.4%). A majority of the respondents had a master's degree ($n=73$, 38.4%) with slightly more than half of the respondents in middle-level management ($n=85$, 53.1%).

Descriptive Statistics

Partnership Planning

Six statements were addressed, as shown in Table 2, regarding Partnership planning and Performance of the Edmund rice project in Mukuru Kwa Reuben, Embakasi Sub-County Nairobi County, Kenya.

Table 2: Partnership Planning

Statements (Partnership planning)	SD %	D %	N %	A %	SA %	Mean	Std Dev
	F	F	F	F	F		
1. Proper planning is essential for any project to end up well.	9 (5.6%)	33 (20.6%)	3 (1.9%)	70 (43.8%)	45 (28.1%)	3.68	1.24
2. There are no proper ways of setting objectives thus projects lack direction when being implemented	71 (44.4%)	46 (28.7%)	4 (2.5%)	18 (11.3%)	21 (13.1%)	2.20	1.44
3. The senior management team source for personnel who are skilled to get the desired results.	44 (27.5%)	50 (31.3%)	2 (1.3%)	23 (14.4%)	41 (25.6%)	2.79	1.59
4. The project ideas are communicated to key stakeholders for verification purposes	6 (3.8%)	11 (6.9%)	1 (0.6%)	84 (52.5%)	58 (36.3%)	4.11	0.98
5. Task delegation and team management are skills taught to project managers and supervisors	8 (5%)	28 (17.5%)	3 (1.9%)	56 (35%)	65 (40.6%)	3.89	1.25
6. There is minimal production because contractors have little or no influence decision making during planning.	42 (26.3%)	54 (33.8%)	5 (3.1%)	15 (9.4%)	44 (27.5%)	2.78	1.59
Overall composite Mean and Std deviation						3.28	1.62

Source: Field data, 2025

The responses to this variable varied, reflecting the diverse perspectives of respondents on the importance of proper planning for project success. The statement emphasizing the need for consultations during planning received a mean score of 3.68 and a standard deviation of 1.24. Out of 160 respondents, 9 (5.6%) strongly disagreed, 33 (20.6%) disagreed, 3 (1.9%) were neutral, 70 (43.8%) agreed, and 45 (28.1%) strongly agreed. With the mean exceeding the overall average of 3.28, the findings suggest that frequent consultations among team members contribute to better project outcomes. Additionally, the lower standard deviation of 1.24 compared to the overall 1.62 indicates a consensus on the significance of planning within the Edmund Rice project.

Regarding the assertion that a lack of proper objective setting leads to project failure, the mean score was 2.20 with a standard deviation of 1.44. Data from 160 respondents showed that 71 (44.4%) strongly disagreed, 46 (28.7%) disagreed, 4 (2.5%) were neutral, 18 (11.3%) agreed, and 21 (13.1%) strongly agreed. Since the mean falls below the overall average of 3.28, the findings suggest that project objectives at Edmund Rice are generally well-defined, contrary to the statement. The higher standard deviation of 1.44 compared to the overall 1.62 reflects a degree of disagreement among respondents on this matter.

On the topic of senior management sourcing skilled personnel for optimal results, the mean score was 2.79 with a standard deviation of 1.59. Among the 160 respondents, 44 (27.5%) strongly disagreed, 50 (31.3%) disagreed, 2 (1.3%) were neutral, 23 (14.4%) agreed, and 41 (25.6%) strongly agreed. Since the mean falls below the overall 3.28, the results suggest that challenges exist in securing highly skilled personnel. However, the lower standard deviation of 1.59 compared to 1.62 indicates some alignment in opinions.

For the statement regarding project ideas being communicated to key stakeholders for verification, the mean score was 4.11, with a standard deviation of 0.98. Data from 160 respondents showed that 6 (3.8%) strongly disagreed, 11 (6.9%) disagreed, 1 (0.6%) was neutral, 84 (52.5%) agreed, and 58 (36.3%) strongly agreed. With a mean above the overall 3.28, these findings affirm that stakeholder involvement enhances project outcomes. Despite the standard deviation being lower than the overall 1.62, the high level of agreement among respondents reinforces the importance of stakeholder communication in project execution.

The statement on task delegation and team management training for project managers and supervisors yielded a mean score of 3.89 and a standard deviation of 1.25. Among the respondents, 8 (5%) strongly disagreed, 28 (17.5%) disagreed, 3 (1.9%) were neutral, 56 (35%) agreed, and 65 (40.6%) strongly agreed. With a mean higher than the overall 3.28, the results indicate that such training has positively impacted project productivity. The relatively low standard deviation of 1.25 suggests a strong consensus on this issue.

Lastly, the assertion that minimal production results from contractors having little influence in decision-making scored a mean of 2.78 with a standard deviation of 1.59. Among the respondents, 42 (26.3%) strongly disagreed, 54 (33.8%) disagreed, 5 (3.1%) were neutral, 15 (9.4%) agreed, and 44 (27.5%) strongly agreed. The lower-than-average mean suggests that contractors do, in fact, have a significant role in decision-making, contrary to the statement. The standard deviation of 1.59, being close to the

overall 1.62, indicates some variation in opinions but general agreement that contractors play a vital role in planning processes.

Performance

Eight statements were addressed, as shown in Table 3, regarding Performance of Edmund rice project in Mukuru Kwa Reuben, Embakasi Sub-County Nairobi County, Kenya.

Table 3: Performance of Edmund Rice Project

Statements (Performance of Edmund rice project)	SD % F	D % F	N % F	A % F	SA % F	Mean	Std Dev
1. The projects are completed as per the stipulated time	6 (3.8%)	31 (19.4%)	4 (2.5%)	77 (48.1%)	42 (26.3%)	3.74	1.15
2. The projects are not completed within the time frame as planned	65 (40.6%)	40 (25%)	4 (2.5%)	13 (8.1%)	38 (23.8%)	2.49	1.63
3. There is accountability for the projects	14 (8.8%)	17 (10.6%)	6 (3.8%)	75 (46.9%)	48 (30%)	3.79	1.23
4. Most staff members have fewer skills and do not go for fresher courses	36 (22.5%)	71 (44.4%)	3 (1.9%)	23 (14.4%)	27 (16.9%)	2.59	1.41
5. Satisfaction of beneficiaries is highly experienced	13 (8.1%)	14 (8.8%)	3 (1.9%)	84 (52.5%)	46 (28.7%)	3.85	1.17
6. Every organization desires to achieve the objectives	12 (7.5%)	50 (31.3%)	4 (2.5%)	65 (40.6%)	29 (18.1%)	3.31	1.28
7. There is no accountability for the projects being undertaken	7 (4.4%)	63 (39.4%)	1 (0.6%)	60 (37.5%)	29 (18.1%)	3.26	1.27
8. Projects are completed on time since most projects have the right staff	7 (4.4%)	20 (12.5%)	7 (4.4%)	58 (36.3%)	68 (42.5%)	4.00	1.17
Overall composite Mean and Std deviation						3.45	1.30

Source: Field data, 2025

Inferential Statistics

Correlation Analysis

The relationship that joins the Partnership planning and Performance of Edmund Rice Project was carried out using statistical outputs laid out in Table 5 and Pearson's correlational analyses. It has been determined that the cumulative scores of the rating scale have been calculated by incorporating the ratings that the participant gave on each item, with a level of confidence of 95%. Table 4 shows the findings of the correlational analysis.

Table 4: Correlation Analysis

Variable	Statistics	Performance of Edmund rice project in Mukuru Kwa Reuben, Embakasi Sub-County Nairobi County, Kenya
Partnership planning	Pearson <i>r</i>	0.577**
	P-value	0.007
	N	160

(n=160); ** The correlation is statistically significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed).

The study identified a statistically significant but weak positive correlation of 0.577 (P-Value = 0.007 < 0.05), suggesting a meaningful relationship between partnership planning and the performance of the Edmund Rice project. Based on this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, the study concludes that partnership planning plays a significant role in influencing the project's performance.

Regression Analysis

A simple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between partnership planning and project performance. A summary of the regression model's key findings is presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Regression Analysis

Model outline				
Framework	R	R Square	Amended R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.577 ^a	0.332	0.321	0.43568

a. Predictor: (Constant), Partnership planning

ANOVA					
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Squares	F
1	Regression	0.179	1	0.179	0.945
	Residual	29.992	158	0.190	
	Total	30.171	159		

a. Setting up for Partnership planning and Performance of Edmund rice project in Mukuru Kwa Reuben, Embakasi Sub-County Nairobi County, Kenya

b. Predictors: (Constant), Partnership planning

Coefficients^a

Analysis	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig (p-value)
	B	Beta		
1 (Constant)	3.561		18.584	0.000

Partnership planning	0.577	0.058	0.332	0.972	0.014
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a. Independent Variable: Partnership planning

The model summary indicates a positive correlation ($R^2 = 0.332$) between partnership planning and the performance of the Edmund Rice project in Mukuru Kwa Reuben, Embakasi Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya, as predicted by the regression model. The ANOVA results show that partnership planning has a significant influence on project performance, with an F-value of 0.007 and a p-value of 0.014, which is below the 0.05 significance threshold. This confirms that the model effectively predicts the dependent variable.

Analysis of the coefficient data reveals that, when holding other factors constant, the estimated baseline value for partnership planning is 3.561. Additionally, an increase in partnership planning is associated with a 0.577 change in project performance, assuming all other variables remain unchanged.

$$\text{Model Y} = 3.561 + 0.577X_1 + \varepsilon$$

Where:

Y = Performance of Edmund rice project

X₁ = Partnership planning

ε = error.

Qualitative Data

The qualitative feedback provided insights revealed that partnerships are crucial processes in attaining the objectives.

“Partnership in planning is very key process when you want every objective to be achieved. Some people don’t care what happens in the activities they do but with proper guidance they can work amicably. ”KII-Respondent 6

The findings showed that partnership planning had a significant association with the performance of the organization. The qualitative feedback also revealed that partnerships are instrumental in the achievement of objectives. This relates to a study by Khaenamkhaew (2023) which revealed that organization handle their failures and mistakes by working with other stakeholders, thus ensuring improvement in their performance. Kelly & Reid (2020) also stipulates that organizations fail during the start-up phase as a result of a lack of support and guidance acquired through partnerships. Moshtari & Vanpoucke (2021) also, suggest that collaboration between different organizations is also instrumental in not only building social capital but also encouraging mutual investments.

Musila (2023) also conducted a study that focused on different strategic partnerships, which included open communication, joint commitment, shared vision, teamwork, trust, and investment. The results revealed that strategic partnerships are instrumental in improving NGO performance in Nairobi. A key factor was the adoption of a shared vision among the partners, the establishment of open communication channels, effective teamwork, investment, and joint commitment, which were positively correlated with NGO performance. These were crucial in improving the customer satisfaction levels, which in turn

contributed to employee satisfaction. This relates to a study conducted by Kigenza & Irechukwu (2023), which urged NGOs to not only focus on resource allocation, risk planning, and stakeholder engagement, but also consider engaging with other stakeholders, especially during planning.

1.6 Conclusion

Partnerships in planning are crucial in ensuring project success and ultimately the success of the project. They provide the required support and guidance in the monitoring and evaluation process, which ensures the success of the project. This study contributes to new knowledge by demonstrating how structured partnership planning directly influences managerial performance in community-based projects within informal settlements, offering empirical insights from Mukuru kwa Ruben that are scarce in existing literature. Further studies should explore how partnership in planning predicts on-time delivery of projects and whether the relationship is influenced by other factors.

1.7 Recommendations

- a) **Strengthen Structured Partnership Planning**
 - *What:* Develop and institutionalize clear frameworks for partnership planning, with defined objectives, timelines, and deliverables.
 - *Who:* Project management teams in collaboration with Edmund Rice leadership.
 - *How:* Use participatory planning models that integrate stakeholder feedback, ensuring that planning meetings and consultations are formally scheduled and documented.
- b) **Enhance Stakeholder Engagement and Communication**
 - *What:* Foster active involvement of all stakeholders—including contractors, beneficiaries, and local leaders—in project planning and monitoring.
 - *Who:* Project managers working with community representatives and contractors.
 - *How:* Establish structured communication channels such as quarterly forums, town hall meetings, and feedback platforms to validate project ideas before implementation.
- c) **Capacity Building in Leadership, Task Delegation, and Team Management**
 - *What:* Provide continuous training on task delegation, supervision, and leadership for project managers and supervisors.
 - *Who:* Human Resource units in partnership with external training providers.
 - *How:* Implement periodic refresher courses and mentorship programs to enhance management skills, ensuring project efficiency and accountability.
- d) **Invest in Skilled Personnel Recruitment and Retention**
 - *What:* Address gaps in technical expertise by hiring and retaining competent staff for project execution.
 - *Who:* Senior management and HR departments.
 - *How:* Introduce competitive recruitment practices, professional development opportunities, and retention incentives such as career progression pathways.
- e) **Strengthen Accountability and Monitoring Mechanisms**
 - *What:* Build robust accountability frameworks to ensure transparency in project resource use and outcomes.
 - *Who:* Project monitoring and evaluation (M&E) teams, supported by external auditors.
 - *How:* Adopt digital tracking systems, quarterly performance audits, and beneficiary satisfaction surveys to monitor and evaluate accountability in project implementation.
- f) **Leverage Strategic Partnerships for Sustainability**

- *What*: Build collaborative networks with NGOs, government agencies, and development partners to strengthen resource mobilization and knowledge sharing.
 - *Who*: Edmund Rice leadership in partnership with local and international NGOs.
 - *How*: Formalize Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) to establish shared visions, joint commitments, and co-investment strategies for long-term sustainability.
- g) **Improve Timeliness in Project Delivery**
- *What*: Enhance project scheduling and monitoring to ensure timely delivery of outputs.
 - *Who*: Project coordinators and M&E officers.
 - *How*: Employ project management software tools, enforce milestone reviews, and align project timelines with available resources and staff capacities.

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