

REGIONAL REPORT – RWANDA – MARCH 2010



Project Management Update from Kigali

By Isaac Nyarwaya

*International Correspondent for PMForum & PM World Today
Kigali, Rwanda*

Introduction

This is my second month as member of this network. So far, I am learning a lot about projects and project management. I wish the opportunity to join this network came earlier. I thought it would be fair for our readers to know that Rwanda has not been left behind in projects and project management. The aim of this first contribution is to briefly tell our readers how projects are making significant contribution to Rwanda's economic development after the devastating effects of the 1994 genocide. It is also aimed at sharing with our readers how project management and project management professionalization is fairing in our country.

News from Big Local Projects

Last time I was reading an article in Rwanda's New Times of February 5, 2010 entitled "2009 investments to create 11,000 jobs" and was left amazed at how projects are at the center of economic development of Rwanda. It reported that in 2009, Rwanda registered about 109 investment projects worth over 600 billion RWF (approximately 1.1 billion USD) and were estimated to create 11,000 jobs. This is perhaps a significant investment given the size of Rwanda.

The major projects registered include the Kivuwatt project by American-based company Contour Global, which aims to extract methane gas from lake Kivu and convert it to energy, Luxemburg's Millicom in Telecommunications with its brand name TIGO, Germany's SAG in electrical construction, South Africa's Rutongo Mines and Tanzania's Bakhresa Grain Milling. The other major foreign deals signed include

USA Ecofuel's biodiesel/ Jatropha project and the construction of five-star Marriott/ New Century Hotel and the Kigali Convention Center/ Hotel. Other huge upcoming projects include the Airport and Railway construction.

When you look at a number of investments in various projects, you can be sure that Rwanda is on the right track towards achieving its famous Vision 2020. Rwandans can be proud of the trust foreigners are putting in the country given that most of the projects are Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). These include foreigners and members of the Rwandan Diaspora. The country's leadership is still calling upon investors to come and invest in Rwanda and is working hard to make Rwanda the first choice investment destination in Africa.

The projects mentioned are public investments projects but there are several other projects implemented by development organizations. With the number of projects increasing, there are a number of project management initiatives that are worth sharing with our readers.

Other News Affecting Projects & Project Management

Project Management has gained recognition in Rwanda over the past few years although there is a lot that needs to be done in its professionalization. In Rwanda, the professionalization of project management is still in its infancy stages but the future is bright.

One notable milestone in Rwanda was the establishment of the Central Public Investments and External Finance Bureau (CEPEX). For quite a long time, Rwanda had been in a situation whereby projects were conceived, initiated and approved in an uncoordinated manner. Resources borrowed, grants received or national funds budgeted for development were not having the desired impact. Project management has been further complicated by multiplicity of donor agencies, including NGOs each having its own procedures and directly deciding its own priorities. The proliferation of project implementation units in different Ministries and agencies some of which having no necessary capacity further complicated the matter.

To address these challenges and many more, CEPEX came to contribute to Rwanda's development through offering top range project and program support services to the government ministries, institutions, departments and project/program implementation units. CEPEX deals purely with project issues including: offering technical support services to government ministries and institutions in project preparation and appraisal, negotiations, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. The support services that CEPEX provides include program and project management, project implementation support, project monitoring and evaluation, supervision and advisory services including capacity building in those competencies.

Project management in international development agencies has taken a significant step forward. Project Management professionalization has been given consideration. Much as there is no much information on project management practices in international agencies, what is happening in agencies like UNDP Rwanda is well known. The project/ program management practices have been aligned to international project management standards. Their project/ program management methodologies have been aligned to PRINCE2 methodology. To support this, a number of staff have been trained in PRINCE2 methodology and facilitated certification for their staff. At the moment, there are over 20 staff who have PRINCE2 (Foundation) certification. In my opinion again, this is a good step toward project management professionalization.

The other thing that deserves mention is the willingness to embrace the concept of Project Management Office (PMO) in organizations. There is no research done to know how many companies have PMOs but I know Rwanda Information Technology Authority (RITA) under Rwanda Development Board (RDB) and Mobile Telephone Networks (MTN) Rwanda have already established PMOs. This is yet another big achievement in Rwanda.

Another considerable step Rwanda has taken relates to project management training. The Rwanda School of Finance of Banking started a MBA program and one of the specializations is in Project Management. This is in collaboration with Maastricht School of Management of the Netherlands. Apart from this, government has attracted reputable companies to train government staff in key areas of project management. For example SETY International has conducted a number of trainings for government staff.

One other point that deserves mention is the desire of Rwandans to be affiliated to internationally recognized project management bodies like the Project Management Institute (PMI). There were over 40 Rwandans who received PMI membership in 2007 and most of them have renewed membership since then. These Rwandans have continually received journals and magazines from PMI which I believe have enhanced their project management experience and knowledge in one way or the other. Apart from membership, I have talked to a number of Rwandans who are PMI members who are keen to sit for either the CAPM or PMP certification. Most of them have targeted to be certified project managers before the end of 2010. This is yet more good news for project management professionalization in the country.

Project Management training has recently received a boost from the Center for Finance and Project Management (CFPM) based in Nairobi- Kenya. This company has conducted probably the first ever PMP Exam Preparation Course back in December 2009 and is scheduled to conduct another one from 22-26 March 2010 in Kigali, Rwanda.

As I end this piece, I would like to mention that Rwanda is a growing nation with the desire to be at the same level with other developed nations. There is notable progress in every domain and I will keep you posted on what is happening in the area of projects and project management in Rwanda.

About the Author:***Isaac Nyarwaya******Author******International Correspondent
Kigali, Rwanda***

Isaac Nyarwaya is an International Correspondent for **PMForum** and **PM World Today** in Rwanda. He has over 9 years of project management experience in the NGO sector, United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), and recently in the private sector. He holds a Bachelors Degree in Management with Distinction from the National University of Rwanda and a Masters in Business Administration (MBA) in Project Management from the Maastricht School of Management. He also has a PRINCE2 (Foundation) Certification and is scheduled to sit for the PMP exam this year. He has been a member of the Project Management Institute (PMI) since 1997. Mr. Nyarwaya is in the process of establishing the Centre for Project Management Excellence (CPME Ltd) in Kigali to conduct project management related consultancy, training, research and publication. He is also a visiting lecturer at the Independent Institute of Lay Adventists of Kigali (INILAK). Isaac is committed to promoting professional project management in Rwanda and he dreams of having many certified project managers and a professional project management body in the country one day. Isaac Nyarwaya can be contacted at cpme.rwanda@gmail.com.