

Framework for Optimization of Projects Implementation

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Executive Summary

The achievements of Development Goals of a country mainly depend on implementation of development projects. In Pakistan, a part of development projects implementation is delayed with cost over-run and time over-run, which needs improvement through integrated and comprehensive strategy.

There are a number of gaps at inter-ministerial level, intra-ministerial and intra project implementation level. Besides, a certain number of bottlenecks with cross cutting affects also exist in implementation of projects at national, regional and local level.

Numerous factors contribute to achievements and delayed achievements or non-achievement of development goals. A number of gaps exist in between conceiving a rational development goals and achievement of the goal; (i) Gap between conceiving a National Development goal and sectoral goal, (ii) Gap between sectoral framework and sub-sectoral framework, (iii) Disharmonized ownership of Projects by the Sponsoring Ministry, Ministry of PD&R and Ministry of Finance. (iv) Gap between sub sectoral framework and development project (v) Gap between conceiving a project and matching capacity of the project implementing agency, (vi) Gap between Project Implementation Agency and its internal structures and personnel,, (vii) Gap between project implementing agency and its Associated Implementing Partners, (viii) Gap between Project Implementing Agency and its facilitating Ministries, Departments and Agencies, (ix) Gap between implementing Agency and beneficiaries of the projects, (x) Gap between project achievements and the machinery interlinking it with national Goals.

A number of bottlenecks exist vertically and horizontally in the National Development Goal Achievement Cycle. These bottlenecks have cross cutting and activity centered effect on a number of implementation activities. The implications of bottlenecks may be expanded at multiple activities and stages across implementation cycle. Around 13 number bottlenecks have been identified during monitoring of implementation of around 500 projects since 2011 to 2018. These bottlenecks include; lack of decision making, lack of management capacity, turnover of Project Director (PD) and staff, delay in recruitment, governance issues, delay in procurement, contractor's problems, coordination issues, delay in consultants' appointments/designing, non-existence of PMU, land acquisition, law and orders, delay in releases etc. (Shah 2018).

A comprehensive, multifaceted strategy is required to manage delayed implementation of projects, which has a number of negative implications including sub-optimal use of money, opportunity cost, political leverage of the government, socio-economic development at local and national level and misalignment with international development Goals. A strategy has been devised to address a number of gaps and management of bottleneck existing at ministerial and project level.

It mainly covers reforms in the existing system, procedure, roles of individuals, institutions and the ministries. The strategy also incorporates the role of technologically embedded system for the improvement of overall implementation of projects. The strategy will reduce time, cost and wastage of resources in development activities. The strategy is drawn on principle of bridging gaps, managing bottlenecks and improvement of efficiency of overall governance system of project implementation. Main caveats adopted for the strategy are transparency, symmetric flow of information, reduction of human interface; minimize randomness in the system, reduction of discretion with embedded technological support. Following framework is developed to optimize implementation of projects for early achievement of development goals and marketing at appropriate level at proper time.

It includes; Forward Planning for Project Portfolio, Improvement in Releases, Appropriate Operational Framework of Projects, Onboarding System, Performance Contract System, Training of all the Specialized Team Members, Creation of Project Coordination Cell, Improved Coordination, Improved Recruitment in Projects, Ownership of Project by the Sponsoring and Executing Ministries, Timely Procurements. Innovative Financing Wing Creation. Development of Online Billing and Project Payment System. Deduction in Transfers of PDs/Managers of Projects, Improved Land Acquisition System, District Development Coordination Committees, Introduction of Performance Audit System and Improved Accountability.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Accomplishment of this policy paper was only possible with the blessing of almighty Allah, the most beneficent. This research based policy paper is outcome of a number of inputs received from various people involved in policy making, implementation of projects, monitoring and evaluation of projects. Cooperative role of project implementation staff and management is acknowledged. Over aching motivation from Makhdoom Khusro Bakhtiar and recognition of such policy related research work is a strength to continue policy research work. Encouragement from Mr. Zafar Hassan, Secretary Planning, Development & Reform for completion of this task is recognized in depth. Motivational role of Mr. Shoaib Ahmad Siddiqui, Ex-Secretary Planning, Development & Reform to carry out this endeavor is deeply recognized. Mr. Ali Raza Bhutta Additional Secretary, Planning, Development & Reform helped me in completion of this task. Consultation with and encouragement for working on policy papers by Tariq Mahmood Jaffery, Senior Joint Secretary always remained a strength for me.

This work has drawn significant strength on the efforts and contribution of Mr. Shahid Director General (MIS) and his team members specially Mr. Arshad Muneer. In this endeavor I mainly banked upon my colleagues of Projects Wing specially Syed Zahoor Ali Shah, Chief Monitoring Officer (CMO); Mr. Ghazanfar-ud-Din, Chief Monitoring Officer (CMO).

I also benefitted from comments of Dr. Imtiaz Ahmed, Dr. Mehmood Khalid, Mr. Javed Sikandar, and Dr. Aamer for improvement of the draft paper. I acknowledge my office team members specially Mr. M. Asghar Cheema, APS, and Mr. Wasi-ul-Islam Section Officer (Imp-III), who oftenly accompanied me in late evening and on weekends for accomplishment of this task.

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Introduction

Achievement of national development goals of any country are dependent upon implementation of development projects. An appropriate strategy would be instrumental in accomplishment of national goals through optimization of implementation of development projects. Implementation of Projects in Pakistan have shown a persistent delays in more than 65% of development projects (Shah 2018). Delays result into time over run, cost over-run and also delay in national development goals.

Accomplishments of the planned development programmes, is associated with its linkage with national goals, projects objectives, implementation of projects, and their trickle down effects on socio-economic development and infrastructure development. The trend of allocation of resources, availability of resources, setting development agenda and achievement of development targets is on lower side and a gap exists in national goals achievements and resources allocation. (Shah 2018).

In view of current analysis accomplishments of development goals by the current government of all these conditions, structure remain same will show similar trend, which means hardly 40% age of projects have probability of completion according to specified time line as per PC-I. (Shah 2018). The probability of accomplishment of these development goals may come on lower side as the major bottlenecks of release, lack of management capacity, land acquisition, slow recruitment is not matching with new and innovative nature project. Innovative projects need more efficient and high level of management team, which in case of innovative projects seems difficult. (Shah 2018).

Besides, a number of gaps and bottlenecks cause delays in implementation of projects, which need analysis and management for improving pace of project implementation. Gaps exist vertically and horizontally with varying intensity and impacts. Mainly gaps exist at the level of national think tank, political leadership, existing legal framework, implementation framework, government's assigned roles and function's, organizational structures, working modalities, inter-linkages at multiple stages, ownership at various levels, participation of stakeholders and inter-linkages and interplay of different activities at various levels, dissemination of information etc.

Moreover, a number of bottlenecks exist in achievement of national development goals. These bottlenecks have cross cutting, partial and activity centered effects. These may be expanded across a number of activities and stages of implementation of development projects. The

implications of these bottlenecks expand at the level of a number of players, stakeholders, and outcomes. Lack of capacity, erratic financing, recruitments of human resources, contractors, procurements, weak coordination, law and order situation, availability of primary inputs; land, capital and labor, frequent turnover of team leaders and group leaders also delay the project implementation.

Significance of the Study:

Partial and limited policy research work is available on the achievement of national development goals and impacts on beneficiaries. Most of the available literature either covers a small part of the whole cycle; National Development Goals Achievement Cycle (NDGAC). No comprehensive and integrated research work exists. This paper, analyses the whole National Development Goal Achievement Cycle and proposes a strategy for optimization of achievements of NDGAC.

Objectives:

Main objectives of the paper are to identify gaps causing delays in achievement of development goals. Elaborate gaps existing in between national goal setting and passing on benefits to the common men.

Propose framework for improvement in achievement of national development goals through improved implementation of development projects, by bridging gaps and managing bottlenecks.

Data Set and Methodology:

This paper is drawn on the primary and secondary data set. Firsthand knowledge of monitoring of projects, meetings, discussions with a number of persons involved in implementation of projects, the projects documents including PC-I, data uploaded on Project Monitoring and Evaluation System (PMES), field observations. Most of the observations and inferences are drawn on around 500 Projects' Monitoring Reports and 615 projects data set available on PMES. Limitation of Data Set also exists. Detail analysis of the above mentioned gaps need a more comprehensive and diversified dataset, however, the current data set drawn on field monitoring covers gaps No (iii) through Gap on (viii). Even then the data is partial representative of the bottlenecks, irritants and weaknesses.

Quantitative and Qualitative research methods have been used for development of the policy research paper.

Organization of the Paper.

The paper is mainly divided into four parts; Introduction, Gap analysis between national development goal setting and passing on benefits to targeted beneficiaries. A number of bottlenecks having partial direct and indirect effects on implementation of the Projects. At the end a framework has been devised to cover a number of gaps and resolution and management of bottlenecks.

Gaps in Implementation of Development Projects

Achievement of development goals of an economy mainly depends on resource allocation, implementation of planned developmental activities, programmes and projects execution, political ownership, will and provision of enabling environment by the respective political government for implementation of development programme. Most of the governments set a number of development goals for achievement of their pronounced development agenda. The trend shows that despite, their declaration of development strategy their achievements of the development goals remains below the desired level.

Numerous factors contribute to achievements and delayed achievements or non-achievement of development goals. A number of gaps exist in between conceiving a rational development goals and achievement of the goal; (i) Gap between conceiving a National Development goal and sectoral goal, (ii) Gap between sectoral framework and sub-sectoral framework, (iii) Disharmonized ownership of Projects by the Sponsoring Ministry, Ministry of PD&R and Ministry of Finance (iv) Gap between sub sectoral framework and development project (v) Gap between conceiving a project and matching capacity of the project implementing agency (vi) Gap between Project Implementation Agency and its internal structures and personnel (vii) Gap between project implementing agency and its Associated Implementing Partners (viii) Gap between Project Implementing Agency and its facilitating Ministries, Departments and Agencies (ix) Gap between implementing Agency and beneficiaries of the projects (x) Gap between project achievements and the machinery interlinking it with national Goals.

i. Gap between Conceiving National Development Goals and Sectors

Some time a political government announce development goals which neither has ownership nor achievement with the existing sectoral framework. The announcement is made on partial knowledge of economy. The development framework and alignment with the existing sectoral system takes significant time, with a log factor, energy and wastage of resources. In the past few of the political governments announced development agenda at the start of ruling period, which took sufficient time to create sectoral alignment, for example People's Works Program, Benazir Income Support Programme, etc. It takes more time to develop concept, legal framework, structure of the organization, alignment with sector of the economy and the Government system. Similarly in presence of a Long

Term Plans (LTP) e.g. 5 year plans, some time certain projects are brought under the sector with little coherence with the LTP in a random manner.

ii) **Gap Between Sectoral and Sub-Sectoral Framework**

The announcement of development goals by the respective political government pertaining to a national and sectoral goals may take some time to map appropriate and relevant government structure for execution of the developmental activities. This distant, divergent structure of the economy and government system takes sufficient time to create convergence amongst all these. There are bottlenecks; legal framework, management structure, information capacity and will of the employees to take over implementation of the goal.

iii) **Disharmonized Ownership of Projects by the Sponsoring Ministry of PD&R and Finance**

On certain occasions Sponsoring Ministry, Ministry of Planning, Development & Reform and Ministry of Finance have non co-harmonized ownership for a particular project. The priorities of Sponsoring Ministry do not match with priorities of Ministry of PD&R. This disharmonized ownership creates difference for implementation and releases to the project. Consequently, the project face delays in implementation. Convergence needs to be created in the initiation of project, approval of project and allocations of funds in budget books and PSDP books. Key priority areas may be included in forward planning of these projects, and creation of ownership along these lines is required.

iv) **Gap between Sub-Sectoral and Project Implementation**

Gap exist between the sub-sector of the economy and project designed for implementation to achieve national development goals. A number of weaknesses, irritants, bottlenecks and threats exist for implementation of projects under umbrella of a sub-sector. The insufficient, fragile legal framework, lack of capacity, alignment with the government system for project implementation exists. This takes sufficient time to overcome these bottlenecks and re-alignment with the existing sub-sectoral framework. In this process probability of wastage of resources, time, energy, losing trust of people and alternate investment opportunities for public money may be lost.

Some time a project being conceived and implemented is not housed in appropriate Sponsoring Ministry, which, increases likelihood of dis-ownership of officers involved in implementation of the projects.

v) **Gap between Conceiving a project and Matching Capacity of the Project Implementing Agency**

The government announces its development goals, through preparation of development strategy. Various modes are identified and proposed for achievement of these goals through development and implementation of new projects based on innovative ideas, best practices in the world, replication of private sector models, replication of developed world's models. Many a time the implementing machinery either is unaware of the original spirit, concept by the project or lacks in capacity for implementation of the project activities. Certain insufficient legal framework exists for implementation of such projects. A number of agents in vertical hierarchy of the government are related to implementation of projects at certain level on certain number of time, whose will, capacity, knowledge and experience varies person to person, thereby delays implementation of projects.

Some time projects are conceived on the basis of socio-political objectives, employment creation and sub-optimal utilization of the resources. Few time projects are reflected in the PSDP relating to a particular part of the country, serving very small number of beneficiaries or over saturated sub-sector having decreasing marginal utility of money.

Certain number of bottlenecks and irritants exist in between conceiving and implementation of lagged projects. For implementation of such projects; will, ownership and capacity of maximum number of agents involved vertically is required. Many of the projects start journey with slow pace and ends up without taking off or at initial stage. Typical examples of projects are Ministry of Planning, Development & Reform projects; Productivity, Quality and Innovation, Transformation Plan for Vision 2025 etc, Industrial Cluster Development Studies.

vi) **Gap between Implementing Agency and its Internal Structure and Personnel**

A certain number of projects are delayed due to gaps between Implementing Agency and its nonaligned internal structures. The administrative, management and operational command and operative structures are more complicated, ambiguous, containing lag in

decision making and implementation reviews. The divergent and fragile administrative structure on one hand is a delaying factor in project implementation on the other hand creates messy system of accountability, performance reviews, and assessment of contribution to mega goals. It leads to sub-optimal utilization of resources, money, time and capital. The ambiguous structure may generate rent seeking culture, use of manipulated discretion, job shirking and randomly ordering of developmental activities. It may also create unwilling human resource which may increase employees turn over. A crude example is of center of Excellence for CPEC Project of Ministry of Planning, Development & Reform, wherein the project activities are less prioritized core research areas, over publicity, dissemination of information, which sometime overlaps with other projects (CPEC Support Project, development Communication).

vii. **Gap between Project Implementing Agency and its Associated Implementing Partners**

A number of projects implementation are delayed due gaps between implementing agency and its associated implementing partners. Projects involving role of more than one implementing Ministry, Organization, Agency have witnessed delays at a various levels. A crude example of Productivity Quality and Innovation (PQI) project; the project was designed with integrated roles of Ministry of Industries, Science & Technology and Planning, Development and Reform.

Involvement of diversified partners has differences at levels of conceiving projects, planning of the projects, developing implementation framework, ownership of project, alignment with the legal framework and changing preferences and ordering of developmental activities. This horizontal and vertical disharmony, non-coherence or divergence may delay overall implementation of projects.

viii. **Gap between Project Implementing Agency and its Facilitating Ministries, Departments and Agencies**

Certain numbers of projects are delayed in implementation due to divergent, non-coherent working styles of various agencies involved directly or indirectly on implementation of a development project. As per Rules of Business all the government Ministries have to work in line with their legal framework, which creates a system of integrated work as well as a system based on checks and balance on each other.

Theoretically it seems a good model, however, with the involvement of discretion, human interface centered working relationships likelihood of increasing use of discretion, rent seeking and collusion enhances. This not only catalyses sub-optimal use of money rather delays project implementation by creating a role based on discretion. For example processing of bills, payments, reimbursements are delayed at different levels and government organizations.

ix. **Gap between Implementing Agency and Beneficiaries of the Projects**

Certain number of projects faces delay in implementation and sustainability in view of credibility gap between the implementing agency and the beneficiaries of the project. This gap exists and increases in absence of social capital amongst the stakeholders, the social capital deficient system may emerge or catalyzed with the asymmetric flow of information, opaqueness, of system, nontransparent procedures, way of working, and non-conforming attitude with the beneficiaries. Thereby may increase with non-participation of beneficiaries in project activities, disowning attitude and non-recognition of development activities. Non alignment of development methodologies and techniques with local socio-cultural, religio-political system may delay project implementation and reduce sustainability of developmental activities.

x. **Gap between Project Achievements and Machinery Interlinking it with National Goals.**

Certain time projects implementation lead to development outcomes at local level, regional and national level, which is neither accounted in the national development documents nor marketed at appropriate national and international forea. A number of development activities carried out and achieved outcomes have inter-linkages with national goals and Special Development Goals (SDGs) agreed by the United Nations. No integrated system of accounting and projections exist for portraying achievements of development goals. Most of the agencies work in isolation without linking projects achievements with development goals outcomes and their positive contribution to global development.

A system is needed for documentation, accounting and marketing of all the achievements at national and international levels. Pakistan's ranking may be improved in a number in international competitive indices drawn on cumulative achievements of an economy.

These Gaps contain, catalyzed or drawn on a number of weaknesses, irritants, threats and bottlenecks in achievement of development goals and marketing of the development outcomes. These bottlenecks delay implementation of projects and resultantly the development goals of respective governments.

Bottlenecks in Implementation of Development Projects

A number of bottlenecks exist vertically and horizontally in the National Development Goal Achievement Cycle. These bottlenecks have cross cutting and activity centered effect on a number of implementation activities. The implications of bottlenecks may be expanded at multiple activities and stages across implementation cycle.

Around 13 number bottlenecks have been identified during monitoring of implementation of around 500 projects since 2011 to 2018. These bottlenecks include, (i) lack of decision making, lack of management capacity, turnover of Project Director (PD) and staff, delay in recruitment, governance issues, delay in procurement, contractor's problems coordination issues, delay in consultants' appointments/designing, non existence of PMU, land acquisition, law and orders, delay in releases etc. (Shah 2018).

Delay in releases is the biggest bottleneck for implementation and progress of 453 projects has been slowed down. Second major bottleneck is the management capacity i.e. full time Project Director, Continuity of Project director etc. Due to unawareness of PPRA procurement rules & procedures, ends up with about 150 projects delay in procurement. Delay in recruitment of staff, lack of coordination, delayed land acquisition; adverse law and order situation also delay implementation of projects.

BOTTLENECKS OF MONITORED PROJECTS (2011-2018)

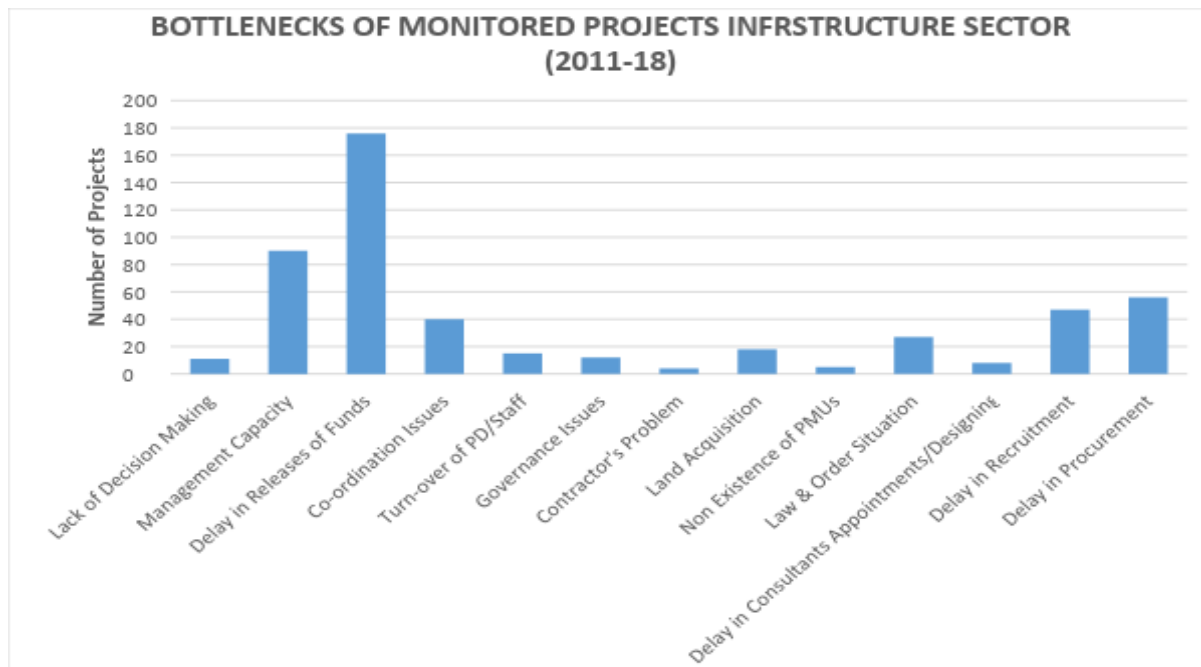
Sr. No	Major Problems	OTHER	SOCIAL	INFRA	Total
1	Lack of Decision Making	5	37	11	53
2	Management Capacity	32	236	90	358
3	Delay in Releases of Funds	113	164	176	453
4	Co-ordination Issues	11	47	40	98
5	Turn-over of PD/Staff	9	23	15	47
6	Governance Issues	1	58	12	71
7	Contractor's Problem	11	35	4	50
8	Land Acquisition	51	27	18	96
9	Non Existence of PMUs	0	32	5	37
10	Law & Order Situation	38	12	27	77
11	Delay in Consultants Appointments/Designing	27	28	8	63
12	Delay in Recruitment	13	33	47	93
13	Delay in Procurement	47	35	56	138

Source: Shah 2018.

Weak and insufficient management capacity of the project implementing agency and executing agency remained a second major bottleneck for 358 number projects including 235 number Social Sector projects, 90 number Infrastructure projects and 32 number Other Sector projects.

Delay in procurement of equipments machinery, allied facilities, congenial work tools due to insufficient knowledge of Public Procurement Rules (PPR), incompetent and insufficient human resource in the project implementation team, supervisory team, interconnected agencies has been 3rd major bottleneck. Around 138 number projects' Implementation has been delayed with 56 number infrastructure projects, 35 number Social Sector projects and 47 number Other Sector projects. Delay in land acquisition, insufficient and weak coordination system, weak governance and slow recruitment has been bottlenecks of regular nature in delayed implementation of projects.

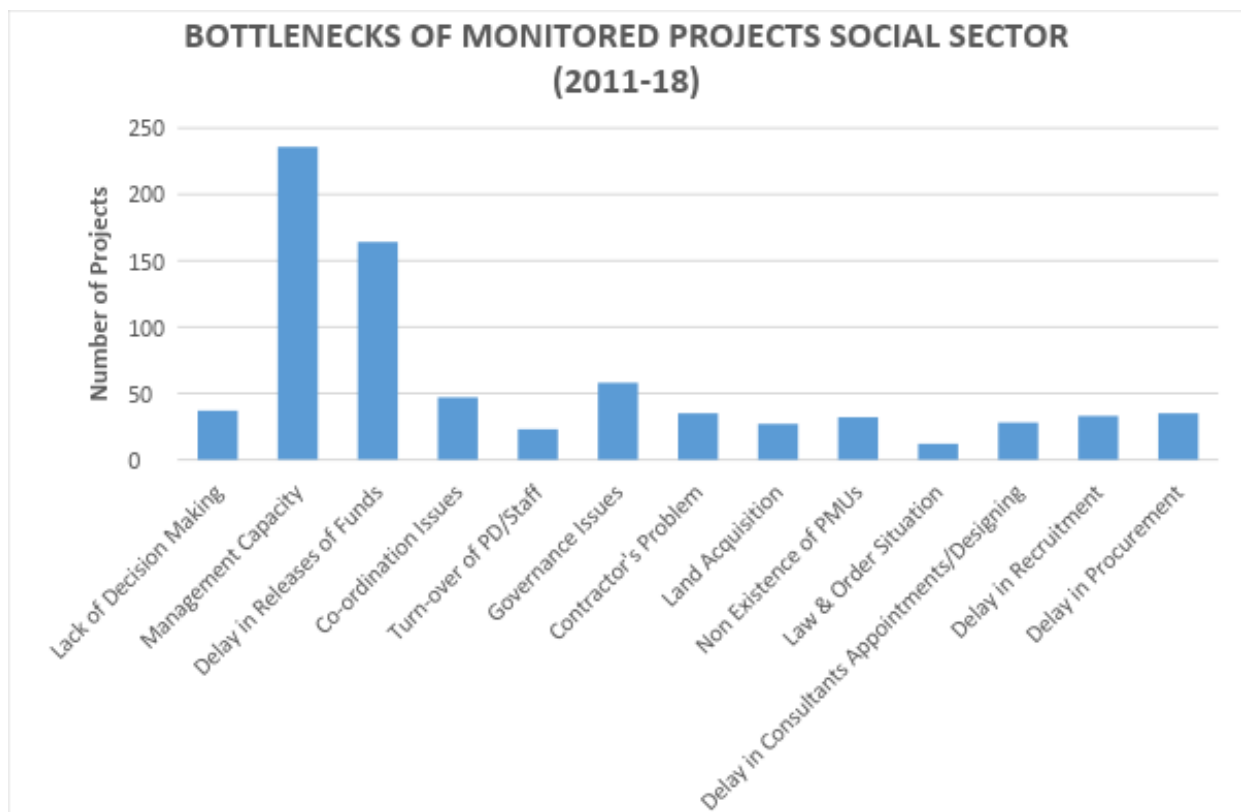
Below is the bifurcation of bottlenecks faced in each Sector of Projects Wing.



Source: Shah 2018.

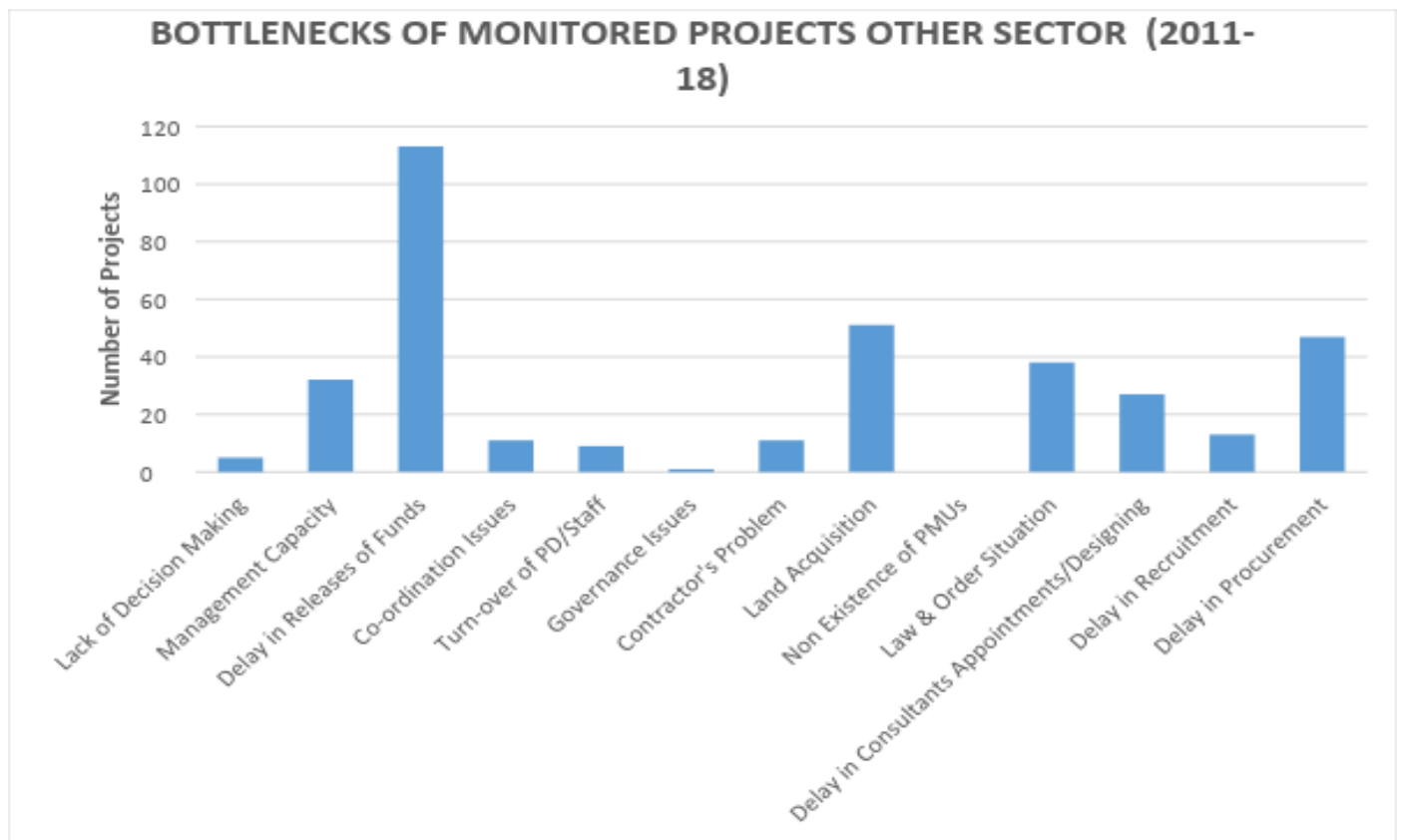
In infrastructure sector the projects are of high cost which needs huge amounts of releases. Around 176 projects face time over run due to delay in releases. Second biggest reason is lack of management capacity. Delay in procurement, delay in recruitment, coordination issues, law and order in land acquisition follows.

In the infrastructure projects the highest delaying factor is delayed releases, which may be due to misalignment of PC-I Phasing and Finance Ministry's releases policy. Most of the time infrastructure projects are required more funds at initial stage of the project for acquisition of land, procurement of machinery and costly items. The funds supply needs to be aligned with project phasing plan.



Source: Shah 2018.

Management capacity seems a major reason in social sector projects time over run, around 240 projects suffering because of management issues. About 160 projects delayed due to releases not made on time. Social Sector projects are mostly related to human capital centered development activities. The availability and contribution of high level human capital is below the desired level. Delay in releases is second major bottleneck, reportedly in certain number of projects over availability of funds incentivize the project authorities to park funds in the banks. Governance issues and coordination issues are also delaying the implementation of projects. Lack of decision making at appropriate levels, contractors' problems delayed procurements, nonexistence of PMU and delayed recruitments are also causing delay in implementation of projects.



Source: Shah 2018.

Delay in releases is the major factor in 113 projects of other sector. Land acquisition and delays of procurement also affect around 100 projects. Due to Law and order situation of project area has been a major issue for others sector projects. In above graph around 50 projects, have suffered. Delay in consultant’s appointment, designing of projects, management capacity, delayed recruitments are also delaying implementation of Other Sectors projects.

Major initiatives such as 5 million House construction, revolutionizing social sector, and plantation of 10 billion trees are banking upon existing human resource management practices, available stock of management team, existing trends and financial human capital dealing with procurement under PP Rules is not matching with the desired goals and expected pace of achievement of development goals.

Strategy for Optimizing Project Implementation

A comprehensive, multifaceted strategy is required to manage delayed implementation of projects, which has a number of negative implications including sub-optimal use of money, losing opportunity cost, political leverage of the government, socio-economic development at local and national level and misalignment with international development Goals.

In this regard, a strategy has been devised to reduce time, cost and wastage of resources in development activities. The strategy is drawn on principle of bridging gaps, managing bottlenecks and improvement of efficiency of overall governance system of project implementation. Main caveats adopted for the strategy are transparency, symmetric flow of information, reduction of human interface, minimize randomness in the system, reduction of discretion with embedded technological support. Following framework is developed to optimize implementation of projects for early achievement of development goals and marketing at appropriate level at proper time.

1. Forward Planning for Project Portfolio

Every Ministry, agency having a set of notified functions under Rules of Business may start prior project portfolio development in consultation with diversified stakeholders, political representatives, would be beneficiaries, implementing machinery and the political leadership. The forward planning will help in identification of a number of prospective areas for intervention, consultation, dialogue with the stakeholders in presence of reaction time. It will provide an opportunity for seeking diversified inputs from implementation partners and development of implementation framework. Stakeholders information sharing, identification of irritants, bottlenecks, and management of the bottlenecks would be made possible at appropriate time. Gaps between planners of the projects, implementers and beneficiaries of projects may be bridged up through prior exchange of information, awareness, absorption and ownership of the ideas concepts, and projects.

This forward planning may be made in sequel of all the stages involved in National Development Goal Achievement Cycle in view of symmetric information flow, ownership creation, involvement of diversified stakeholders and sustainability of developmental activities.

2. **Improvement in Releases Mechanism**

- Delayed and inadequate releases have been one of major contributory factor in delayed implementation, which can be improved through binding rules and procedures, well thought and prudent funding demands. Inter-Ministerial consensus may be helpful in refinement of demands and releases on sustainable manner. The sponsoring ministries may be given a cushion to manage time based demands out of existing lump sum.
- The releases policy of Ministry of Planning, Development & Reform and Finance may be divided into three parts; (i) Infrastructure Development Project, (ii) Social Sector Development Projects (3) Other Sector Projects. The releases to infrastructure and Other Sector projects requiring huge amount at initial stage for land acquisition, procurement of machinery etc. may be made on PC-I phasing as releases is not bottlenecks and demand basis while releases to Social Sector project may be made on the basis of Finance Policy as delayed releases is number two bottlenecks and lack of management capacity is No.1 bottleneck.
- A check list may be developed, updated and shared prior to submission of demands for projects so that time and again demands are not returned and delay implementation of projects.

3. **Appropriate Operation Framework of Projects**

A number of projects are conceived on socio-political consideration, with lesser feasibility, viability and low internal rate of returns. The acceptability of the project by diversified stakeholders, non-assimilation with the existing system and development structures as well as lack of ownership at operational level in the society delays its implementation. Even the completed projects are not capitalized for service delivery, achievement of desired objectives and acceptability of larger segment of society. Sometime the expected clients of the projects are not willing to trade off the cost, time, money and risk attached with availing the facility of projects, For example construction of health facility or educational institution on inaccessible places, politically hegemonized areas and risky areas. The projects may be conceived on the basis of national data set, alignment with development strategy, in consultation with stakeholders followed by appropriate processes by the respective approving fora.

4. **Onboarding System**

Onboarding system may be introduced in the projects. Many a time project staff, supervisors, managers etc. are appointed from private sector without sufficient knowledge of public sector work environment, efficiency measures, social aspects, information of horizontal and vertically allied and dependent employees, forward planning, forecasting of time and activities may be made. A significant time is consumed to understand the public sector system, personnel involved in project implementation, projects' vertical and horizontal team members. The delayed knowledge of projects, public sector work environment, work culture, concept of project etc, creates a significant lag in the actual and desired level of performance.

A preliminary introductory literature may be developed to accommodate basic projects' information, project employees, horizontally allied projects, organizations related personnel, vertical tiers of government supervisory hierarchy, government's horizontal complementing team members. Besides, personal interaction may be arranged with horizontal and vertical team members.

Availability of above basic information may be ensured to new entrants of projects with special online access. It may be made mandatory for project employees to retrieve this customized information through study of available sources.

A special one member onboarding team may be developed in the Implementation Wing of Sponsoring Ministries or Executing Ministries or Executing Agencies. The team members may get preliminary information from each project, respective section of project executing and sponsoring Ministries. This scattered information may be integrated into small number of papers. Same and other allied information may be consolidated into more concise and easily comprehensible material for new entrants. This will help in reduction of time and capacity building of new entrants for implementation of projects.

5. **Performance Contract System.**

More explicit, clear, concise, quantifiable and time bound deliverables need to be developed and shared between employees and employers. Clear deliverables, time bound targets, post and incumbency based tasks and assignments are required to be incorporated in the contract document. In projects employees and employers many a time have

abstract, unclear, hypothetical and presumption based expectations from each others. Resultantly, a gap exists between desired level of performance and actual achievements. Weak accountability system, less frequent internal monitoring, periodical performance appraisal in project implementation widens gaps between actual and desired performance. Sometime influential appointees, hesitate, resist and weaken periodical performance leading to prospective accountability. Performance contracts may be signed between employee and employers.

The performance contract would create ownership among project management team, members and improve decision making at their level and pursuance to get decision at higher level. The record of performance contracts may be kept dynamic, sharable at multiple vertical stages. Performance contracts will thrash out details of deliverable by all the employees, team managers, project heads etc. These information will be available to the vertical and horizontal formations of projects, their sponsoring Ministries etc. Transparency and systematic flow of the information will be improved. The process of development of performance contract will ensure active involvement of employees, supervisors, managers, team leaders and executive heads. Details of forward and backward linkages of activities will be known to all of the participating project employees and supervisors. It will create ownership of maximum number of project employees. This will be having a roadmap as well as time to achieve agreed targets.

6. **Result Based Monitoring System.**

Result Based Monitoring System may be developed for assessing ongoing activities, achievements of individual staff members, Wings and Sections of overall performance of the projects. This monitoring will help in improvement and rectification of activities, addressing of bottlenecks. This may be done through software development and automation of the system against PC-I and performance contracts. This system will also help in forecasting pace and completion time of projects.

On-going monitoring, internal reviews, periodical performance sharing mechanism will be strengthened. Based on these information, corrective mechanism may easily and timely be adopted. Overall flows of project activities, interplay of variables, and the contribution for intermediate goods, outputs and outcomes may be assessed. Short run adjustments of activities and alignment with major project objectives under the umbrella of overall development goals may be made.

Predictability, forecasting, for the sake of future planning may be improved. Overall development performance of the Sector and Sector will be improved by pursuing quantifiable targets in a time bound manner.

7. **Training of all the Specialized Team Members**

In Project training courses may be arranged, because numbers of projects are delayed due to lack of capacity, customization with the public sector project work environments. Public Sector procurements made under PPRA are less fragile and less discretion based, even some time costly, unsustainable in the long run, but the procurement specialists have to take suboptimal decisions to maintain financial management discipline and risk aversion.

In some projects, coordination specialists are unfamiliar with the public sector coordination, interaction with diversified stakeholders and sensitivity base of the structure. A strong bureaucratic structure demands, adjustments and assimilation of Project personnel on the socio-psychological terms of reference of the public sector.

The newly recruited staff, team and wing leaders may be made bound to get passed online training courses developed for Procurement and Public Sector Coordination and development. The would be employees may have to pass the courses in the period between letter of Offer and letter of Appointment.

8. **Creation of Project Coordination Cell**

Project Coordination Cell or Section may be developed in the Development Wing of the Sponsoring Ministry, Executing Agency / Ministry Capacity of Sponsoring Ministries, Executing Ministries to pursue development planning, implementation, coordination and procurement matters of projects. Current capacity is below the desired level for; Development Challenges, Changing circumstances, changing project location, implementation of technology imbedded projects need a systematic arrangement and dynamic team with matching capacity.

Capacity of sponsoring, executing Ministries and Agencies may be developed through creation of planning cell in case of non-existences. The capacity of existing planning cells may be strengthened, through induction or addition. The team members may be provided opportunities to improve their human capital level through regular trainings, refresher courses etc.

The members of planning team may be used as trainer of other projects, besides extending other accelerating activities in the implementation of projects. This planning cell will also act as repository of old, new, and completed projects data. Lesson learnt from project may be shared, applied and used as modification tools for improvement of project documents, its tracking and implementation team. Mandatory Courses may be designed for project managerial team. Many a time newly recruited project staff despite high level of development experience and wide ranging exposure, yet lack in knowledge of typical Public Sector tools of procurement, coordination and social capital of implementing partners. This deficiency takes a significant time to bridge the gap. These project team managers may improve their, knowledge and skill in contributing output areas e.g. procurement, coordination and implementation through orientation, training and refresher courses. Formal trainings may be arranged at different specialized training institutes including Project Planning Management Institute (PPMI). Besides, special on line courses may be designed for new entrants on procurement. These courses may be made mandatory for the new entrants of project management team. The candidate will have to complete these courses with in 1st month. This will also be made part of Performance contract as one of the indicator of performance

9. **Improved Coordination**

A Coordination Officer (CO) may be centrally deployed at Ministerial or Divisional level of Sponsoring Agency, who may extend role as transitory arrangements. The CO will have the capacity, experience of project coordination, social capital accumulated within the Sponsoring Ministries, Inter-Ministerial, inter project, core economic Ministries and Accountant General (AG). This knowledge, information of procedures and the social capital reduces time and monetary cost of new projects as well as inter dependence of project implementation on other Ministries, and agencies may.

10. **Improved Recruitment in Projects**

Improved decision making by the Project Staff in HR recruitment can be made through adoption of transparent system of recruitments. The appointment committees are constituted with slight tilt towards fragile selection of project human resource. The committees are constituted to share decision making on one hand and managed decision making on the other hand. In some of committees inclusion of representative without

technical knowledge and caliber of comparable standing creates suspicion amongst committee's members, who are hesitant in decision making. The risk averse members of the committee find the delayed decisions as desired outcome, which in fact derails the achievements of projects objectives. There seems a conflict of interest among existing employees with future would be employed staff in presence of non transparent committees.

Interestingly at the moment no comprehensive, exclusive and clear project appointment policy exists, which creates; confusions, ambiguities, queries, sometime entice use of discretion etc. This may take more time in inter-ministerial communication, use of discretion, thereby delays recruitment of project staff. An integrated, comprehensive clear and exclusive clear and exclusive project policy for appointments may be devised.

In most of the Ministries, Divisions, Implementing agencies human resource recruitment is delayed due to lack of capacity, conflict of interests at different vertical stakeholders, difference in signatories and beneficiaries of recruitments, over work load, manipulated objectives of few of the persons, more discretion, crude methods of recruitment etc. Since being instrumental in giving appointments in public sector is considered as a socio-political capital, therefore its competitive on socio-political grounds to get appointments in public sector.

The system of recruitment can be improved by developing more transparent, technology based and outsourced system of recruitments. A Hiring Agency may be outsourced the task of recruitments in projects, provision of budgets may be made in the PC-I for recruitment. Apparently it will be marginal increase in the total cost in short run but will be instrumental in offsetting incremental increase in cost over run and time over run in delayed implementation of projects. Many a time vested interests use this short term marginal increase in cost as an argument for manipulated recruitment outcomes.

11. **Ownership of Project Staff by the Sponsoring and Executing Ministries**

Sometime a gap for ownership of project employees, supervisors and others exist in sponsoring and executing Ministries and Government Agencies. Gap may be due to divergent public and private sector experiences, non-familiarity with public vs private sector work environment. A large portion of project employees are recruited from private sector or development sector, with different knowledge and background, training,

socialization and experience. Assimilation of private sector based employees with the public sector projects takes time and reasonable time of project implementation is passed in this process.

Public Sector employees, supervisors in the executing agencies develop perception about almost all the project employees based on biased parameters and criteria of public sector, while an employee recruited from private sector, how he can behave, perform or contribute in the manner a public sector employee expresses. This is considered as a weakness of new entrants, but actually it is a strength based on diversity of knowledge, experience, result oriented, decision making and sometime innovative behaviors. The private sector drawn employees have misperception, asymmetric flow of information, less frequent interaction, time lagged information of work culture, knowledge of public sector goals, inter-linkages of project activities with project outputs, objectives development and goals of sub-sector and sector.

These gaps may be abridged through assimilation of information with new entrants. Similarly, the public sectors dealing with project employees may be educated through periodic review meetings, refresher courses and feedback system to own, assimilate and capitalize new entrants drawn from private and development sector. The will, ownership and command from top and senior levels may improve assimilation, work environment, contribution and implementation of project; thereby, achievement of national development goals.

12. **Timely Procurements.**

The less experienced or inexperienced public sector procurement related employees may consume more time in necessary procurements. A number of times procurements are delayed for long time due to non-availability of trained personnel. An officer well versed in procurement may be appointed in central pool of the Sponsoring Ministry, Agency, who may assist, or carry out Stage-1 procurement necessary for taking off new projects. The person would also develop social capital with related Ministries, agencies, AGPR Office, Ministries Finance and Planning, Development and Reform. The officer may be instrumental in Stage-2 procurements, required for primary activities of the project.

13. **Innovative Financing Wing Creation:**

Innovative financing sources may be explored for funding new and even ongoing projects implementation. The accumulated throw forward with ratio of 7 : 1, has decreased room for distribution of resources to new projects (113 Number). Since achievement of pronounced development goals of the government are dependent on implementation of the new projects, therefore, the government may not get sufficient funds to that probability of delay in completion of development projects in current governments' tenure is high.

The government has to explore new resource opportunities or trade off on releases to new projects at the cost of ongoing projects or vice versa, compromising pronounced national development goals. A number of strengths of economy, embarking on developmental activities contributing to international development agenda and having a number of matching international and national interest groups and sponsors, this may create win win condition for all and funding may be funneled for projects.

A special structure in the form of Innovative Financing Wing for Development may be created under the umbrella of Ministry of Planning with outlets in respective Ministries so as to explore new funding sources, create convergence, through alignment and marketing existing and planned development activities.

14. **Development of online Billing and Project Payment System**

May develop a system of online submission of bills, payment, documents, processing and transfer of money to appropriate head of accounts, sub-accounts, activities and persons. This system will reduce interface of project implementing staff with pre-audit teams and accountants, which will reduce probability of use of discretion, collusion and delays in implementation system.

The Online System would be based on measurement of frequency, number of observations made, quality of observation and number of time bills returned, entertained and final payments made. This requires development of hardware and software based system, its monitoring, accountability and training of all the stakeholders. This system will contribute to reduction in delays in implementation of projects in implementation projects.

15. **Frequent Transfers of PDs/Managers of Projects**

A frequent turnover of project team leaders; Project Director (PD), Project Manager (PM) impedes the pace of implementation, proper continuity of processes of taking off are disrupted on one hand and loss of leaders disturbs directions, convergence of activities for objective achievements. The project leaders have to quit due to a number intrinsic and extrinsic reasons. The project leader has to take decision of joining the project based on limited information about perks, privileges, package, challenges, physical and socio-psychological constraints. Some time he has to make adjustments to un-notified conditions, divergent objectives of high ups, less conducive work environment, unfamiliar structure and culture of public sector. Apparently main reason is considered as switching over for better options. Public Sector option despite being better, yet is rated relatively high with cumulated package. A more transparent mechanism, symmetric flow of information, prior information of his perks, privileges, package, emoluments frequently asked question (FAQ), may be designed and shared priorly with the would be PD / PM or employees.

Tenure a protection needs to be made for the implementing machinery especially PDs, Managers on deputation or by transfer.

16. **Improved Land Acquisition System:**

Land acquisition is also a factor in delaying the project implementation in the short run may catalyze delay, however, over the time with improved governance i.e. computerization of land record this issue will be reduced significantly and implementation may be accelerated afterward. Systematic financial flows are necessary for implementation of project but the past trend shows, delayed releases is the most adverse factor in achievements of development goals. The government has to address this issue for achievement of its development goals.

A regular Committee for land acquisition comprising District Collector, Member/representatives of other stakeholders, representative from Revenue Department, representative of Project may be notified on regular basis by the Provincial Government (Senior Member Board of Revenue) as a part of Standing Operation Practice (SOP), for all time; taking effect from the day of inception of any project in respective district.

The Deputy Commissioner/District Collectors and the committee may be made accountable for delayed land acquisition. The ownership and will of the top provincial bureaucracy will improve the process.

17. **District Development Coordination Committees**

At District level a District Development Coordination Committee (DDCC) may be constituted under Chairmanship of respective Deputy Commissioners with representation from District Police, Political representatives, other stakeholders including the Project Authorities, so that implementation of the project is facilitated in an area, district and part of the country prone with fragility of law and order situation. Prevalence of weak law and orders situation in distant parts of the country having high likelihood of conflict, disaster and inhabit other formidable factors may create a systematic, perpetual threat for the project employees, implementing persons and associated businesses.

The committee will be instrumental in identification of issues, irritants, threats, as well as management of these threats for smooth implementation of the projects. This committee will successfully manage implementation of projects in weak law and order situation.

18. **Introduction of Performance Audit System.**

Sometimes there exists; unclear internal monitoring, self-assessment, internal reviews, lack of documentation, random tracking system of performance reviews, thereby weak accountability indicators keep performance of project teams at low level. The inter connectivity, inter play of performance of diversified team members some time is below desired level. Tracking system and improved connectivity may be developed at project level. May develop time tracking and documentation of date wise performance of each employ through embedded technological support. Improved interconnectivity, abridging with software support, key performance indicators (KPTs) drawn on Job Description (JDs) of each project employee may be developed, Vertical interconnectivity of projects with its sponsoring Ministry and agency may be developed with software support and dashboard for view of performance of connected projects.

19. **Improved Accountability:**

Exogenous factors of accelerated anti-corruption move by anti-graft institutions are improving governance, on the other hand are a threat, hampering decisiveness among the people involved in implementation of development program at different level; planning,

execution, implementation, procurements etc. The anti-graft institutions may have to review and improve their strategy by involving or consultation of all stakeholders. Periodical review, improvement of anticorruption laws may be made on the basis of ground implementation realities, available data, best practices in the world. This will not only improve trust, confidence of implementing machinery rather will improve credibility of these institutions, thereby, and overall implementation will be improved.

Conclusion:

This strategy is devised to bridge 10 number of gaps existing at inter-ministerial; intra-ministerial and intra projects levels. It will also contribution improved management and resolution of 13 number of bottlenecks, irritants etc. Innovative financing measures may be adopted through alignment of development objectives with international and national development goals by creation of a special structure; Innovative Financing Wing in Planning, Development & Reform with outlets at respective Ministries. This framework will be instrumental in achievement of national development goals through optimization of implementation of projects. The implementation will be improved through improved human resource availability, on boarding system, performance contract system, ownership of projects by diversified group of stakeholders. At district and regional level implementation would be improved through establishment of District Development Coordination Committees, Land Acquisition Committees, forward planning mechanism, Result based monitoring system etc. The implementation can be made more transparent and improved through development of technology embedded system of payments, reimbursements, etc. This will increase achievements of national development goals.

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