CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN KAZAKHSTAN

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JANUARY 2010
The thesis in front of you was written as a part of the requirement for the master’s programme in Strategic Project Management (European). Many people have contributed to the writing of this thesis work by providing support and guidance to us. Therefore, we wish to express our gratitude to each of those individuals who have helped and motivated us during this research in particular and master’s study as a whole.

First we would like to thank our families for their constant support and understanding. Moreover, we are grateful for them teaching us to overcome challenges and encourage our desire to study abroad.

Second, we are sincerely grateful for our supervisor Dr. Kaye Remington for her guidance, constructive comments and knowledge she provided us during the writing of this thesis. We appreciate the hard work she did and the time she spent assisting us to successfully complete this thesis.

Third, we wish to convey our acknowledgement to both academic and administrative staff of MSPME programme, namely to Prof. Tomas Blomquist, Mr. Amos Haniff, Prof. Antonio Calabrese, Ms. Gillian Townsend, Ms. Melani Houette, Ms. Monica Larsson and all the professors who taught us during the last 15 months.

Fourth, our sincere gratitude goes to the interview and questionnaire respondents for sharing their knowledge and experience and support throughout research duration. The interest you showed towards our study topic motivated and inspired us to work harder and provided courage to broaden the research angle than originally planned.

Fifth, we are thankful to our classmates and other students for their support and friendship during the length of our study. Furthermore, we would like to express our appreciation to our main and side-opponents in advance. We believe you will provide a prompt and valuable feedback on our thesis.

Last but not least, we wish to convey our gratitude to the European Commission for such providing us with an Erasmus Mundus scholarship and a life changing opportunity. We are not only thankful for the financial support provided but also for a unique postgraduate programme incorporating strategy and project management.

Without the input and support of the above mentioned groups or individuals this research would never have been written.

“*The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.*”

_Eleanor Roosevelt_
ABSTRACT

International aids, which target socio-development in developing and/or underdeveloped countries, are generally undertaken through projects. These projects, which are named as international development projects (IDPs), are financed mainly by multilateral and bilateral development agencies. However, management of these projects, which have less tangible objectives and deliverables, differ drastically from traditional industrial-commercial project types, that have more tangible objectives and deliverables. Moreover, the intensive investments on IDPs have not yielded the expected progress yet. Therefore, ensuring a successful IDP management through the satisfaction of factors that are critical for project success becomes crucial for both sponsoring bodies and receiving countries. Nevertheless, the current literature provides only a limited number of studies, such as studies conducted by Diallo and Thuiller (2004; 2005), Do and Tun (2008), on this subject area. Then, this study following previous studies by Diallo and Thuiller (2004; 2005), Do and Tun (2008), aims to contribute to this gap in the literature through investigating critical success factors (CSFs) for implementation phase of international development projects (IDPs) in Kazakhstan. Not only the applicability of Do and Tun’s (2008) CSFs for IDP implementation phase to IDPs being implemented in Kazakhstan are tested but also a new set of CSFs is generated for the implementation phase of IDPs being implemented in Kazakhstan.

Key words: International development projects, critical success factors, project management, Kazakhstan
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<tr>
<td>CSF</td>
<td>Critical Success Factor</td>
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<td>CSFs</td>
<td>Critical Success Factors</td>
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<td>IDP</td>
<td>International Development Project</td>
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<td>IDPs</td>
<td>International Development Projects</td>
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<tr>
<td>OSCE</td>
<td>Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Money Foundation</td>
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<td>MIC</td>
<td>Middle Income Country</td>
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<td>NGOs</td>
<td>Non-governmental organizations</td>
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<td>PMBOK</td>
<td>Project Management Body of Knowledge</td>
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<td>BSI</td>
<td>British Standards Institution</td>
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<td>PM</td>
<td>Project Management</td>
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<td>PLC</td>
<td>Project Life Cycle</td>
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<td>PIP</td>
<td>Project Implementation Profile (PIP)</td>
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<td>IPPMC</td>
<td>Integrated Project Planning and Management Cycle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LFA</td>
<td>Logical Framework Approach</td>
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<tr>
<td>PDF</td>
<td>Portable Document Format</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECTS</td>
<td>European Credit Transfer System</td>
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<td>MDG</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goals</td>
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CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN KAZAKHSTAN

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Socio-economic development in under-developed and/or developing countries should not be left to the ‘vicissitudes of the economy’ rather it demands a targeted, deliberate aid by the international community (Goodman and Love, 1979, p.2). Therefore, today most of the world’s nations place high priority on projects that have the objective to enhance economic and social development in countries where the managerial, economic and political environments differ drastically from those in developed countries (Hayes, 1966, p. 13). Similarly, intergovernmental organizations and their agencies take a leading role by allocating greater resources than ever before to aid development within under-developed and/or developing countries, just as in the case of Kazakhstan.

Kazakhstan, as is the case with other post-Soviet countries has departed from totalitarianism and planned economies to embrace democracy and market based economies. This kind of transition requires restructuring and even reassembling almost all institutions, accompanied by continuous economic and legislative reforms. Over the 18 years of independence Kazakhstan has achieved impressive economic growth, however the numerous ecological catastrophes, unequal income distribution (poor rural population), high child mortality as well as the low quality of the health system reminds us that there is still a significant amount to be done. In Kazakhstan, international cooperation started as partial assistance with small but vital projects, such as provision of food, and grew into full collaborative ventures between multilateral organisations and governmental offices. An example is a project to prepare the long-term strategy of the Republic and establishing holistic Millennium Development Program. (Millennium Development Goals, 2002).

However, intensive international development project (IDP) investments have not yielded the expected economic and social progress in most of developing countries (Goodman and Love, 1979, p. 3), and neither have they in Kazakhstan. Therefore, in order to ensure success of international development projects (IDPs), which is vital for both the socioeconomic progress in the recipient countries and the effectiveness of the aid provided by the donor countries and agencies, an enhanced understanding of factors that are critical for project success becomes fundamental.

Indeed, the literature offers a vast number of studies on project critical success factors (CSFs) (Fortune and White, 2006). Nevertheless, factors that are critical for a project type are not necessarily valid for another project type (Pinto and Slevin, 1988).
Therefore, IDPs, which have significant distinguishing characteristics, such as their social and non-profit nature, complex networks of stakeholders’ relationships, and intangibility of their outcomes (Do and Tun, 2008) require identification of CSFs that are specific to them. However, although critical success factors for projects are widely discussed in the literature, with the exception of the studies by Diallo and Thuillier (2004, 2005), and Do and Tun (2008), to date our search of the literature has found none that specifically address international development projects.

The current research follows the studies by Diallo and Thuillier (2004, 2005) and Do and Tun (2008) of IDPs by taking into consideration specific critical success factors for the implementation phase of the project life-cycle within the context of Kazakhstan.

1.2 Research Question and Objectives of the Study

Based on the above background, the research question of this study is as follows:

“What are the critical success factors for implementation of international development projects in Kazakhstan?”

The aim of this research is to explore and identify the critical success factors of international development projects implemented in Kazakhstan. The study is primarily based on empirical research mainly underpinned by Do and Tun’s (2008) CSFs for IDP framework, as well as, a synthesis of other related literature. Do and Tun’s (2008) work has been chosen as it has research goals and agenda that are parallel to the research agenda and goals of this study. Do and Tun (2008) in their study identify and validate different sets of critical success factors for each project life-cycle phase of the IDPs, based on a survey conducted in Vietnam and Myanmar.

Following from their research, the objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To test applicability of Do and Tun’s IDP implementation CSFs within the Kazakhstan context.
2. To identify other critical success factors that are specific to the Kazakhstan IDP environment.

Then in order to achieve these researchers envisage to:

- present an empirical background for comprehending the Kazakhstan country context and the need for successful IDP realisation there, as well as, a theoretical background for concepts related to CSFs, IDPs.
- undertake a research of two different surveys within two different IDP implementing organizations in Kazakhstan
- present findings and develop conclusions and recommendations from the empirical data generated on research subject
- propose suggestions for further research on the topic

The research results are intended to assist project leaders in international development field in Kazakhstan to structure/prioritize issues vital for project success and, also, scholars researching the topics regarding CSFs in IDPs and/or CSFs in developing countries, particularly Kazakhstan.
1.3 Scope and limitations of the research

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the aim of this research is to explore and identify the critical success factors for implementation phase of selected international development projects in Kazakhstan. In addition, it has also been noted above that two different survey techniques are conducted for generating data required to address this research aim. Thus, the scope of this study is being determined by the following limitations:

- Project type
- Project Life Cycle (PLC)
- Geography
- Research Methodology

First of all, the domain of this research is constrained to a specific type of projects, the IDP. In other words, researchers intend to shed valuable insight into IDP subject area.

Second, researchers focus specifically on implementation phase of IDP. Since very often the project team of an IDP has limited influence on other phases of PLC, namely initiation, planning and termination. Therefore, this research will concentrate only on the factors proposed by Do and Tun (2008) for implementation phase of project life-cycle. The factors are: ‘adequate support to stakeholders’, ‘high commitment to project goals/objectives’, ‘competent project management team’, ‘adequate resources and support’, ‘compatible rules and procedures’, ‘effective consultations with all stakeholders’.

Third, due to the access to data limitations, researchers generate the data required only from participants in Kazakhstan. Researchers had access to data from two different organizations, donor organisation’s office and recipient organisation in Kazakhstan. However, the participant organizations constrained the scope of the research one step further. Since one of the participant organizations accepted to involve only in interviews, whereas, the other agreed to involve only in
questionnaires. Therefore, the research methodology had to be designed as two different surveys being conducted in these two different participating organizations.

1.4 Structure of study

The structure of the present study is as in the following figure.

![Structure of the research](image)

First of all, the Introduction presents a brief overview of the research gap and introduces the research question and objectives, as well as, the scope and limitations of the research study.

Next, the Literature review provides the reader with both empirical and theoretical background for the research subject. Therefore, this chapter is divided into main parts ‘Empirical Background’, providing insight into Kazakhstan country context, and the ‘Theoretical Background’ providing comprehension of project success and IDP related concepts.

The, third chapter, the Research Methodology enables the reader with the chosen research methodology of this study. The entire research process including its philosophy, strategy, approach, time horizon, as well as, its data collection methods is being discussed. The sampling procedure in addition to the ethical and quality of the data collected considerations are being discussed within this chapter as well.

The Findings and discussion chapter presents the analysis and discussion of findings generated from data collection techniques being applied.

The Conclusion chapter summarizes achieved results, reminds the reader about limitations, and proposes areas for further study.
1.5 Demarcations and Perspective

This study is based on information gathered from two organizations located in Kazakhstan. Therefore, its findings can not be generalized across organizations in other parts of the world dealing with IDPs. The empirical study is conducted through the eyes of people involved in and/or affected by the implementation phase of the project that is subject to this thesis. Thus, findings are not necessarily applicable to other than the implementation phase of an international development project.

In addition, the study involves input from project stakeholders with different roles ranging from a project manager to a beneficiary of the project being affected by the success of the IDP. The rationale behind this is not to make comparisons between the different roles of stakeholders but rather to investigate their perspectives on an IDP success.
2. LITERATURE REVIEW

For almost half of a century, project success and factors facilitating the success have attracted interest of researchers in project management field. Therefore, the project management literature offers a rich foundation on project success and related concepts. Therefore, in order to present an easy to follow and clearly structured literature review, this literature review has been organized as follows:

![Figure 3. Structure of the literature review](image)

2.1 Empirical Background

The Republic of Kazakhstan and International Development Projects

2.1.1 Economic and Environmental Overview

Today Kazakhstan is on its way to becoming one of the 50 most competitive economies in the world (President’s Message, 1 March 2006). Since its independence (from Soviet Union) in 1991, Kazakhstan has showed a impressive economic development rate (IMF, 2009), successfully transitioned from a planned and authoritarian to market and democracy-based economy, having reduced poverty by half (Kazakhstan Country Analysis, 2008) as well as having established a
'fundamentally stable' under challenging situations and 'relatively credible' new currency 'tenge' under symbol KZT. (Bauer and Herz 2007, page 61).

Kazakhstan is not only the largest landlocked country and the ninth largest country on the planet; it is also one of the richest in mineral, metal and fossil fuel resources. Kazakhstan enjoys the second largest uranium, chromium, zinc and lead reserves of the world. Furthermore it is ranked among the top five largest in manganese and copper reserves, and in the top ten for coal, iron, and gold. Agricultural resources also take an important place in the economy. For example: Kazakhstan is the sixth largest supplier of grain in the world. (The Agency of Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 1999).

According to Elliot (1993), the Soviet Union bureaucratic administration and low quality of available technology created barriers for Kazakhstan in its attempts to optimize usage of its human and natural resources. Moreover Safavi (1997) adds that the Soviet government’s totalitarian political and economic models negatively affected economic growth of Kazakhstan by prohibiting establishment of supply chains for the country’s output to the world market. As a result, the economic development of Kazakhstan is still closely related to the exploration and exploitation of its natural resources. Nevertheless, dependence on natural resources has its negative aspects, such as exposure to global pricing structures and demand fluctuations, environmental pollution and low-value added employment. Economists argue (Sachs and Warner, 1995) that resource-abundant countries tend to have higher macro-economic volatility as well as lower rates of long-term economic growth. In order to avoid what is called ‘Dutch disease’1, economic growth theorists recommend redesigning policies and strengthening institutions and supporting human, social, physical capital in order to achieve competitiveness in non-oil sectors. (Sachs and Warner, 1995; Egert and Leonard, 2007; Gyfason, 2001; Wood, 1999). These issues were mainly addressed through continuous attempts to diversify the national economy by supporting non-oil producing sectors, however according to a Kazakhstan Country Analysis (2008), there are still many challenges ahead, such as improving social conditions, environmental issues and overall quality of life.

Another legacy from Soviet-era mismanagement is severe environmental problems (Dahl and Kuralbayeva, 2001). The UN, in its Kazakhstan Country Analysis report (2008), put the environmental issues of Kazakhstan amongst the worlds most challenging. The main environmental problems include: land, air and water pollution, radioactive contamination, erosion, salinization, and desertification. Although these kinds of problems arose mainly from the environmental practices during the Soviet regime, the problems are still present and in some cases have been exacerbated since the independence of Kazakhstan in 1991 (Kazakhstan Country Analysis report, 2008). Therefore, fair share of IDP are concentrated in ecological and environmental issues.

According to Nidumolu et al. (2009) development can only be successful if it is sustainable. However, as mentioned above energy related activities are the main catalyst for economic growth in the country. On the other hand, they are the main contributors to air and water pollution, as well as soil contamination (Dahl and

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1 So called Dutch disease occurs when economic growth is dependent on natural resources, which produces negative affect in long-term due to the degradation of the non-oil manufacturing industries)
Kuralbayeva, 2001). Therefore, sustainable development, as well as formulation of national environmental legislation and implementation of multilateral environmental agreements is not a simple issue. In this regard Kazakhstan has sought foreign assistance and is actively developing both regional and international environmental cooperation (Kazakhstan Country Analysis, 2008).

2.1.2 **Kazakhstan: Looking into the future**

A positive side to the above issues is that Kazakhstan has a great potential for renewable natural resources including hydropower, wind energy, sun radiation energy etc. To illustrate, hydropower is only operating at approximately 4.5% of its potential Dahl and Kuralbayeva, 2001). Therefore a considerable portion of international development projects are concerned with assisting Kazakhstan to reach its sustainable development goals.

Today Kazakhstan has established a framework for future development projects by identifying priorities and long-term strategic plan for development (Appendix 1) and followed by short-term and mid-point strategic plans. The strategy allowed government to receive assistance in line with the national goals rather than accepting strategies proposed by donors as it was on the initial stages of cooperation. (Millennium Development Goals Report for Kazakhstan, 2002).

The country actively cooperates with bilateral and multilateral organisation, for example with the UN. Kazakhstan has made demonstrable progress in achieving the UN’s Millennium Development Goals (Appendix 2) related to primary education, poverty reduction and gender. However the issues addressed in reports suggest that there is a problem with effective implementation of the projects which involved international cooperation. Some reasons cited are lack of coordination activities, lack of cooperation between local agencies during the project, inadequate resource allocations, and lack of tools to monitor the implementation activities. Many projects are assessed according to the final reports and project expenditure information and the knowledge database on project implementations is extremely poor (Environmental Performance Review of Kazakhstan II, 2008). Moreover, reaching Middle Income Country (MIC) status has had its negative consequences for the republic with regards to reduction of funding options as many donor organisations are refocusing on countries with more acute development challenges. MIC status is usually based on aggregated averages which do not take into consideration disparities in income distribution. Furthermore, having MIC status means that migrants from nearby countries are attracted. This in turn adds pressure on public and social systems in the country. (Final Evaluation of United National Development Assistance Framework in Kazakhstan 2005-2009, 2009).

In summary, as the country has built appropriate strategies and legislation the need to find concrete application through appropriate means of implementation increases daily.
2.2  **Theoretical Background**

2.2.1  **An Overview of Project and Project Management**

2.2.1.1  **Project**

Lundin and Söderholm (1995) describe a project as a temporary organization and assert the time conception as one of the four distinguishing features of temporary organizations from permanent organizations (task, team and transition are other three distinguishing features). Cleland and King in 1983 (cited in Cooke-Davies, T. J. 2001) adopted a similar approach by the following project definition:

“… a complex effort to achieve a specific objective within a schedule and budget target, which typically cuts across organisational lines, is unique, and is usually not repetitive within the organisation” (Cleland and King, 1983, p.70 cited in Cooke-Davies, T. J. 2001)

Moreover, recent definitions expanded the project definition to include the product and /or service as the project outcomes.

“… a temporary endeavour undertaken to create a unique product or service. Temporary means that the project has a definite ending point and unique means that the product or service differs in some distinguishing way from all similar products or services” (Duncan, 1996, p.4 cited in Cooke-Davies, T. J. 2001).

However, as expectations from projects increase, the definitions for project evolved to reflect this. Thus, Turner and Müller (2003) incorporate the idea of beneficial change that product of the project is expected to deliver, to the project definition. Thus, they define a project as a temporary organisation that aims to create a unique service or product that brings added value or delivers beneficial change (Table 1) (Turner and Müller, 2003).

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<th>Aim</th>
<th>Features</th>
<th>Pressures</th>
<th>Processes</th>
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<td>To deliver beneficial change</td>
<td>Unique</td>
<td>Uncertainty</td>
<td>Flexible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Novel</td>
<td>Integration</td>
<td>Goal Oriented</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Transient</td>
<td>Transience</td>
<td>Staged</td>
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Table 1. Features of projects adapted from Turner and Müller, 2003

Nevertheless, despite the various project definitions that have been accumulated for almost 50 years, the review of literature revealed that ‘defined start and end’, ‘a common objective’ and ‘complex set of activities’ are the three most common features that are shared by every project and thus present in almost every project definition.

2.2.1.2  **Project Management**

Project management has a long evolution, for example Meredith and Mantel (2000) cite the construction of Egyptian pyramids as the example of historic projects. However, the authors argue that modern project management is considered to begin
with the Manhattan project in the 1950’s and followed by other large construction or engineering projects (Meredith and Mantel, 2000). As time has passed project management practice has expanded to the realm of consumer products and services development, public and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) sectors.

Project management, as defined by practitioners, is ‘the application of knowledge, skills, tools and techniques in order to meet or exceed stakeholder requirements from a project’ (PMBOK, 2004, p. 8). On the other hand, the academic literature defines the project management as the activity series performed in order to ‘initiate, plan, control and terminate’ the project execution activities (Cooke-Davies, 2001, p. 20). In other words, as Turner suggests (1993) project management basically is the process of completing a project successfully. Indeed, Turner (1996, p.6) offers, nevertheless, more intrinsic definitions for project management, such as being “the art and science of converting vision into reality” (Turner, 1996, p.6).

In addition, the academic literature also proposes more (success) focused definitions for project management, which are more relevant to the research context of this study. To illustrate, Gardiner (2005, p.5) adopts the following definition by British Standards Institution (BS) (2000, p.5 as cited in Gardiner, 2005, page 5):

“... the planning, monitoring, and control of all aspects of a project and the motivation of all those involved in it to achieve the project objectives on time and to specified cost, quality, and performance”.

In addition, Gardiner (2005, p. 5) boils this definition down into two key points of ‘managing’ and ‘successfully’. Gardiner (2005) argues that ‘managing’ refers to ‘planning, monitoring, controlling and motivation’, whereas, ‘successfully’ refers to ‘on time, within cost, to quality and to performance’ (Gardiner, 2005, p.5).

On the other hand, Kerzner (1995) prefers to distinguish between project management and the successful project management. Kerzner (1995, p. 2) asserts that project management involves project planning and monitoring, whereas, successful project management involves accomplishment of project objectives within its time and budgetary limits, and at the same time satisfying the desired performance level together with effective and efficient use of resources.

Last but not the least, Cooke-Davies (2001, p. 20) points out to the fact that distinction between the project execution and project management not being always clear cut. To illustrate, meeting site personnel in a construction site can be regarded as an element of both project execution and project management. Therefore, he remarks that this obscure distinction may pose problems in assessing success of a project. Then, obviously project management, which involve project planning, monitoring, controlling and motivation, has vital implications on a project’s fate, success or failure. In the following, the project success is to be reviewed.

2.2.2 An Overview of Project Success

Achieving project success has been a domain of increasing interest in the project management literature. Despite this, many researchers admit that to achieve project
success is still a challenging task. Müller and Turner (2007), propose two constituents of project success: determining success criteria and critical success factors (CSFs). Both of these are needed for enhancing the likelihood of project success within the dynamic project environment (Pinto and Slevin 1988; Lim and Mohamed 1999; Westerveld, 2003).

This chapter is intended to review the literature accumulated on project success together with the major project success related concepts from the literature, and present findings through the conceptual framework of project success consisting of project success, project success criteria, as well as, critical success factors.

2.2.2.1 Project Success

Although project success is a core project management concept, a review of the project management literature reveals that there is no standardized definition of a ‘project success’ in the project management literature (Baccarini, 1999). The success of a project is perceived differently by different success assessors (Shenhar et al., 2001). Therefore, as Prabhakar (2008, p. 3) noted ‘the only agreement seems to be the disagreement on what constitutes project success’.

According to Pinto & Slevin (1988) based on their study conducted with over 650 project managers, the ‘project success’ is not only meeting cost, schedule, and performance requirements rather it requires satisfaction of more complex specifications, such as client satisfaction. Baker, Murphy and Fisher (1983, 1988 as cited in Prabhakar, 2008 and Cooke-Davies, 2001) discuss that client satisfaction has been achieved together with the end result has a vital influence on the perceived success or failure of projects (Prabhakar, 2008). In a similar fashion, Baker, Murphy and Fisher (1983, 1988 as cited in Prabhakar, 2008, page 4) note that:

“In the long run, what really matters is whether the parties associated with, and affected by, a project are satisfied. Good schedule and cost performance means very little in the face of a poor performing end product”

De Wit (1988), on the contrary, defines project success as the assessment of project outcomes against cost, time and quality (as cited in Cooke-Davies, 2001 and Prabhakar, 2008). However, he points out to a distinction between the project success and project management success, which he defines as measurement of project outcomes against the overall project objectives that will be discussed by most of the researchers interested in this subject area.

Furthermore, another attempt at developing a viable foundation for project success definition was by Baccarini (1999), who attempts to contribute to this gap in the literature by his logical framework method (LFM). The LFM model distinguishes between four levels of project objectives, namely goal, purpose, output, and input, provides a comprehensive framework for defining, as well as, comprehending the project success concept. Baccarini (1999), just as some of his colleagues, based his work on De Wit’s (1988) a decade old research. Similarly, Baccarini (1999) differentiates between project management success and the product success, instead of project success. Product success is related with goals and objective, while, project management success is related with the project outputs and inputs according to
Baccarini (1999). On the other hand, another stream of researchers, including Pinto and Slevin (1987), Belassi and Tukel (1996) Lim and Mohamed (1999) prefer not to distinguish between project management success and project success as two distinct concepts rather consider project management success as being part of and contributing to ‘project success’.

Lim and Mohamed (1999) took a further step and conducted a study to determine criteria for assessing project success by different stakeholders. Since as Baccarini (1999) notes that criteria for assessing project success has vital importance in preventing the project and its team members from holding different views on project success which contributes to project failure.

Therefore, it is fundamental to determine and agree upon the criteria satisfying various stakeholders, who have different perceptions of project success.

2.2.2.2 Project success criteria

Success criteria as defined by Lim and Mohamed (1999, p.243) are ‘the set of principles or standards by which project success can be judged’. Early research on project success criteria adopted the so-called Iron Triangle of ‘time, budget and quality’ as the set of principles for evaluating the success of a project. Almost 40 years ago, Oisen (1971) proposed ‘budget, time and quality’ as the project success criteria. Admittedly many scholars accepted this set of success criteria but also noted the necessity to take into consideration other criteria (Turner, 1993; de Witt, 1998; Pinto and Slevin, 1988). More recently, this set of criteria has been evaluated as being insufficient for assessing the project success comprehensively (Turner, 1993; Jugdev and Müller, 2005).

To illustrate this point, according to Jugdev and Müller (2005), assessing project outcomes only with respect to time, cost and, quality is to consider only operational level project management as opposed to anything of strategic value. Jugdev and Müller (2005) focussed on evaluating project success based on the organizational aspects that are internal to the project, leaving out external ones as being too complicated.

Nevertheless, there are researchers, such as Pinto and Mantel (1990), who tend to include both internal and external aspects of a project organization, as well as, complex criteria in assessing project success such as, stakeholder satisfaction, stakeholder community benefits, organization benefits, etc. (Pinto and Mantel, 1990; Atkinson, 1999; Wateridge, 1998). Pinto and Mantel (1990) proposed two additional success criteria, namely, ‘the quality of the project’ as it is perceived by the project team and ‘an external performance indicator’ of both project and its team performance (e.g. client satisfaction) in addition to the ‘efficiency of implementation phase’ criterion that assesses the project success in relation to internal performance indicators, and the Iron Triangle.

Similarly, in a subsequent study, Andersen and Jessen (2000), who attempt to assess project success with respect to the task- and people-oriented aspects, defined project success criteria further into 10 elements. These elements, besides the traditional Iron
Triangle components of time, budget, and quality, include the degree of importance of the products to the base organization, the results as perceived by all stakeholders, the learning experience, motivation for future work, knowledge acquisition, the final report preparation method, and the way of project termination (Andersen & Jessen, 2000). Andersen and Jessen (2000) thus provided a more holistic picture for assessing the success of a project.

Lim and Mohamed (1999), on the other hand, in their study attempted to justify this diversity in perception of project success criteria. They concluded different stakeholders’ perspectives on project success criteria, such as those of the project manager, the project team, the client, and the general public, as being the reason for different perspectives on project success criteria. In addition, authors (1999) note success criteria as one of two constituents of the project success. The other constituent of the project success are Critical Success Factors (CSFs), which will be reviewed in the following section.

![Image](image.png)

**Figure 4. The relationship between critical success factors, success criteria, and project success, adapted from Lim and Mohammed, 1999, page 244**

### 2.2.3 Overview of Critical Success Factors

It was Daniel in 1961 (as cited in Amberg et al, 2005), who first coined the term ‘success factors’ in management literature. In his study, he came up with a set of industry-related CSFs that are claimed to be relevant for any company in a particular industry. Anthony, on the other hand, in 1972 (cited in Amberg et al, 2005), discussed the need for adaptation of CSFs to a company’s and its managers’ specific strategic objectives. Then, based on the both perspectives by Daniel (1961, cited in Amberg et al, 2005) and Anthony et al. (1972, cited in Amberg et al, 2005), Rockart (1979, cited in Amberg et al, 2005) conducted a study that involved three organizations. He found out that organizations despite operating in the same industry may have different CSFs due to differences in geographic locations, strategies etc. Then on, studies on identifying CSFs for different industry projects proliferated in the project management literature.
According to Cooke-Davis (2002) researchers have been trying to find out those factors that are critical to project success since the late 1960s. Therefore, the review of literature on CSFs reveals several definitions. The following CSF definition by Rockart (1979, cited in Amberg et al, 2005) is one of the most cited:

“...the limited number of areas in which results, if they are satisfactory, will ensure successful competitive performance for the organization”.

In subsequent studies CSFs are defined as:

‘... characteristics, conditions or variables that, when properly sustained, maintained, or managed, can have a significant impact on the success of a firm competing in particular industry’ by Bruno and Leidecker (1984, p. 24).

Whereas, as ‘factors which, if addressed, significantly improve project implementation chances’ by Pinto and Slevin in 1987 (p.22). Lim and Mohamed (1999, p. 243) define critical success factors (CSFs) as ‘the set of circumstances, facts, or influences which contribute to the project outcomes’.

In the following section, a comprehensive review of literature on CSFs for different projects and different industry contexts is presented.

2.2.3.1 Critical Success Factors and Projects

During the 1970s-1980s, critical success factor requirements had been addressed rather as a response to the indicators of project success at the implementation phase, focusing on time, cost, and quality, as well as, stakeholder satisfaction (Jugdev and Müller, 2005). It was Pinto and Slevin (1987), who first attempted to develop a comprehensive set of CSFs related to project implementation success. In their work, they propose a project implementation profile (PIP) model, which consists of 10 CSFs, namely, project mission, top management support, project schedule/plan, client consultation, personnel, communication, technical tasks, client acceptance, monitoring and feedback, troubleshooting, determining project success. Additionally, the PIP model of 10 CSFs, is claimed to be suitable as an instrument for project managers to measure those factors (Pinto and Slevin, 1987).

Later, Pinto and Prescott (1988), take a further step by determining the relative importance of 10 CSFs over the life of a project and discover that the relative importance of several CSFs vary at different phases of the project life cycle. The generalized 10 CSFs of the project implementation process (PIP) have also been employed as a model for many project types in several studies (Pinto and Prescott, 1988, Finch 2003, and Hyvari, 2006). However, the factors identified by Pinto and Slevin are not likely to cover every aspect involved in project management. Finch (2003) indicates that the PIP model does not take into consideration a number of significant external factors that affect the success of a project, such as, competence of the project manager, political activities within the organization, external organizational and environmental factors, and responsiveness to the perceived need of project implementation. Nevertheless, subsequent research, conducted during the 1990s-2000s, incorporate the stakeholder issue, as well as, interactions between internal and receiving organizations as factors that are critical for a project success (Jugdev and Müller, 2005).
Moreover, in pursuit of providing a comprehensive CSF framework, there have also been attempts that integrate CSFs categorizations and frameworks with project success criteria. Belassi and Tukel in their study conducted in 1996, criticize previous studies, whose critical success factors are mainly focused on the project manager and project organization. They incorporate characteristics of the project and team members, as well as external factors, into their framework. Their framework, thus, provides a classification of project CSFs into four groups; namely, project manager, team members, organization, and external environment. Additionally, the framework by Belassi and Tukel (1996) provides an explicit and systematic way for examining the intra-relationships between factors in different groups. This scheme provides grouping of project success factors, however it is generic rather than industry specific.

Another interesting study is by Cooke-Davies (2002, p.185), in which he introduces a set of questions for the purpose of grouping of CSFs, such as; “What factors are critical to project management success?”; “What factors are critical to success of an individual project?”; and “What factors lead to consistently successful projects?” Moreover, he distinguishes between project management success and project success by claiming that project management success is the satisfaction of traditional criteria of time, cost and quality, whereas, project success is the satisfaction of the overall project objectives. Then, he proposes 12 CSFs, which he extracts from multi-national organizations’ activities and practical actions. Additionally, although his proposed CSFs are not directly related to human factors, he points out that people have intrinsic importance to all project processes.

On the other hand, CSFs introduced by Clarke (1999) involve effective communication, clear project’s objectives and scope, decomposing project into manageable size, using project plans as working documents, whereas, Nicholas (2004) proposes a set of CSFs, which are grouped into three categories: project participants, communication and information sharing and exchange, and the project management/systems development process.

Based on an analysis of the literature it can be concluded that there is not a consistent CSF framework. Rather there are different perspectives of what constitute CSFs, depending on how the authors identify and classify them. Moreover, although early literature on project management does not consider project success criteria, containing the focus to CSFs, subsequent studies attempt to close the gap between CSFs and project success criteria, both of which impact on project success. In addition to this, recently developed CSFs are more complex than those of the previous decade as more recent CSFs cover both hard and soft aspects of project management such as the competence of the project manager and the project team members and leadership. The challenge to determine relevant CSFs over the full life of a project has been attracting growing interest in recent publications. The following section addresses this aspect.

\[2.2.3.2\] Critical Success Factors and Project Life-Cycle

According to Mintzberg (Mintzberg et al, 1998) many academicians, especially in the strategy development field have stated the necessity for better project implementation. Nevertheless, Walker and Rowlinson (2008) argue that mainstream literature in the
project management and strategy field fails to address these issues because it views implementation:

“... as a lesser form of intellectual pursuit than strategy and planning” (Walker and Rowlinson, 2008, p.32).

Furthermore, Belassi and Tukel (1996) contribute to this issue by claiming that when it comes to project implementation issues, project management literature focuses more on improving tools and techniques such as scheduling, or project failure, rather than on success. However, such position is understandable, as to identify the success factors of a project is a more complex task than identifying failure factors, mainly because of the following reasons.

First, parties involved in a project tend to see project success differently and therefore, each party may allocate different success criteria to each phase (Pinto and Slevin, 1987; Pinto and Prescott 1988; Baker et al 1983; Belout and Gauvreau, 2004; Fowler and Walsh, 1999).

Several academicians have proposed models in attempts to capture the processes which a project undergoes during its life. Adams and Barndt (1998), King and Cleland (1983), and Westland (2006) support the model which consists of the following four stages: initiation/conceptualisation, planning, execution / implementation and closure / termination. Pinto and Prescott (1988) propose empirically derived CSFs for each of the phases over the project life-cycle and CSFs proposed for implementation phase are ‘mission’, ‘trouble-shooting’, ‘schedule/plan’, ‘technical tasks’, and ‘client consultation’. Their work was later criticized unsuccessfully by some authors, including Belout (1998) and Belout and Gauvreau (2004), whose results were found to support those of Pinto and Prescott (1988).

Third, Belassi and Tukel (1996), Clarke (1999) and King (1996) argue that the CSFs may not directly affect the project outcome. It is the combination of these factors at different project life-cycle stages that influences the success of the project. They also add that due to uniqueness of a project, some CSFs may be missing or become irrelevant for some projects and therefore covering as many factors as possible that could influence the project would be of little or no help to project manager. Moreover, Adams and Brandt (1988) remind us that projects are not static entities; rather they change significantly as they progress through their life-cycle stages.

Finally, as Belout and Gauvreau (2004), Bellasi and Tukel (1998), Fryer, Antony and Douglas (2007) argue that the relevance of the CSFs vary across different industries. For example, Belout and Gauvreau (2004) found that in the IT industry, with the exception of client acceptance, all other factors proposed by Pinto and Prescott (1988) are critical to success. In construction and engineering industries, on the other hand, client acceptance is critical.

2.2.3.3 Critical Success Factors and Project Type

Pinto and Slevin (1988) assert that CSFs identified for a project type may not be necessarily valid for another project type. Therefore it might be argued that identification of the project type has a vital importance for successful management of
a project. Just as project descriptions evolved over time to incorporate more characteristics, so did the idea of project types. Early studies on project management distinguish projects mainly among different examples of the so-called ‘hard projects’, such as aerospace, construction, manufacturing projects (Cleland and King, 1988). ‘Hard’ type projects are those that have well-defined methods and tangible outcomes, such as construction of a building, production of a car. Later on, as the trend of shifting from producing goods to providing services has become more and more prominent in the global economy, another project type, the so-called ‘soft projects’ yielding intangible outcomes, has begun attracting growing interest.

Recently, Turner (2008, page 22) contributed to this subject area by further categorizing and distinguishing among four types of projects:

- **Engineering projects or the ‘Earth’ type project** is how Turner calls the ‘hard’ type projects. This type projects possess both solid goals and methods. Aerospace, construction, shipbuilding, as well as, manufacturing projects are counted as the most popular earth type projects.

- **Project development projects or ‘Water’ projects**, on the other hand, possess solid goals but poor methods. These types of projects are adopted when the project manager requires flexibility in terms of the delivery of the well-defined project results.

- **Application software development or ‘Fire’ type projects possess**, poorly-developed goals but solidly defined methods. Therefore, the plan of this type of projects is being developed with respect to PLC. To illustrate, at the initial phase of an information system project the customer may not know exactly what he/she wants from the project. But as the project develops the expectations of the customer from the project become more visible.

- **Research and organizational change projects or ‘Air’ project type** have both poorly-defined goals and methods. Therefore, this project type utilizes a gateway-based planning, in which the decision to keep the project is made in relation to go/ not go decision points.

In the following ‘the goals and methods matrix’ is being demonstrated (Figure 5.).

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**Figure 5.** The goals and methods matrix adopted from Turner (2008, page 22); originally published in Turner and Cochrane (1993).
This matrix, which presents the relationship among each project type, together with their goals and methods, has implications regarding project management practices that result in a project success or failure. Therefore, ‘the goals and methods matrix’ has a fundamental importance in determining critical success factors, which vary according for different types of projects.

Similarly, Westerveld (2003) by his ‘the Project Excellence Model’ attempts to incorporate the five project types that he identified with success criteria and CSFs. The Project Excellence Model, which links success criteria to CSFs, utilizes the following five different project types in order to describe the project organisation and provide guidance to the application of the model. (Westerveld, 2003, p.416):

- **Product orientation**, in which the project is perceived as an ‘organization’ consisting of various disciplines that are dedicated to accomplish the product as specified by the client. To illustrate, replacement of an obsolete hospital sunscreen by the new one is handled by a technician, who is being appointed by the Maintenance Department (Westerveld, 2003).

- **Tool orientation**, in which the project is perceived as a ‘process’ yielding the end product through use of a methodology including various tools and techniques. Establishment of a comprehensive schedule for ensuring the maintenance of machines in a process industry factory is an example of tool orientation project type (Westerveld, 2003).

- **System orientation**, in which the project is perceived as a ‘system’ consisting of contracting partners and project organization that are determined to accomplish the end product through taking into consideration demands and expectations of stakeholders. Westerveld (2003), for this project type, offers the example of a school construction, in which the demands of local people, children and teachers have fundamental influence.

- **Strategy orientation**, in which the project is perceived as an ‘organization’ being composed of directly involved parties that are dedicated to achieve the customer demands. Additionally, external stakeholders are taken into account as parties, who establish the boundaries for the project organization. Establishment of a new information system within a permanent organization is proposed as an example of this project type by Westerveld (2003). To illustrate, in case of a new information system implementation, after the supplier selection, a temporary project organization for the new information system implementation is being established within the permanent organization.

- **Total project management**, in which the project is perceived as a ‘complex network’ of interrelated related stakeholders, who aim at fulfilling needs of clients and users. Westerveld (2003) suggests the renovation of a city centre, which involves a web of various stakeholders such as citizens, government agencies, shopkeepers, as an example of this project type.
In the model above, each project type has a role as a framework, in which its relevant project success criteria and CSFs are identified, aimed at providing a project manager of any of the above identified project types with guidance for successful project management.

In a nutshell, the literature provides evidence for a close link between the project type and the CSFs (Turner, 2008; Westerveld, 2003). However, the criticality of a factor for the success of a project varies with respect to its type. Therefore, conducting viable research on project critical success factors requires narrowing down the wide research context of projects of different types into a project context involving one or few project types. Following Pinto and Mantel (1990), who studied the causes of project failure through ten CSFs in the Project Implementation Profile (PIP) based on construction and R&D projects, our research aims to determine CSFs relevant to IDP implementation through investigation of IDPs being implemented in Kazakhstan.

In the following section describes the project type being studied, a non profit – International Development Project (IDP) – including their distinguishing features from traditional projects are presented.

### 2.2.4 Overview of International Development Projects (IDPs)

International development projects, as defined by Youker (1999, page 1), are medium to large public projects and/or programs, which are implemented by a local project team in developing countries, whereas they are financed by the following types of institutions:

- Multilateral Development Banks such as the World Bank and regional development banks including Asian Development Bank (ADB), African Development Bank (AfDB), Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) etc.
- United Nations including United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Labour Organization (ILO), World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) etc.
- Bilateral and multi-lateral government agencies such as United States Agency for International Development (USAID), European Union etc.
- Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) such as CARE, Catholic Relief Services, Save the Children etc.
- Government agencies in developing countries.

Originally, international development projects were concerned with infrastructure construction, the so-called hard type, projects (Youker, 1999). However, in recent years, IDPs have included soft type projects having objectives such as poverty alleviation and living standards improvement, environment protection, basic human rights protection, assistance for victims of natural or people-caused disasters, capacity building and development of basic physical and social infrastructures (Youker, 1999; Do and Tun, 2008; Diallo and Thuillier, 2004, Diallo and Thuillier, 2008).
2.2.4.1 Characteristics of IDPs as compared to traditional projects

Intrinsic characteristics of IDPs bring about several management challenges that are not in place when dealing with ‘hard’ type industrial and commercial projects. Therefore, when discussing the characteristics of IDPs in the following section, the words ‘characteristics’ and ‘challenge’ are being used interchangeably, as well as, the terms ‘hard’ projects, ‘traditional projects’ are being used interchangeably referring to ‘industrial and commercial projects’, that are very commonplace.

First of all, compared to ‘hard’ type industrial and infrastructure projects, IDPs as soft type projects with their less tangible social objectives and deliverables pose a special challenge in managing and evaluating of IDPs (Do and Tun, 2008).

In addition to their less tangible objectives and deliverables, the complex web of the many stakeholders is an IDP characteristic that results in another management challenge (Youker, 1999). To illustrate, compared with industrial and commercial projects, which involve the client, who pays for and receives the deliverables of the project, and the contractor, who manages and obtains the desired result (Do and Tun, 2008), IDPs involve a web of stakeholders, including:

- the coordinator as the head of the project management unit
- the task manager as the supervisor of the project implementation in the multilateral development agency
- the national supervisor, to whom the coordinator reports
- the project team
- the steering committee as an interface with the local institutional system
- the beneficiaries as those actually benefit from the project outputs without paying for it
- the population at large

In addition, ensuring accountability of the project manager is more troublesome within this complex web of stakeholders (Diallo and Thuillier, 2004, page 239) as opposed to traditional projects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>International Development Projects</th>
<th>versus</th>
<th>Traditional Projects</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>are soft type projects e.g. poverty alleviation</td>
<td>hard type project e.g. industrial and commercial projects</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>have less tangible social objectives and deliverables</td>
<td>tangible objectives and deliverables</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>involve complex web of seven stakeholders (project coordinator, team, task manager, national supervisor, steering committee, beneficiaries, population at large)</td>
<td>involve two parties; the client and the contractor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>are subject to cultural gap between stakeholders (between donor and local organization)</td>
<td>cultural gap between stakeholders is not very commonplace</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>can be subject to political manipulations</td>
<td>not subject to political manipulations</td>
<td></td>
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Table 2. IDPs versus Traditional Projects
Another IDP management challenge may occur due to the possible knowledge and cultural gap between donors and the recipients, which is not necessarily the case with traditional projects so often. This cultural gap may result in impairment between the real needs of the target groups and the development policies of the funding agencies. This may cause a poor project design, and thus failure in the implementation. Additionally, this knowledge and cultural gap may cause establishment of contradicting rules by donors and the recipients, thus raising further difficulties during IDP implementation (Do and Tun, 2008).

Last but not the least, as it is proposed by Dibaja (1993), the study of the politics of the development process is crucial. Unlike with traditional projects, IDPs due to the lack of market pressures in evaluating and implementing and the intangibility of their objectives, can be the target of political manipulation (Do and Tun, 2008). Dibaja (1993) expresses his criticism of the situation as:

‘...involvement tied to projects strongly resembles the former Western colonial era. Donors are seemingly a wealthy powerful coalition who can decide upon the fate of the recipients.’ (Dibaja, 1993, p.126)

Therefore, another disconnection may occur between the real interests of different stakeholders in these projects and the stated objectives in the project document, adding another challenge to IDP implementation as opposed to traditional project implementation.

Youker (1999) based on his study of evaluations of World Bank IDP post–project reports, outlines a number of IDP management challenges in addition to the above mentioned. He states that ‘the lack of shared perception and agreement on the objectives of the projects by staff and stakeholders’, as well as, ‘the lack of commitment by the team, management and stakeholders’ as the problems that had been most persistent during implementing IDPs. Also, Youker (1999, page 6) counts ‘the lack of detailed, realistic, and current project plans’, ‘unclear lines of authority and responsibility’, ‘the lack of adequate resources’, ‘poor feedback and control mechanisms for early detection of problems’, ‘poor or no analysis of major risk factors’, ‘delays caused by bureaucratic administration systems’ as other challenges that had occurred frequently during IDP implementations in past.

It is clear that management challenges associated with IDPs differ drastically from those of traditional projects. Therefore, IDP projects require development of management practices that are specific to them. In the following section, a review of models and frameworks, which have been proposed so far, for a successful IDP management, is presented.

2.2.4.2 Management practices associated with IDPs

In the past, success of IDP implementation, in relation to the amount of financing involved, has been assessed to be below acceptable levels generally (Goodman and Love, 1979) The framework proposed by Goodman and Love (1979) called the ‘integrated project planning and management cycle’ (IPPMC) constitutes one of the earliest attempts for development of management practices for IDPs. This framework serves as a conceptual tool for observing and analyzing the life of a
development project and it is composed of 4 major phases, namely, the planning, appraisal and design phase, the selection, approval and activation phase, the operation, control and handover phase and the evaluation and refinement phase (Goodman and Love, 1979, page 3).

However, although one of first attempts for development of IDP management practices, this framework is not IDP specific, rather it can be adopted for managing traditional projects as well:

‘... to clarify the mass of procedures, methods and challenges relating to the management of projects, it is useful to have a framework within which development projects may be viewed.’ (Goodman and Love, 1979, page 2)

Similarly, an earlier model proposed by Hayes (1966) involves four methods that are claimed to assist in moving towards better measurement, understanding and administration of development projects as (page 13). These four methods are as following:

- Description of the IDP and specification of its goals should be written down in a statement
- The types of data that will be used to indicate project results, as well as, how these data will be obtained should be described
- The desired data should be collected before, during, after the project
- The findings should be subject to analysis and review by various interested parties.

Nevertheless, although IDP is intended as the domain of his proposed model, this study by Hayes (1996), it does not yield exclusively IDP specific management practices.

Therefore, the study conducted by Diallo and Thuillier, in 2004, is said to constitute the first comprehensive empirical research on the IDP specific management practices, particularly success criteria for IDPs. These authors (page 239) assess project success as perceived by seven groups of stakeholders: coordinators, task managers, supervisors, project team, steering committee, beneficiaries, and the population at large. In their study, they also outline a comprehensive set of evaluation criteria that includes, satisfaction of beneficiaries with goods and services generated, formation of the goods and services produced to the project documents, achievement of project objectives, completion of the project in time and within budget, receiving a high national profile, and receiving a good reputation among the principal donors (page 239).

In their subsequent study in sub-Saharan Africa, Diallo and Thuillier (2005, page 241) determine and validate empirically communication and trust as critical to the success of international development projects. Then, Do and Tun (2008) following the recommendations by Diallo and Thuillier (2004; 2005) for further research on extending the set of IDP CSFs, conducted a study that constitutes basis of our research study. In the following section the study by Do and Tun (2008)” and the proposed framework for our study will be presented.
2.2.4.3 CSFs of IDPs and Proposed framework for this research

Do and Tun (2008) following up the studies on IDP CSFs by Diallo and Thuiller (2004; 2005) have developed a framework based on an adaptation of the Logical Framework Approach (LFA), which is a general methodology commonly used by the development community to design, plan, manage and communicate their projects, for IDP context. Their proposed framework focuses on project life cycle, then assesses the success of each phase based on the outputs produced by the the previous phase. As a consequence, these partial successes are integrated into an assessment of the overall success of the IDP according to the Life-Cycle-Based framework.

Table below, presents the survey results on critical success factors to international development project in different life-cycle phases conducted by Do and Tun (2008, page 80):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Life-Cycle Phases</th>
<th>Critical Success Factors</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conceptualizing phase</td>
<td>understanding of environment (of donors and 2 consultants)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>effective consultations</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>competency of project designers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Planning phase</td>
<td>compatible development priorities</td>
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<td></td>
<td>adequate resources</td>
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<td></td>
<td>effective consultations with planning</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>competency of project planners</td>
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<tr>
<td>Implementing phase</td>
<td>adequate supports of stakeholders</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>high commitment to project goals/objectives</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>competent project management team</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>adequate resources and support</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>compatible rules and procedures</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>effective consultations with all stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing phase</td>
<td>adequate provisions in project plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>effective consultations during closing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>competency of project manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall project success</td>
<td>clear policies of donors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>local capacities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>strong local ownership of project</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Critical success factors to international development project in different life-cycle phases adapted from Do and Tun (2008, page 80)

As our particular study focuses on the implementation phase of IDPs we will utilize only the CSFs identified in Do and Tun’s (2008) model for the implementation phase of IDPs. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, international development projects are usually planned or initiated by the inter-governmental organisations such as the World Bank, the UN, or the European Commission etc, and implemented by a local project team. In such situations the project team has limited influence on the ‘strategic’ part of projects life-cycle (initiation and planning phases). Also, most of the multilateral and bilateral development agencies have specific guidelines regarding the termination or close-out of the project, many of which require audit checks delegated from the donor organisation. That is why this research will concentrate only on the implementation or execution stage of project life-cycle.
SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 2

The review of empirical literature revealed that:

a. Kazakhstan after having departing from totalitarianism just as is the case with other post-Soviet countries, has been planning economies to embrace democracy and market based economies.
b. Then, now, the country has almost established appropriate strategies and legislation but it is in desperate need of improving means for effective implementation of international development projects.

Whereas, the review of academic literature revealed that:

a. Definition of the project and the project management evolved and expanded over time to reflect increasing requirements by the customer.
b. The researchers do not agree on a consistent definition for project success. Additionally, there is not a consistent CSF framework for projects and its life cycle as well. Rather there are different perspectives of what constitute project success, CSFs, depending on how the authors identify and classify them.
c. Nevertheless, most of the scholars agree on that there is a close link between the project type and the CSFs and the criticality of a factor for the success of a project varies with respect to its type.
d. Therefore, conducting viable research on project critical success factors requires narrowing down the wide research context of projects of different types into a project context involving one or few project types.
e. IDP, as a special project type, possess management challenges that differ drastically from those of traditional projects, e.g. intangible objectives and goals, complex web of stakeholders.
f. IDP projects require development of management practices that are specific to them.
g. However, not until 2004 a researcher has conducted study on CSFs for IDPs. The work by Diallo and Thuillier (2004) constitute the first study on CSFs for IDPs.
h. Do and Tun (2008) following the recommendations by Diallo and Thuillier (2004; 2005) identified set of CSFs over an IDP life cycle, in which the proposed implementation phase CSFs constitute basis of this research study.
1. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter is aimed at providing information about the applied research process for this thesis. Saunders et al. (2007) refer to the research process as an ‘onion’ with important layers to be ‘peeled away’ in order to accomplish it. The first of these layers is the research philosophy that is being adopted for the study. The second layer is the chosen approach for the research study. Third layer involves the research strategy, whereas, the fourth is concerned with the time horizon applied to research process. The final layer is about the data collection methods employed during the research.

In the following figure, the steps of the research process ‘onion’, as applied to this thesis is demonstrated.

![Research Onion Diagram](image)

*Figure 6. Research onion of the thesis adopted from Saunders 2003, page 15*

The outmost layer represents the research philosophy of this study, which is interpretivism. The next layer stands for research approach of the study and it is inductive approach. The third layer, which represents research strategy, methodology – in this research project, involves application of two different survey techniques to gather data from two different organizations in Kazakhstan. Whereas, the fourth layer determines the time horizon of the study, which is identified as cross sectional since data regarding a particular phenomenon, the CSFs of IDP implementation, has been generated at a particular point in time rather than over a given time period. Finally, the inmost layer reveals the data collection methods, which are interviews and questionnaires that have been employed as a means of accomplishing two different survey techniques of this thesis.
In the following section, an in-depth analysis of each research ‘onion’ layer as it is applied to this study is discussed in depth.

3.1 Research Philosophy

Saunders et al. (2007) define research philosophy as the way knowledge is developed by the researcher. However, the researcher’s way of knowledge development is affected by the way he/she views the world. Therefore, the determination of a suitable ontology, which deals with the way that world is viewed, to investigate the research gap is essential. Moreover, ontology, as the study of being, attempts to answer the following question of ‘whether social entities should be seen as objective entities, having an external link to social actors’ or as ‘social constructions, being created by social actors and their perceptions’ (Brymann and Bell, 2003, page 16). There are two different approaches towards the ontology of a research methodology (Money & Schwartz, 1998, p. 35):

- **objectivism**, which asserts social phenomena as external factors not being influenced by humans.
- **subjectivism**, which claims the influence of social constructions and interactions on social entities. Therefore, it asserts the importance of studying

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjectivism as the ontology:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>With regard to this study, we have evaluated that subjectivism as being the appropriate approach. Since, this study involves study of a social phenomenon, CSFs of IDP implementation, taking into consideration the influence of human beings on this phenomenon.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the other hand, epistemology, which is the study of knowledge, science, model and testability, is the other constituent of a research philosophy. In other words, it deals with questions such as: “What does the researcher perceive as truth? What tests can be applied to test for truth in the decided ontology?” (Müller, 2009). According to Bryman and Bell (2003, page 17) the issue in this context is to provide an answer to the following question “Should the same principles and procedures be applied whilst studying the social environment?” This, in turn, leads to the following discussion about different approaches in terms of epistemology:

- **Positivism:**

Remenyi et al. (1998) argue that positivism is adopted when researchers aim to produce law-like generalisations, which are similar to those generated by the scientists, while dealing with an ‘observable social reality’ (Remenyi et. al, 1998, page 32). Thus, an assumption is that the positivist researcher, who undertakes the philosophical stance of a natural scientist, is neither affecting nor being affected by the research. Consequently, with a positivist approach a structured methodology, which lends itself to replication, as well as, statistical validation is developed. (Saunders et al., 2007).
• **Interpretivism:**
As opposed to positivism, an interpretive approach adopts the stance that business life is too complex to be generalised by laws. Rather, interpretive approach appreciates ‘social constructivism’, in other words:

“... the details of the situation that enables researchers to understand the reality or perhaps a reality working behind them” (Remenyi et al., 1998, p.35).

Since, people tend to interpret the situations, in which they find themselves, these interpretations, in turn are very likely to influence both their actions and the way they interact with others in the society Saunders et al. (2007). Therefore, an interpretive view asserts that human beings, far from being objectives without any influence on or by daily social life, must be analyzed as social actors within his/her social environment. Saunders et al. (2007). Consequently, the role of interpretivist is to understand the subjective reality of the participants in their study. Then, this in turn, will enable interpretivist researchers to understand the rationale, motives, and intentions behind their actions.

• **Realism:**
Realism, which involves a mixture of positivist and interpretivist stances, is based on the belief that ‘a reality exists that is independent of human thoughts and beliefs’ (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 84). According to this approach forces and processes occurring in social environment affect the way in which human beings perceive their world, regardless they are aware of them or not. Therefore, it is asserted that in order to gain insights about the way people behave and think understanding people’s socially constructed interpretations within their social environment is vital.

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**Interpretivism as the epistemology:**
The research philosophy chosen for this study is interpretivism since the researchers have chosen to conduct the study, the CSFs of IDP implementation, through collection and analysis of the perceptions of human beings involved in the subject area. The participants are seen as social actors, having influence on the research subject, rather than being viewed as isolated objects. Thus, the researchers attempted to understand their behaviours, interpretations etc. in relation to the research subject being investigated.

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### 3.2 Research Approach

The design of a research process and its subsequent research approach are influenced by the extent of theory applied by the researcher at the beginning of research. The literature distinguishes between two types of research approaches (Saunders et al., 2007, page 119):

• **Deductive approach** involves development of a theory and/or hypothesis, as well as, design of a research strategy, to test the developed hypothesis and/or theory. This approach, which stems from natural science related methods, develops hypotheses using existing theory. With a deductive approach data is collected through surveys, observations, questionnaires, interviews etc.
Whereas, data is analyzed through use statistical methods generally. Finally, theory is developed through either confirmation or rejection of the hypotheses. As a result, this approach, is affiliated with positivism, is objective by nature and easy to replicate.

- **Inductive approach**, on the other hand, aims at understanding new and/or unknown phenomena. Therefore, the research process commences with the collection of data through interviews, observations, diary methods, observations, case studies etc.. Then, the data collected is analyzed in order to come construct theory. Thus, this approach, in which theory is followed by data, is subjective by nature and difficult to replicate.

**Inductive approach as the research approach:**
The research approach applied for this thesis is inductive approach, where researchers aim to provide new insights about implementation of IDPs subject through collecting data on the subject and developing a viable theory based on their analysis of the data.

### 3.3 Research Strategy

The research strategy is the general plan outlining the way researcher answers the research question. Therefore, it involves identifying clear objectives, which are extracted from the research question, as well as, determining sources of data collection. Based on the constraints that will be most probably encountered, e.g. data, time, location, money and ethical issues, Saunders et al. (2007) distinguish six research strategies, namely, experiment, survey, case study, grounded theory, ethnography, action research.

The experiment is a classical form of research, which stems from natural sciences but now is practiced widely also in social sciences, especially in psychology. It involves testing of a theoretical hypothesis and the selection, as well as, control of external variables are essential. Therefore, selection of individuals from known populations as experiment participants is a commonplace practice in experiments. Thus, experimental tests, which attempt measuring impact of different levels of variable(s) X, *the cause*, on variable Y, *the effect*, produce the most precise measurement results. Experiments are often used in inductive approaches.

On the other hand, the survey is used with both deductive and inductive approaches. Furthermore, of the survey is a commonplace strategy within the business and management subject areas since this strategy provides one of the most economical ways to collect data from large populations. Saunders et al. (2007). In addition, this strategy is exercised very often through questionnaires, which produce standardised data lending to comparison of results. The analysis of data can be accomplished using quantitative methods.

The case study, according to Yin (1994), is a comprehensive research strategy targeting at investigating a phenomenon within its real life context. Robson (2002) contributes to this definition by stating the need for employing multiple sources of data and therefore a variety of data collection methods are used to conduct a case
study, including questionnaires, interviews, observation, documentary analysis, can be employed for a case study research. This comprehensive research strategy, can in turn, provide answers not only to “why?” and “what?” but also to “how?” questions (Morris & Wood, 1991). Finally, despite its ‘unscientific’ feel, case study research is evaluated as an essential way of exploring a theory exhaustively (Saunders et al., 2007, page 32).

Grounded theory is an inductive and ‘theory-discovery’ methodology that enables the researcher to develop a theory from the general features of a subject while at the same time grounding this theory in empirical observations or evidence (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). To develop a grounded theory, first patterns are identified through use of data collection methods such as interviews or observations. Then, the theories, which are developed based on patterns identified, can be tested for generalisation through employing another research strategy, e.g. a comprehensive survey.

Ethnography is another inductive approach that through participative observation allows interpreting the behaviour of human beings within their real world context. However, this strategy is a time consuming and is exercised over an extended time period. Therefore, it is not a frequently used research strategy in business and management subject areas.

Finally, action research is a research strategy that has three common themes in the literature, namely, management of change, collaboration between practitioners and academicians and implications beyond the immediate projects. Coghlan and Brannick (2001) assert that an action research does not only explain the situation but also take necessary initiatives to change it. Therefore, the researcher, who is a part of the organization / project, is involved in this action research for both implementing change and previously obtained knowledge. Finally, this research strategy has a cyclical nature, thus enabling improvement of organizational changes and its associated actions continuously over time.

In the following section, the decision regarding research strategy of this study and the rationale behind this decision are presented.

Survey as the research strategy:
Even though the concept of critical success factors (CSFs) was first introduced by Daniel in 1961 cited in Amberg et al, 2005 and was popularized for the next three decades by many well-known scholars, there still exists little amount of information regarding CSFs in international development projects, and no studies were conducted regarding such projects in Kazakhstan. Therefore, the current research field is viewed as embryonic. For an emergent area or of research Bandara et al., (2005), Stuart et al., (2002) and Yin (2003) recommend the case-study approach, which is typically conducted with the combination of data collection methods such as interviews, questionnaires and observations (Eisenhardt, 1989). It was the researchers’ initial intention to conduct a multiple-case design research study; however access to data limitations prevented the researchers from conducting such a research. Of the two organizations that agreed to participate in our study, the first organization declared that it was only eager to participate in interviews, whereas, the second organization agreed to involve only in questionnaires.
However, a case study research mandates triangulation of results through other means, such as observations, investigation of records etc. Although, it was possible to gain access to certain information about the two participating organisations, it was not possible to obtain access to enough information to fully explore each organisation as case study method requires.

Therefore, because of the constraints imposed, two different survey techniques were applied to the two different organizations. Eight semi-structured interviews were conducted with one of the organizations, and 188 emails with explanation and a link to online self-administered questionnaires were sent to the other organisation.

The presentation and discussion of this data will be provided in the analysis part of this thesis.

### 3.4 Time Horizons

A time perspective of a research design is another important issue influencing the research process.

- cross-sectional studies involve studying of a particular phenomenon at a particular point in time
- longitudinal studies, on the other hand, involve research and representation of findings over a given period.

**Cross-sectional as the time perspective of the research study:**

Time perspective for this study is cross-sectional, as the time constraints associated with this research meant that the investigation of CSFs of IDPs implementation had to be conducted at a particular point in time.

### 3.5 Data Collection Methods

The final layer of the research ‘onion’ deals with the methods employed for collecting data for the study. First, the distinction between types of data to be collected must be noted. The literature distinguishes among three types of data, namely, quantitative, qualitative or both, the mixed type.

Qualitative data is the non-numerical or non-quantified data, which is based on meanings expressed through words. This type of data is generated through interviews, observation and diary methods mainly. Although not as common, questionnaire and survey methods can be employed for qualitative data collection as well. Moreover, the collection of qualitative data results in non-standardised data, which requires classification into categories and the analysis of qualitative data, is conducted through the use of conceptualization, e.g. content analysis and grounded theory. Content analysis, which is an objective and deductive approach, analyzes qualitative data through hypothesis testing. On the other hand, grounded theory, as previously
defined, is an inductive and holistic approach, which analyzes qualitative data through determining or developing patterns Saunders et al. (2007).

**Quantitative data** is the numerical or quantified data, which is based on meanings derived from numbers. This type of data can be collected through surveys, questionnaires, interviews and the collection results in numerical and standardised data Saunders et al. (2007). Therefore, the analysis of this data type is conducted through use of diagrams, as well as, statistical analysis.

**Mixed data** collection involves both quantitative and qualitative data types. Therefore, collection and analysis of mixed data involve use of above mentioned both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis methods Saunders et al. (2007).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mixed data as the data type being collected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Throughout this study both qualitative and quantitative data, in other words, the mixed data has been collected through data collection methods of semi-structured interviews and self-administered questionnaires. Conducted semi-structured interviews mainly generated qualitative data, whereas, self-administered questionnaires generated quantitative data.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the following sections the data collection techniques that are outlined above, sampling, as well as, the data collection process are discussed in detail.

- **Interview**

One of the most widely employed data collection method is the interview. The interview is defined as a purposeful discussion between at least two people by Kahn and Cannell (1957). Thus, it enables the researcher to generate valid and reliable data that are relevant to research question. The literature distinguishes among three types of interviews based on their level of formality and structure Saunders et al. (2007):

**Unstructured interviews** are informal interview types, in which there are not predetermined lists of questions to be covered. Thus, the questions are formulated during the interview and the interviewee has the opportunity to talk freely about the research topic. However, it should be noted that the interviewer must have a clear picture of themes he/she wants to explore in his/her mind.

According to Bryman and Bell (2003) **semi-structured interviews**, involve a set of predetermined questions and/or themes to be covered but the order of questions can be varied. Moreover, the phrasing of questions may not be exactly the same for all interviewees and not all questions are constructed before the interview as additional questions may arise during the interview, allowing a further investigation opportunity for details or discuss issues.

**Structured interviews** employ questionnaires that involve predetermined and **standardised** questions, in which the interviewer reads each question and then record each answer on a standardised schedule.
• **Questionnaire**

Next, the *questionnaire* is another commonplace data collection method for research studies. Although it is mostly used by the survey strategy, experiment and case study research strategies make use of questionnaires very often as well. Therefore, questionnaire is a generic term including all data collection techniques, in which the same set of questions, are asked to each respondent (deVaus, 2002). It includes not only telephone questionnaires but also structured interviews, as well as, those questionnaires answered without the interviewer being present. Questionnaire design varies with respect to how it is administered and the extent of contact with the respondents.

Self-administered questionnaires are those, which are completed by the respondents generally. This type of questionnaire is further classified into those delivered and returned by hand – *the delivery and collection questionnaire*-, by email, *Internet -online questionnaires*- or by ordinary postal mail - *the postal questionnaire*-

Whereas, the interviewer-administered questionnaires, in which responses provided by respondents are recorded by the interviewer, are classified into *telephone questionnaire* and *structured interview*. Telephone questionnaires are those involving contact of respondent and conduct of questionnaire using the telephone. On the other hand, the structured interviews are those, in which interviewers meet respondents and get answers through a face to face talk.

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**Semi-structured interviews and self-administered questionnaires as the data collection methods of the research study**

As mentioned earlier, the type of data that has been collected and analysed is mixed, involving both qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative data has been generated through use of semi-structured, whereas, the quantitative data has been generated through use of self administered on-line questionnaires. Data collection for the research has started with semi-structured interviews for the following reasons. First, as the research question is of complex nature, since there is no academic research on the same topic available up-to-date in the library or internet. Therefore, semi-structured interview method provides two-way communication allowing clarifying or discussing in details complex issues during the interview.

Second, as Rockart (1979) suggests, conducting in-depth interviews with managers is a viable method for identifying CSFs. Then, a semi-structured interview, with right questions asked may provide not only answers, the CSFs of IDP implementation, but also the reasons for the answers. Therefore, extra information can be captured that interviewer did not think of previously.

Third, the existing theoretical framework of CSFs during the project implementation phase supplies an adequate amount of information to construct basic questions for the semi-structured interview. The model proposed by Do and Tun (2008) will be used as an initial point. Additionally, related literature and authors experience will be of use if required.

Fourth, since the identification of CSFs is based on the experience and points of view of people involved in the process, semi-structured interviews provides opportunity to
capture the insights into unexplored areas of a topic as well as allows the interviewer to adjust the emphases in the research according to the issues that emerge during the interview process.

The findings from semi-structured interviews allowed researchers to construct criteria for project selection and project implemented in organisation ‘B’ has been selected. Initially, the semi-structured interviews were proposed to organisation ‘B’, however due to busy schedule and distracting work environment interviewees specifically asked for a questionnaire instead of semi-structured interviews. Respondents have been given 14 calendar days to fill the online questionnaire.

As mentioned above, the research methodology of this study involves application of two different survey techniques to two different organizations. The following section briefly describes the two different surveys, as well as, the organizations, in which those survey had been applied, is provided.

3.5.1 Survey 1

Survey 1 involves intensive analysis of IDP implementation and its CSFs through employing semi-structured interviews in an international organization in Kazakhstan. For the ethical considerations the name of the organisation studied by researchers will be coded as organization ‘A’.

- **Organization ‘A’**

Organisation ‘A’ is a country office of an international organization, which monitors the situation in the world and proposes IDPs aiming at ensuring regional security, economic and environmental development, as well as, human rights protection. Organisation ‘A’ is categorized as the ‘donor organisation’, i.e. it not only proposes, plans or implements IDP in Kazakhstan, but also often plays a role of a sponsor of a project to local ‘recipient’ organizations by granting them necessary resources. Donor organisations are international. However, since the research question concentrates only on Kazakhstan, this study is focused only on one office located in Astana, Kazakhstan, without taking into consideration the situation in other branch offices of the organisation ‘A’.

The office works together with governing bodies in Kazakhstan such as parliament, ministries and agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGO) and other international organizations in the country. International organization ‘A’ supports national development goals of Kazakhstan and assists in their realization by designing and implementing development projects.

According to preliminary communication with organisation ‘A’, in the coming years 2010-2014, the office plans to increase the number of projects especially the ones which address sensitive political issues. Thus, the significance of successful outcome of the projects is expected to be higher than before. Therefore the researchers anticipate that studying this organization’s past projects will allow them to identify critical success factors which will assist project managers in achieving project goals.
3.5.1.1  *Semi-structured interviews design and process*

The main focus of these interviews was to identify the respondent’s point of view regarding the applicability of Do and Tun’s (2008) proposed model according to their experience. Another objective of the interviews was to gather information about the implementation of IDP in Kazakhstan through project managers’ experience. To do that an interview consisting of five parts was formulated for the semi-structured interview. Each part consisted of several open-ended questions which allowed respondents to express their point of view without restraint. The research started with three semi-structured interviews in organisation ‘A’, during which general information about the situation in the field, the organisation and its processes, the major and most successful, in their perspective, projects undertaken by interviewees were asked. Even though, the researcher can deviate from the questions during the semi-structured interviews, a list of guide questions was prepared before hand. Questions were open-ended and aimed at collecting data for two reasons: identifying selection criteria of an international development project, selection of a project and questions for questionnaire. Questions for the latter reason were designed in accordance with the CSFs model by Do and Tun (2008) identified as relevant from the literature review.

First, an introduction of the research was given along with general questions to establish contact. For example, to support the smooth start of the interview, several questions regarding the interviewer and his/her experience in the international development field were designed.

Second, the questions regarding measurement or evaluation of success were asked. For example: “Does the organisation have any special tools to measure the success in organisation?” Several common pre-agreed measures for success evaluation from commercial projects, such as achievement of all goals and objectives, on budget, on time etc; are discussed in order to understand if there exist a difference in success perception between international development projects and the commercial projects.

Third, the respondents were asked to refer to several successful projects in this phase of interview and the interviewee was asked to share his/her opinions regarding the implementation phase of these projects. The questions regarding the factors that lead to the success of a project in respondent’s opinion were discussed.

Fourth, the questions built around each factor proposed by the Do and Tun’s model were asked in order to identify the applicability of their model in Kazakhstan as authors themselves suggest that CSFs differ from country to country, industry from industry and the above literature review supports it.

All the questions were formulated as open-ended and were tested on fellow students to ensure full understanding and friendliness of the question design. After that, the additional consultation was made with the employee at the researched company ‘A’.

Due to budgetary and geographical constraints the interviews were conducted using Skype video-call, with eight managers in Kazakhstan. All interviewees have been provided with general information regarding the research topic and information about confidentiality and ethics by email before the interview.
Each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes which proved to be a comfortable time in which to collect answers for the main questions. In order to ensure minimum data loss and an opportunity for detailed analysis interviews were recorded on a digital carrier, with the permission of the respondent. Then, each interview was transcribed and analysed. All eight interviewees agreed that we could contact them again if required. The table below provides information regarding the interviewees and interview process, however due to ethical considerations the names of persons and company have been coded.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Role in discussed projects</th>
<th>Type of interview</th>
<th>Date of interview</th>
<th>Duration of interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘A’</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Project manager</td>
<td>Semi-structured</td>
<td>19.11.2009</td>
<td>35 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘A’</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Project manager</td>
<td>Semi-structured</td>
<td>21.11.2009</td>
<td>27 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘A’</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Finance manager</td>
<td>Semi-structured</td>
<td>27.11.2009</td>
<td>24 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘A’</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>Semi-structured</td>
<td>03.12.2009</td>
<td>36 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘A’</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>Semi-structured</td>
<td>08.12.2009</td>
<td>25 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘A’</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Project manager</td>
<td>Semi-structured</td>
<td>11.12.2009</td>
<td>42 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘A’</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>Semi-structured</td>
<td>12.12.2009</td>
<td>33 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘A’</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Project manager</td>
<td>Semi-structured</td>
<td>15.12.2009</td>
<td>45 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Interview process

3.5.2 Survey 2

To generate a better picture, with enhanced data, an additional survey technique was applied to an organization implementing IDPs. To satisfy this purpose the project subject to research study was selected based on criteria demonstrated in table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selection criteria</th>
<th>Project Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project had all the features of an international development project</td>
<td>Project was financed by a multilateral organisation and was aimed for development purposes, project was planned in accordance with the national strategy and was designed by a team separate from the implementation phase project team, project has had all the IDP stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project has been assigned an implementation team with clear responsibilities of each member</td>
<td>Project team has been assigned specifically for this project as well as roles and responsibilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project has been already implemented in an organisation</td>
<td>The project took place from 2004 -2007 years and has been properly terminated and reports were submitted to the donor organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project has had more than one stakeholder</td>
<td>Employees outside of project team as well as several external companies have been consulted during the implementation phase. Many employees and stakeholders of the company have been affected by the project</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Project selection criteria and justifications for selected project
Such project was exercised in an educational field in an organisation under a coded name organization ‘B’.

- **Organization ‘B’**

The project took place in a local company based in Almaty, Kazakhstan. Because of ethical reasons the company name will be referred as organization ‘B’ in this research. The mission of organization ‘B’ is to become a new generation educational service provider responsible for the development of the next generation of engineers, managers and executives, who would have the necessary skills to meet the needs of the various industries evolving within Kazakhstan and in the Central Asian region.

Organization ‘B’ aims to bring western-style education systems to Kazakhstan. The company is relatively young, only 8 years of existence and it was only 3 years old when the project implementation started. Today it is established itself as one of the best and most expensive education providers in Kazakhstan.

Organisation ‘B’ operates in a turbulent environment, since Kazakhstan’s education system is undergoing constant change which affects the institutions providing higher education. Paraphrasing the classic Lewis Carroll, in such environment company ‘B’ needs to run as fast as it can, just to keep in the same place. Therefore, since 2003, organization ‘B’ has been implementing project management elements in its operations. There projects were implemented by experienced project management teams, specifically assigned to these kinds of projects. Every team member spoke fluent English and therefore the risk for miscommunication with donor and partner organisations was minimized.

- **About the project being subject to self-administered questionnaire**

The project has been won by tender managed by the donor organisation and was shared between three other organisations which received the same grant for the same type of project. The project was designed by the donor organisation, without any input from the implementation team. This situation is common in international development projects, where the nation’s goals are taken into consideration rather than the company’s goals.

The implementation phase of the project took three years from 2004 till 2007, and the goals were the following:

- **Development of innovative business education curricula in accordance with the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS);**
- **Facilitation of quality assurance policies and procedures;**
- **Development of academic staff.**

According to the interviewee 1, who suggested the project, it was deemed to be a successful endeavour by the both organization ‘B’ and donor organisation.

The organization ‘B’ however was reluctant to give interviews and wished to complete a questionnaire instead.
The design process for questions for a questionnaire differs from that for semi-structured interviews Saunders et al. (2007). As discussed earlier, the self-administered online questionnaire has been selected as an appropriate methodology.

The goal of a questionnaire is more precise than of semi-structured interview, with the questionnaire researchers were interested in a specific project’s implementation phase, and the questions are more focused on the main goal of identifying CSFs of implementation phase of an IDP and testing whether the Do and Tun’s (2008) model is applicable in Kazakhstan. Moreover, the project in organization ‘B’ provided the opportunity to capture the point of view of both direct team members and people who are external to the team, such as consultants or other stakeholders in a shorter time using questionnaires rather semi-structured interview. Questionnaires also remove the bias of interviewer and provide clearer results due to ensured anonymity (deVaus, 2002). Admittely, there is a threat of intrinsic bias contributed by those who constructed the questions for the questionnaire. However, the researchers addressed this potential problem through use of pilot testing of the questionnaire by an expert, an experienced researcher, who has been supervising researchers throughout their study.

The process of designing questions for the questionnaire was as follows (see Appendix 5 for the questionnaire design). First, the main questions were identified and a decision to combined use of both open and closed end type of questions was made. Then additional information was gathered from the project documents, literature and previous semi-structured interviews with respondents from organisation A. In order to reduce the strain on the respondents, multiple-choice questions were inserted where possible. For example, the main stakeholders groups involved in implementation phase of the project were identified and questions were formulated the way for all of them to be able to understand and provide insight.

Second, decision to use a seven point Likert-type scale instead of a five point scale was made, ensuring better spread of results and being more sensitive to the extent of the theme being investigated. For closed questions, such as “In your opinion did all members of the project team fully understand the goals and objectives of the project when the implementation period started?” the check box type multiple answers were presented, such as Yes or No check boxes. For questions regarding the applicability of Do and Tun (2008) model seven point Likert scale questions were designed. Likert scale questions enable respondents to indicate how strongly she/he agrees or disagrees with a statement (stretching from e.g. 1: don’t agree at all to 7: strongly agree) completely. Specifically, a 7 point Likert scale, as opposed to widely used 5-point scale, provides better spread of results Saunders et al. (2007) (Appendix 4).

Third, due to several constraints including time, budget and geographic location the questionnaire was posted online and a link to the questionnaire was sent by email, where all the ethical issues were presented as well. The online questionnaire provides an easier way to fill out the questionnaire for respondents as well as for researchers for several reasons. An online survey software SurveyMonkey was used since it provides the opportunity to control the design of the questionnaire, choose among several collection methods and reports in-real time about the survey. An email with
the invitation to complete the questionnaire is sent to the sample at the same time. After the respondent followed the link to the questionnaire and completed it, the online survey software automatically saves it and updates the real-time status of the survey. This is done until either all the respondents complete the questionnaire or the survey is closed. After the closure of the survey the software will provide the summary of the results as well as portable document format (PDF) version of each questionnaire.

Finally, pilot testing, which was a small-scale study being conducted to test a questionnaire (or interview checklist) in order to minimise the possibility of respondents having problems in answering the questions Saunders et al. (2007), was conducted on small group of people to ensure before it was sent out to the respondents.

### 3.6 Sampling

The quantitative studies generally involve the probability sampling, that is randomly selection of the research participants, in order to yield statistical generalisations. On the other hand, sampling with qualitative approach does not aim at yielding data that can be generalized but rather it yields the data that can be transferred, which is called as the non-probability sampling.

Then, the sampling process for the data collection techniques of this study, which has been made according to researchers’ access to relevant data, can not be said to be probabilistic but rather non-probabilistic sampling. Thus, such a sample can not be representative of the whole population being studied, and therefore it is impossible to use its findings for generating valid inferences about a population as a whole. (Bryman and Bell, 2007, p. 197).

Non-probability sampling can take one of the following forms:

- **Convenience sampling**, involves selection of units which researcher by some reason finds convenient. In other words, it is related with the question of accessibility. (Bryman and Bell 2007, p.197)
- **Snowball sampling**, in which the researcher establishes initial contact with people that are relevant to the research topic and then he/she develops contacts with others based on these initial contacts. This sampling is a form of convenience sampling. (Bryman and Bell 2007, p. 200)
- **Judgement sampling**, in which the researcher attempts to develop a sample that is representative of the population (Bryman and Bell 2007, p. 200)
- **Quota sampling**, in which the researcher ensures that certain subgroups of units are represented in equal proportions within the population as a whole, such as for example small firms, intermediate firms and large firms (Bryman and Bell 2007, p. 201)

Convenience sampling, together with a form of snowball sampling:

The sampling for this study can be defined as follows: The researchers established their contacts with research participants through their acquaintances in two of IDP implementing organizations in Kazakhstan, setting guidelines for the kinds of participants.
required for the sample. Once the respondents accepted the request to participate to this study and the way they prefer to participate, the design of the research was finalized.

### 3.7 Reliability and Validity

For assessing credibility of research findings, fulfilling the reliability and validity criteria for research design are fundamental.

‘Reliability’ is the degree to which the data collection method or methods will produce consistent findings. In other words, it is concerned whether similar observations or conclusions would be made by other researchers or whether the way that raw data is interpreted is viable Saunders et al. (2007). It can be assessed by answering the following three questions (Easterby-Smith et al., 2002, p.53):

- Will the measure yield the same results on other occasions?
- Will similar observations be reached by other observers?
- Is there transparency in how sense was made from the raw data?

Furthermore, the literature outlines four threats to reliability (Robson, 2002, page 58):

- **subject or participant error** occurs due to the possibility of respondents giving different answers at different time points of the research process.
- **subject or participant bias** occurs when the interviewee tends to say what he/she is expected to say.
- **observer error** occurs due to the potential of eliciting answers different from other observer(s).
- **observer bias**, on the other hand, occurs due to the potential of interpreting answers different from other observer(s).

On the other hand, ‘validity’ is the extent to which data collection methods accurately measure what they were intended to measure. Another way of describing validity is: “... the extent to which research findings are really about what they claim to be about” (Saunders et al., 2007, page 20).

Threats to validity as defined by Robson (2002, page 52) are:

- **history** occurs if time of the research is just after or before events that may affect the answers of respondents.
- **testing** occurs if respondents believe that the results of the research may disadvantage them in some way, then they respond to answers accordingly.
- **instrumentation** occurs if measurement scales, devices are changed during the research.
- **mortality** occurs if participants drop out of research studies.
- **maturation** occurs due to effect(s) of external event(s) taking place during the research.
- **ambiguity about causal direction** occurs when the researcher is not clear about the causal relationship between the research subjects.
Above outlined reliability and validity criteria are the common criteria that are needed to be fulfilled by every research study. Nevertheless, there are more specific reliability and validity criteria for semi-structured interviews and self-administered questionnaires, which are related to the data collection methods of this study and thus require high attention.

3.7.1 Reliability and Validity of Semi-structured Interviews

The lack of standardisation is the most challenging characteristics of semi-structured interviews, which may threaten its reliability. Reliability, in relation to qualitative research, deals with whether similar results would be yielded by different researchers (Easterby-Smith et al., 2002). Nevertheless, there are also some bias issues that threaten the reliability of semi-structured interviews. First of all, the interviewer bias, which may occur as a result of the comments, or non-verbal behaviour by the interviewer, may affect the responses by interviewees. Interviewee bias, is also another type of bias that may be caused due to the perceptions about the interviewer. Thus, the interviewees may tend not to reveal and/or discuss the research subject completely, and thus providing a partial picture of the real situation. Also the time consuming nature of semi-structured interviews may create a reluctance to respond to questions and discuss the research theme comprehensively by the respondent. Also, validity of a semi-structured interview refers to the extent to which the researcher extracts knowledge and experience from participants Saunders et al. (2007).

However, to ensure reliability of the non-standardised research methods, such as the semi-structured interview, is not straightforward since these methods do not necessarily intend to be repeatable and they present reality of the time they are being conducted. Nevertheless, as suggested by Marshall and Rossman (1999), throughout this study researchers kept making and retaining notes relating to the research design, the reasons for the chosen research strategy and methods, as well as, data generated to overcome these problems. These records can enable other researchers to understand the research process, as well as, reuse the data generated for this study and thus ensure reliability to some extent.

To overcome bias and thus promote reliability and validity during the semi structured interviews of this study the following measures, suggested by Saunders et al. (2007, page 23), have been exercised:

- intensive preparation and readiness for the interview (e.g. researching the participating organizations) had been exercised.
- relevant information about the research to interviewees before interviews was supplied.
- phrasing of questions was clear and free of any confusion.
- comments and non-verbal behaviours during the interview were avoided by the interviewer.
- attentive listening skills were demonstrated by interviewer
- explanations provided by the interviewees were summarized and outspoken to interviewee
- data provided by interviewees had been recorded by a tape recorder
3.7.2 Reliability and Validity of Self-administered Questionnaires

For assessing the credibility of the questionnaires conducted for this study, researchers conducted a pilot testing before the delivery of questionnaires to respondents. Pilot testing conducted by an experienced researcher enabled researchers to refine the questionnaire and overcome any disputable, miscoded and/or incorrect question before the real data collection process commenced. Comments on representativeness and suitability of questions, as well as, the structure of questionnaire by the pilot test respondent enabled researchers to establish the content validity of the questionnaire Saunders et al. (2007).

The reliability of a questionnaire is related to the consistency of responses to questions posed by the researcher. The three approaches for assessing reliability are: test and re-test, which is conducted by correlating data collected through the same questionnaire and under the nearest equivalent conditions, internal consistency, in which the responses in each questionnaire is correlated with those in other questionnaire and the alternative form, which involves comparing responses to alternative forms of the same question(s). With regard to this study, the consistency of responses to questions posed by the researcher both in questionnaire evidences the its reliability.

3.8 Ethics of Research Design

Research ethics, as defined by Saunders et al. (2003, p.129), refer to the ‘appropriateness of your behaviour in relation to the rights of those who become the subject of your work or are affected by the work.’

Therefore, any research design should not cause to embarrassment or any other material disadvantage of the research population. Additionally, any research design needs to consider the extent to which the researcher should collect data from a research population that is unaware of the fact that they are the subject of research and not being consented Saunders et al. (2007).

The following the measures have been exercised to ensure the ethics of research design:

- Consent of all participants has been obtained
- Rights to privacy at all stages of research design have been respected
- Data gained from one participant was strictly prevented from being revealed during another interview
- Objectivity during the stages of analysing and reporting was maintained by the researchers through the conduct of analysis and reporting separately by each researcher.
- Assurance was promised to participating organisations about confidentiality of the data obtained, and the organizational anonymity has been maintained.
SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 3

The third chapter aimed to provide readers both with the chosen research methodology and the sampling procedure of this study. Then, this study adopts;

a. **subjectivism** as its ontology and **interpretivism** as its epistemology, which constitute the **philosophy** of the research,

b. **inductive approach** as its **research approach**,

c. **two different survey techniques** as its **research strategy**, to gather both **qualitative** and **quantitative** data, the **mixed type data**, from two different organizations in Kazakhstan,

d. **cross sectional** as its **time horizon**,

e. **semi-structured interviews, self-administered questionnaires** as its **data collection methods**.

f. **convenience sampling** together with a form of **snowball sampling** since researchers established their contacts with research participants through their acquaintances in two of IDP implementing organizations in Kazakhstan. Then, the respondents accepted and declared their preferred way of participation to this research study

g. The organization ‘A’ agreed to particiate only in semi-structure interviews, whereas, the organization ‘B’ accepted to respond to questionnaires only. This, nevertheless, limited the design of the research study to be as two different survey techniques conducted in these two different organizations.

h. This access to data limitation detracted from the analysis of findings as well. As an extensive statistical analysis based on the comparing and comparison of results from these two organizations could not be realized. The findings from interviews of the organization ‘A’, which are mainly qualitative in nature, and questionnaires of the organization ‘B’, that are quantititative mostly, did not lend themselves for exploration as a whole on statistical grounds. Rather just the data generated from questionnaires was analysed based on descriptive statistics.
2. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

From the previous chapter it is evident that researchers have surveyed two organisation ‘A’ and ‘B’. In former organisation semi-structured interviews were conducted. In latter organisation online questionnaires were filled.

As mentioned before the different data collection methods were used due to constraints and not the will of researchers. Therefore the aim of the research is to build a picture regarding the implementation of IDP in Kazakhstan and try to identify a set of CSFs applicable for Kazakhstan as well as testing the applicability of the six CSFs provided for implementation phase of the international development project by Do and Tun (2008). Hence, the organization of this section is as the following:

- Findings and discussion from Survey 1 – Organisation ‘A’
  - General findings and views on project success in the organisation ‘A’
  - Applicability of the set of CSFs for IDP proposed by Do and Tun
- Findings and discussion from Survey 2 – Organisation ‘B’
- Overall Findings, Discussion and Recommendations.

4.1 Findings and Discussion from Survey 1 – Organisation ‘A’

In this section only findings from semi-structured interviews are presented from a total of eight interviewees. As mentioned before, data collected from the semi-structured interviews was used for three reasons: 1) establishing the criteria and selecting a project to research in-depth, 2) to design questions for questionnaires and 3) test the applicability of the six CSFs provided for implementation phase of the international development project by Do and Tun. First two reasons have been explained in details in the above chapter. However, before discussion on findings regarding Do and Tun model, overview of situation in organisation ‘A’ is provided below.

4.1.1 General findings and views on project success in Organisation ‘A’

According to interviewee 1, 2 and 3 there is no set of CSFs developed for the organisation ‘A’, the selection or proposal of the projects is planned according to international and national strategy. For example, four out of seven projects referred to by interviewees 1, 2 and 3 were planned in accordance with UN’s Millennium Development Goals (MDG), the seven MDG are same for all developing countries (Appendix 3). Interviewees 1, 2 and 3 explained that there is a database of IDP accomplished in Kazakhstan. However the projects are inserted into the database when the money has been already awarded and the project is in progress or completed. This poses a problem as UN itself has a 16 department offices in Kazakhstan which addresses MDG widely and interviewees agree that duplication of projects often occurs in development projects in Kazakhstan. This creates obstacles for the development in the country.
Interviewees also agree that organisation ‘A’ does not have an official organisation-wide evaluation system for assessing projects success. There is also no specific typology for the projects in international development, therefore when asked about the success of the project from their experience, it was noticed that project managers attempt to provide their own categories of the different projects and what expectations there are for each category before telling why they see one project as more successful than other in each self-created category of project. This happened during interviews with almost every participant; however was most evident during interviews with participants 1, 2 and 3. Therefore the research provides an example based on two typologies proposed by interviewees while trying to explain the IDPs in Kazakhstan.

Interviewee 1 prefers to divide the projects into three categories:

- **Short projects** are up to one month in length for implementation phase. This type of project usually involves training provided by the organisation ‘A’ to governmental bodies, disaster area population or similar.

  ‘The shorter the project implementation phase the less one expects from it. Personally, I am surprised to tell you that I actually have a short project that was very successful in its implementation phase. But let me tell you that I think huge amount of the success of the project implementation was due to the fact that the project is repeated every year and therefore has a strong knowledge base of what could go wrong and how to avoid the risks. ... previous years were not that successful.’ (Interviewee 1)

- **Mid-length projects** are up to half-year for the implementation phase. These are often consultation or research based projects. One project from this category was seen as a highly successful project by the Interviewee 1.

  ‘To tell you the truth I deeply believe these are the most influential projects, since almost always include stakeholders, it is a team work with government, scientist or population. The implementation phase of such projects is the richest, you discover a lot and you see how the project impacts on society. I can probably say that you go to the field instead of sitting in the office’. (Interviewee 1)

- **Long projects** are any project, for which implementation field is longer than six months. These projects are often coordinated by the organisation rather than implemented.

  ‘The projects longer than six month usually implemented by some other organisation or we implement only few activities, actually every short or mid-length project are actually a part of a bigger picture, but I prefer to divide the projects in mind. I had worked on a project where we have provided numerous trainings in an attempt to help [government] built a better legislative base for more sustainable development of the country. You can think of this project as a four year long but I prefer to just think about each seminar as an interconnected project. The team would close each seminar and analyse the outcome and feedback to adjust the next seminar in line. Therefore, if I say a long project, every man in my team know we are not having a full control over the implementation phase, i.e. pass the project to another organisation. ... In this situation we just wait for periodic reports and if project budget allows have a rare field visits.’ (Interviewee 1)
Interviewee 2 and 3 divide projects according to their goals. According to these two interviewees there are projects with goals that are up-to-date (the society is ready or the issue is present and needs to be addressed) or as they both called them ‘real’ goals. Then they talked about ‘fictional’ goals, which happen to the projects that address either issues too big or when the factors for success are not clear in the project manager’s mind. Therefore, all three interviewees in the first round showed high interest in learning about how a specifically designed set of CSFs for their organisation might assist them in implementation of future projects. Interviewee 2 said:

‘I can already imagine how having a checklist of factors which are proved to be central for successful implementation of the projects can affect my strategy for implementation of the projects, it can really give a head start in solving forecasted problems before they occur.’ (Interviewee 2)

While interviewee 3 said:

‘I would definitely try to incorporate it [a set of CSFs] as a tool for the next project and if it works it could be a good tool to use before we establish proper evaluation system for project success.’ (Interviewee 3)

All three interviewees expressed the desire to be notified of the outcomes of this research and gave permission to contact them for further information if required.

4.1.2 Applicability of the set of CSFs for IDP proposed by Do and Tun

In this chapter findings from eight interviewees are presented and discussed in comparison with the CSFs for IDP implementation phase proposed by Do and Tun (2008). The CSFs proposed by Do and Tun (2008) are as follows:

- Adequate supports of stakeholders
- High commitment to project goals/objectives
- Competent project management team
- Adequate resources and support
- Compatible rules and procedures
- Effective consultations with all stakeholders.

As mentioned before, typical stakeholders for IDP are coordinators, task managers, supervisors, project team, steering committee, beneficiaries, and the population at large.

The following findings are based on context-sensitive interpretation of the questions built around each factor.

- Adequate supports of stakeholders

All eight interviewees described ‘support of stakeholders’ as ‘good to have’, however it was mentioned that most projects are not supported by stakeholders during the implementation phase. In order to have a support from the stakeholders, i.e. governmental offices, population, businesses etc, the project goals and objectives should be seen as a clear and address up-to-date issues in society.
Interviewee 3 said the following regarding the issue:

‘Not many projects get proper publicity, sometimes I don’t even know what the other department is working on.’ (Interviewee 3).

Interviewees 1, 4, and 8 said that without proper information management it is difficult to get attention of stakeholders, however ‘the budget does not cover such expenses’. Interviewee 8 adds that ‘when you have tight schedule and tight budget, just closing the project as fast as possible becomes your personal goal’. This implies that better information management is desirable in IDP in Kazakhstan. However IDPs often have budgetary and schedule constraints which create obstacles for proper awareness campaigns. Such issues are often stemming from inadequate planning, for example if environmental changes were not taken into consideration. One way to approach such problems can be by outsourcing some of the project activities to partner organisations. Outsourcing some of the initial activities can reduce work load, which will allow project manager and team to re-estimate the tactics for further activities and address stakeholders for support.

The majority of interviewees (six out of eight) referred to one particular project implemented in partnership with governmental office and Astana city schools that has received strong support of stakeholders. The project was a competition among Slavic youth on knowledge of Kazakh language among schools in Astana, Kazakhstan. Two stakeholders, of which one is a media agency that was covering the issue for news proposed that 5 finalists receive paid internships during summer break. The second, an oil and gas company, has approached the manager with an offer to increase the first prize. These were unexpected positive events that happened during the implementation (after the first competition day). Interviewee 5 said that attracting stakeholder support starts with political and legal issues ‘Language policy has great influence on the political situation and on a course of socio-economic transformations in the country, which attracts media interest, as well as, population support.

Today Kazakhstan has an established legislative framework for development projects which allows government to receive assistance in line with the national goals (Millennium Development Goals Report for Kazakhstan, 2002). However, according to interviewee 1 and 3, projects regarding ecology/environment still bump into some legislative obstacles, for example not always clear regulatory requirements. For example, interviewee 1 added, referring to a project near disaster area for which they have had delay with permission from government: ‘you don’t start [the project activities] before [you] get the permission’. This finding is consistent with UN’s 2nd Environmental Performance Review for Kazakhstan (2008), which states that the environmental legislation still needs further improvement in harmonization with relevant European Union Directives. (Environmental Performance Review of Kazakhstan II, 2008, page 37). Therefore, projects concerning environmental/ecological issues should be planned with consideration of current legislation or consultation with government, consultants or local project manager/team.

Interviewee 6 said that ‘having support from external stakeholders gives a project team motivation and enthusiasm’. However, interviewee 3 is more cautious stating that ‘attracting stakeholders is very delicate issue as most projects touch sensitive issues and it is risky to advertise heavily as you can gain as support so the opposition from external stakeholders’.
• **High commitment to project goals/objectives**

Results on this question varied according to the project, for the following reasons: Interviewee 1 stated that the goals and objectives of the project play a role. Hard-types of projects have clearer goals and objectives compared with soft projects; therefore the team has more commitment to hard projects. This can be explained as the outcome and importance of hard projects are easy to imagine being more tangible. In addition, tactics and activities are straightforward and ‘it is easier to make people commit to building a business incubator which will provide people in the region with new jobs rather than causes such as anti-corruption’ (Interviewee 3).

Interviewee 2 has mentioned that soft project goals usually result in debates about the necessity of such projects, the readiness of society and the correctness of the tactics. One more reason is that objectives and tactics of soft-projects are not very clear. Therefore disagreement among project team and stakeholders on how to best achieve occurs frequently. Such situations often leads to a decrease of commitment to goals and overall motivation of the project team, however out of a total eleven projects discussed by interviewees as successful all were soft-type of projects.

Variance in answers has put this factor to the centre in questionnaire questions and is discussed in more details in section 4.2.1 C.

• **Competent project management team**

Majority of the interviewees (five out of eight) have mentioned that it is ‘highly desirable’; however this is not always a case due to following reasons. First, interviewees 1, 2, 3 and 6 have discussed a long project in which the implementation phase was delayed for over six months and the original team was transferred to other projects. Thus when the delayed implementation phase finally began a new team was urgently formed which resulted in inclusion of more volunteers and interns than planned. The project has been perceived as successful in achieving all set objectives by all four interviewees.

Second, interviewee 5 said that the organisation ‘A’ has a functional structure and a vertical hierarchy. So, experienced managers have more line duties and can allocate less time than specialists [less experienced managers]. All interviewees have mentioned that line duties should be taken in consideration when selecting a team, interviewee 4 adds that on field projects having a proportion of ‘one competent manager to five volunteers or interns’ is enough to provide proper guidance towards reaching the project objectives.

Interestingly, all interviewees have mentioned that the competency of the project manager/leader is critical to the success of the project implementation phase, especially for soft-types of projects where sensitive issues are concerned.

• **Adequate resources and support**

Scarce resources are a common threat to international development projects implemented by organisation ‘A’. All interviewees have mentioned that since the organisation has a functional structure and employee numbers are small, it is difficult
to allocate, motivate and focus people on the project activities during project implementation.

Interviewee 5 agrees that this factor is critical, stating that ‘allocating several projects at a time to a one team or project manager is the biggest mistake one can make in this field’. This view is supported by other interviewees as overloading employees often leads to delays and decrease in enthusiasm and motivation. Conflicts may arise between project and functional managers as well as among two project managers who compete for a team member’s time. Interviewee 5 added ‘it is a rare mistake in our organisation now; however the issue [of having less resources that required] is still present’.

Approaching external stakeholder for support and resources is not an easy task however it is viewed positively by the interviewees. All interviewees have agreed that having adequate resources and support is critical to success of the project.

- **Compatible rules and procedures**

This factor was unanimously agreed to be critical to the project success. International development projects often involve other organisations which have different procedures, rules and policies. This leads to excess bureaucratic work, complex reporting system and consequently to delays in project implementation. Interviewees stated that different rules and procedures, languages and legislative systems have affected as activities and schedules so the working environment during the implementation phase.

- **Effective consultations with all stakeholders**

This factor raised extensive discussion with each interviewee. Semi-structural interviewees all have mentioned that there are activities in the organisation that include extensive training and consultations with government and public stakeholders. The National Strategy, for instance, was developed in accordance with feedback and consultations provided by organisation ‘A’ among others. However, when describing the projects they have implemented, interviewees stated that there is little or no communication with stakeholders during implementation phase unless they are directly involved in project activities.

Interviewee 2 explained that during execution of the project it is more critical to get feedback or support from stakeholders when required rather than effective consultation. Interviewee 3 stated that it takes a long time to receive feedback especially from government, offices which make consultation less effective. However, it was noted that projects should be consulted with stakeholders during the planning phase as it is one of the steps to ensure sustainability of the project. Whereas during execution, extensive consultation can delay project activities or distract the team from performing outlined activities.
4.2 Findings and Discussions from Survey 2 – Organisation ‘B’

In this section the findings about an international development project which was implemented in organisation ‘B’ are presented and discussed. The aim of this survey was to collect detailed information regarding the implementation of the IDP from several viewpoints of internal stakeholders, i.e. from viewpoint of team members, project manager, consultants, volunteers, etc. The data collected method for organisation ‘B’ was questionnaires. In total 188 emails with explanation and link to online questionnaire were sent to organisation ‘B’. Out of which, 29 responses were received, however 2 responses were rated as being invalid with some missing values, thus 27 valid responses put to further analysis which makes almost %15 response rate. According to Comley (2000) response rates for virtual surveys range from 9% to 48%, therefore the response rate of 15% is within the boundaries set in the literature.

For consistency, the findings are arranged according to CSFs for IDP implementation phase proposed by Do and Tun (2008), that constitutes the foundation for questionnaire design as in the previous section.

![Figure 7. The flow of questionnaire findings and discussion](image)

4.2.1 Findings and Discussions from Questionnaires

A. Project Role and Relevant Experience

Out of 27 respondents, there were two project managers, one project coordinator, whereas, 19 project team members, which have at least one of the following responsibilities:

- Steering committee member
- Project manager assistant
- Responsible for finance
- Responsible for administrative stuff
• Responsible for monitoring and control of project work packages
• Responsible for communication and reporting

There are, nevertheless, two respondents that are consultants on academic issues, as well as, three more respondents, who were just beneficiaries, not involved in the implementation process rather witnessed to it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project role</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project team member</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project coordinator</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project manager</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beneficiary</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic consultant</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 6. Distribution of project roles by respondents*

Then, respondents of the questionnaire consist of various stakeholders, ranging from a project coordinator, project manager to beneficiaries. This provided an opportunity to assess Do and Tun’s (2008) CSFs for IDP implementation phase as they are perceived by different stakeholders within the Kazakhstan context.

Moreover, most of the respondents (% 70) at least once performed the similar roles in previous projects, whereas, for the %30 the role in this project was their first experience.

Whereas, to the question of whether they were involved from scratch till the end of the project implementation, more than half of the respondents (%55,5) noted that they have been active throughout the whole project implementation phase. On the other hand, %44,4 involved only in particular parts of the project implementation, namely in activities towards development and implementation of:

• appropriate quality assurance policies and procedures in accordance with European Quality Standards
• undergraduate education curricula in accordance with the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)
• academic stuff

Then, not each of these stakeholders possess in-depth experience in their project roles, as well as, not each of them involve in full implementation of the project. Only 2 respondents, namely the project manager and the team member that is responsible for
finance, have conducted their same project roles more than five times previously. Whereas, for nine of the respondents, the project roles, they were involved in, was their first experience. Moreover, respondents that involved in full implementation constitute only 55.5% of the whole respondents. These findings have the implication that the answers and information provided by those who are more experienced and involved in full implementation should have more inferences than those who are less experienced and took part in the project implementation only partially.

B. Adequate stakeholder support

The way that the project team is supported by stakeholders together with its extent is vital in determining success of implementation phase of an IDP (Do and Tun, 2008).

In the following, the output of ranks, as given by respondents to each stakeholder support form is provided. The scale ranges from 1 to 7, in which 1 stands for the case of no support at all and 7 for the extremely strong support and N/A - not applicable. It is essential to note that those who responded as N/A to this and in following questions are not taken into consideration while calculating the average response.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>Response average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regular meetings with the project team</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistance with extra resources</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistance with procedures</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT troubleshooting on behalf of the project team</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing access to technical expertise</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust/freedom in decision-making process</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7. Average rate on stakeholder support

Then, the following chart presents the average ranks of stakeholder support in a descending order from the strongest support to the weakest one. As it can be noticed from the chart below the majority of stakeholder support forms were evaluated on the average. Only some of them receive equal or similar ranks and therefore it seems complex to define differences among stakeholder supports provided to the project team and explain them. Therefore minimum and maximum values on a rank scale propose a more attractive basis for discussion.

Then, respondents of the questionnaire stated that the most consistent stakeholder support was in terms of access to technical expertise. Technical tasks, which are identified as one of 10 CSFs in Project Implementation Profile Model (PIP) by Pinto and Slevin (1987), have vital effect on success of project implementation phase. Then, obviously, providing the team with access to expertise when required for technical
tasks facilitates the implementation phase. In addition, the stakeholders were rated as being extremely eager to hold regular meetings with the project team in order to come up with solutions for problems being encountered by the project team during implementation phase, as well as, they provided the project team the trust and opportunity to take decisions for tactical issues of project implementation phase without subject to any authorization.

Figure 9. Average rate on stakeholder support

However, the stakeholder support in terms of extra resources and project procedures were inadequate. Particularly, hesitation of stakeholders to offer immediately the extra resources when needed by the project team has vital implications for the success of implementation phase (Youker, 1999). Although day-to-day tactical activities were not subject to any authorization, allocation of any extra resources was subject to justification and authorization from both management of local and donor organization. While bypassing of authorization for tactical activities enables to facilitate implementation process, the authorization for extra resources hinders this process severely; this may result in an overtime and over-budget situation.

Then, ‘providing access to extra resources when needed’ has fundamental importance for successful implementation phase of an IDP in Kazakhstan. As Youker (1999) asserts the absence of this stakeholder support, regardless of favourable conditions for other stakeholder support types mentioned above, may result in failure of implementation phase of IDP. Therefore, either this stakeholder support must be ensured or a contingency reservoir as the contingency plan must be allocated ahead for flow of the project implementation phase.

C. High commitment to project goals/objectives

Lack of commitment to project together with its goals and objectives is listed as one of the major obstacles to an IDP success in World Bank exposit facto evaluation reports (Youker, 1999). However, in order to meet commitments to project goals and objectives, the project goals and objectives must be understood by each and all of stakeholders before the implementation phase.

With regard to our study, almost two thirds (%74) of the respondents noted that each and every member of project team internalized the goals and objectives of the project when the implementation period started. However, the rest of respondents disagreed and they stated that day-to-day tactics, as well as, work packages were not clearly comprehended by each team member. Furthermore, even the ‘activity schedule’ and
the ‘time schedule’ were counted as issues that were not clear for every project team member. What even more interesting, is than this was that the respondents, who pointed out the need for more clarification of day-to-day tactics, work packages, activity schedule and time schedule, were responsible for project administration. This finding has the implication that project was rushed to be launched without providing sufficient knowledge and training, if applicable. Moreover, even those who possess the primary responsibility for day-to-day tactics, work packages, activity schedule and time schedule, -the ones responsible for project administration-, were having difficulties in comprehending their primary functions. However, Clarke (1999) proposes that establishment of clear project goals and objectives that can be internalized by every project stakeholder, as well as, decomposing the project into manageable size, the work package, are critical for project success. Therefore, more effort should be spent for this factor within the Kazakhstan context, as proposed by one of respondents the launch of an awareness campaign of the project for its stakeholders before the launch of the project itself can be helpful to gain commitment and support of all stakeholders. In addition, the time required for each team member to understand fully the goals and objectives was determined as being at least 2 weeks by almost all of the respondents (%96). Then in order to avoid wasting this amount of time during the project execution, an awareness campaign the project launch can be organized.

Nevertheless the communication of project goals and objectives does not involve stakeholders that are internal to project organization, but also those that are external to the project organization. Communication of project goals and objectives to all stakeholders is one of the widely cited project CSFs (Pinto and Slevin, 1987; Clarke 1999; Youker, 1999). Similarly, it is a success factor that is critical for IDPs as well (Diallo and Thuiller, 2005). However, in our study only %59 of respondents provided a positive response to the question of whether the goals and objectives of the project were clearly communicated to stakeholders (other than team members).

On the other hand, %50 of those who perceived communication of project goals and objectives to stakeholders as ineffective rated again ‘tactics and work packages’ as being presented inadequately to stakeholders. This outcome can be understood as the stakeholders other than project team members do not have to get involved in daily operational project activities. Therefore, they do not necessarily need to understand day-to-day operational tactics and work packages of project activity schedule. Nevertheless, the stakeholders should be communicated clearly about the short term goals and objectives, which were reported to be unclear by %36 of those that perceive goals and objective communication as ineffective.

Another interesting issue is that almost all of the respondents (%89) including those who noted that there was not an effective communication of project goals and objectives (%41) reported that each stakeholder fully understood how the project contributed to the overall goal (of the country, organisation etc). Only %11 stated that not every stakeholder fully understood why the project was important.

Interestingly, this %11 consists of respondents that are stakeholders external to the project organization, -external stakeholders- e.g. an academic consultant and two beneficiaries, and they noted the teaching staff, as the only group of project stakeholders, not having access to sufficient knowledge. In other words,
communication of goals and objectives to stakeholders that are external to project team was perceived to be effective by team members –internal stakeholders-, whereas, external stakeholder felt that they were not having access to adequate project information as other project stakeholders.

Then findings of this section imply that project had serious deficiencies in ‘communication management’, which is one of nine project management function, particularly, in communication of day to day project management tactics and project work packages to internal project stakeholders, as well as, in communication of short term goals and objectives to external project stakeholders.

D. Competent Project Management Team

Accomplishment of a project successfully can not be realized without a competent project team working coherently on conducting the project management functions, namely:

- Management of project scope
- Management of project schedule
- Management of budget
- Management of risk
- Management of quality
- Management of people and relationships
- Management of communications with all stakeholders

Then, to the question exploring the extent of how well the project management team performed the project management functions respondents rated as in the following. The table demonstrates the findings, in which scale ranges from 1 to 7, in which 1 stands for did not perform at all, whereas, 7 stands for performed perfectly and N/A - not applicable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Management of...</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>Response average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>scope (%0)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>schedule (%0)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>budget (%18.5)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quality (%11)</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>risk (%15)</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>people and (%)</td>
<td>(%0)</td>
<td>(%0)</td>
<td>(%0)</td>
<td>(%0)</td>
<td>(%0)</td>
<td>(%0)</td>
<td>(%0)</td>
<td>(%0)</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relationships (%0)</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>communication (%11)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8. Average rate for performance of project management functions

As perceived by respondents ‘Management of scope’, as well as, ‘management of quality’ and the ‘management of budget’ were being performed better in relation to
other project management functions as the following chart demonstrates. This implies the orthodoxy of the ‘Iron Triangle’ within the organization B.

![Average Rate on Project Management Functions](image)

**Figure 10. Average rate for performance of project management functions**

However, the organization ‘B’ had problems in meeting one of ‘Iron Triangle’ components, namely, ‘management of schedule’. The ‘management of schedule’ was evaluated as being poorly performed based on perceptions of the respondents. In relation to the findings being discussed above, the deficiency in comprehending fully tactics and particularly work packages resulted in continuous re-scheduling of project activities. And it is noted by the respondents with the following comments:

‘Many times activities were rescheduled, some activities were deleted and some were added in the middle of the project’

(Respondent 8)

Moreover, the poor communication of activity and time schedule to all stakeholders, which was discussed in the previous section, amplified the problems with ‘management of schedule’.

‘The project was rescheduled several times and the work environment was hectic.’ (Respondent 6)

‘The schedules were re-planned according to how much job needs to be done without taking into consideration the functional duties of team members which caused overload to those people.’ (Respondent 15)

Another interesting comment regarding this issue was as the following:

‘The project team has only one goal – to finish the project on time and report to donor organisation’s office. There was initial delay that caused many problems with scheduling and overloaded people, no actions were taken to invite more people or rearrange the roles. But similar activity was done to deliver sub-packages on time, where student were asked for help with designing website and publish news regarding the project. organisation ‘B’ should have allocated more resources however the project team stuck to the initial plan proposed by donor organisation’s and tried to catch up with other universities. Many vital activities were overlooked and in my opinion organisation ‘B’ lost many opportunities in establishing good relationships with the outside companies. Project team members also haven’t been satisfied while working on project and many tried to quit to other departments of the company’. (Respondent 7)
Moreover, as it has been discussed in the relevant literature review part previously, satisfying the ‘Iron triangle’ exclusively is not adequate for the project success nowadays. Therefore, in the following whether the organization ‘B’ puts the same effort on other project management functions is to be discussed.

However, the findings of the questionnaire reveal that organization ‘B’ focused mainly on satisfying the ‘Iron Triangle’. In addition to poor relationships and communication that were discussed above, ‘project risk management’ was another weakness of the project management team as perceived by respondents.

One of the respondents points out to this deficiency with the following comments:

‘When risk of not getting the license fast happened I personally have not notices any contingency actions being taken to solve the problem’.
(Respondent 5)

Then, this outcome implies that the project management team perceives the project success as meeting the ‘Iron triangle’ components solely. Therefore, as a result of this limited project success perception, the project team overlooked some of the project management functions, namely, ‘management of communication’, ‘management of schedule’ and ‘management of risk’ as those being identified and discussed so far.

E. Adequate resources and support

Next, is the question regarding the adequacy of the human resources devoted for the project. A slightly more than half of the respondents (%55.5) stated that the project was provided with the sufficient human capital, while, the remaining %44.5 disagreed to this statement. Rather, they stated that particularly there was scarcity of administrative staff. Admittedly, some of the respondents rated the current project team leadership as inadequate. In addition, the need for technical staff, especially the need for interpreters was outspoken several times as in the following;

‘Had to do excess, unplanned work such as translating every document or letter to Russian, English or Kazakh especially when communication with Steering Committee members, which was not paid nor time was allocated for translations in schedule. Therefore, every day team members had to take job to home without being compensated for it.’ (Respondent 5)

‘Help with translating documents – person or software’ (Respondent 22)

‘To assign specialist for translations and legal advice’ (Respondent 17)

Moreover, the question that probes if the budget allocated was adequate to deliver the project scope was answered as ‘Yes’ by almost %63 of the respondents. On the other hand, those who found the budget allocated as insufficient (%37), pointed out to the extra budget need for ‘team building activities’, ‘day off activities’, ‘administrative assistance’, as well as, ‘technical assistance.

Then, based on the above outlined findings, obviously the resources, both intellectual and financial, allocated for the project were not adequate. There was a need for more administrative, as well as, technical staff throughout the implementation phase. Therefore, in accordance to this, respondents noted that they would have appreciated
extra budget allocated for ‘team building activities’, ‘day off activities’, ‘administrative assistance’, as well as, ‘technical assistance’.

Nevertheless, there are other types of senior management support that would have been appreciated by respondents as well. Responses provided to the question of the extra support that they would have liked to have had from senior management or senior executives associated with the project can be grouped into the following:

- Providing training and field visit for teaching staff
  ‘Teaching staff members involved in project needed less lessons and a training or field visit’ (Respondent 9)
  ‘Field visit to universities that apply the ECTS system for more expertise and consultations’ (Respondent 11)
  ‘Younger members should have flown to UK university trainings instead of professional project managers who already clearly understand the picture’ (Respondent 5)
  ‘Trainings or field visits to UK university to fully understand credit system and educational quality’ (Respondent 13)

- Assignment of a project leader
  ‘Allocating 1 person to report to and who is only concerned with 1 project – a project leader’. (Respondent 8)
  ‘One person to report to’ (Respondent 6)

- Assignment of a translator
  ‘To assign specialist for translations and legal advice’. (Respondent 8)
  ‘With translation of documents’ (Respondent 18)

- Establishment of fair compensation and reward system
  ‘Payment for extra curricular hours’ (Respondent 3)
  ‘Proper reward for technical assistance provided on volunteer base but at least a credit for internship or further employment would be desirable’ (Respondent 23)

F. Compatible rules and procedures

The table below demonstrates the arithmetical average of difficulty rates provided for challenges arising from different characteristic and backgrounds of donor organizations, such as the European Commission and the UN and the participating organization as perceived by respondents. (1 - very difficult, 7 - perfectly easy and N/A - not applicable).
To synchronise conflicts stemming from…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>Response average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Different languages</td>
<td>3 (11%)</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>2 (7%)</td>
<td>4 (15%)</td>
<td>8 (30%)</td>
<td>4 (15%)</td>
<td>5 (18.5%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different legal infrastructures</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>5 (18.5%)</td>
<td>5 (18.5%)</td>
<td>5 (18.5%)</td>
<td>6 (22%)</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>5 (18.5%)</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different cultural backgrounds</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>4 (15%)</td>
<td>22 (81%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incompetent staff</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>3 (11%)</td>
<td>7 (26%)</td>
<td>16 (60%)</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate technical expertise</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>3 (11%)</td>
<td>23 (85%)</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate administration</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>7 (26%)</td>
<td>9 (33%)</td>
<td>9 (33%)</td>
<td>2 (7%)</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9. Average rate for management challenges

Respondents evaluated ‘inadequate technical expertise’ and ‘different cultural backgrounds’ as the easiest challenges to overcome in relation to other challenges outlined. As previously mentioned, respondents once more pointed out the impairment between the technical requirements and the technical resources provided for the project implementation. However, respondents were not sceptical in coping with this challenge as they noted that they can overcome this through for example outsourcing of the expertise needed. Similarly, different cultural backgrounds between the donor and national organization was not rated as posing a challenge as the implementation phase was conducted mainly by the national organization, whereas, the donor organization was not involved directly in the implementation phase.

However, ‘different languages’ was rated as being one of the most difficult challenges. The scarcity of English speaking project team members posed obstacles of immediate translation of project documents from English to Russian and vice versa, as well as, effective communication. Also, this scarcity ended up in complaints of not compensated overwork for translation issues by English speaking members. Therefore, the challenge of ‘different languages’ should be overcome ahead of the project either through recruitment of adequate number of English speaking team members or through outsourcing staff for translation issues.

Moreover, ‘incompetent staff’ was perceived another troublesome challenge. Kazakhstan as a developing country in transition still lacks adequate level of competent staff. Therefore, to overcome this challenge the donor organization in cooperation with the local one must provide training and education programmes to provide the project with the competent staff.
The ‘legal infrastructures’ was counted as being the most difficult challenge to overcome. Although Kazakhstan is in the process of establishing a legal infrastructure that is similar to those in the donor organization countries, in this respect Kazakhstan remains a country in transition. Therefore, any possible conflict due to a legal infrastructure may end be difficult to address in the short term.

G. Effective consultation with all stakeholders

The table below presents average of effectiveness rate for stakeholder consultations, in which 1 stands for being not effective at all, whereas, 7 represents being highly effective and N/A, being not applicable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholders</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>Average of responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Donor organization</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National government</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other participating universities</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
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<td>Steering</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project coordinator</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Administrative staff</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching staff</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10. Average rate for stakeholder consultation effectiveness

As it is demonstrated below, respondents evaluate that consultation with the ‘project coordinator’ and the ‘project team’ respectively as the most effective ones. On the other hand, consultations with the ‘national government bodies’ and ‘population at large’ were rated as being the least effective in relation to consultations with other
stakeholders outlined below. This finding is another sign of, above discussed, inefficient communication and integration of all project stakeholders, both internal and external ones, in organization ‘B’. Another interesting issue is regarding those who answered N/A for this question. As the percentage of those who answered N/A for stakeholder consultation is high, then justification for such a high rate is demanded. Most probably respondents had more tendencies to evaluate some stakeholder consultation as irrelevant at this phase than to evaluate it as and ineffective consultation.

Furthermore, those that evaluated consultations with stakeholders far from being effective (ranked below 5), provided the following main reasons for less than highly effective consultation:

- Reasons for not very effective consultation process with other participating universities:
  ‘For the trainings regarding project implementation they asked for younger and less experienced team members however the professional and indirectly connected academic staff has been sent, which caused conflicts that continued on later phases of implementation among team members, steering committee, teaching and administrative staff’. (Respondent 12)

- Reasons for not very effective consultation process with national government:
  ‘It wasn’t my primary activity to communicate with NG however due to failure in communication project was delayed’ (Respondent 11)
  ‘A lot of bureaucratic barriers’ (Respondent 10)
  ‘Delayed issuing of license for over 5 month’ (Respondent 21)
  ‘Bureaucracy, long waiting period for an answer’ (Respondent 26)

- Reasons for not very effective consultation process with steering committee:
  ‘Took long time to get response and included excess work’ (Respondent 6)
  ‘It is possible to say that there was one way communication from our side with no answer from their. Delayed the project to 5-6 month’ (Respondent 5)
‘Usually took 2-3 days to get an answer from every member in the committee, sometimes more if someone was travelling’ (Respondent 2)

- One reason given for not very effective consultation process with teaching staff was:
  ‘Activities were planned without consultations on schedule of teaching staff or capabilities of teaching staff’ (Respondent 25)

### 4.3 Overall Findings, Discussions and Recommendations

This section discusses findings from both organisations ‘A’ and ‘B’; therefore, it covers all the data collection methods used by researchers.

According to the above illustrated findings and discussion the researchers noticed that traditional project management methods are applied and none of the interviewees or respondents stated that failure or success of the project was related to methods, technology or cadre in organisation. However, more complex reporting structure distinctive to IDPs, causes bureaucratic barriers and is most cited reason for delays. This is especially noticeable in Organisation ‘B’, where the national government has caused a 5 month delay to the project.

Additionally, both interviewees and respondents have mentioned several problems with team spirit and stakeholder support due to following reasons:

First, there is no overall database for the planned, on-going and completed projects in organisation ‘A’. Project managers upload their projects to shared database under the UN office, however the projects are uploaded (if at all) after the implementation work has been started or completed. Thus, interviewees mention the overlap in projects as being a problem. We therefore suggest that the organisation needs to address these problems with information stickiness by facilitating information sharing among employees. One way could be to create a database of internal projects at all levels: planned, in implementation and closed. The other is establishing project success evaluation criteria and reward/recognition system for implemented projects. No team building activities, two or more projects for a project manager/team member at the same time, delays, poor planning etc, lead to decrease in motivation and loss of enthusiasm of team members. This issue was mentioned several times during interviews, especially for projects of soft type. Therefore, the reward/recognition could be a useful tool to keep the team motivated. Moreover, establishment of such system may assist discussion and word-of-mouth promotion of planned, on-going and completed projects inside organisation. Therefore, it could raise awareness and become a first step to knowledge sharing inside organisation ‘A’.

Second, team members may work on two or more projects simultaneously. This situation was described by interviewees as the ‘biggest mistake’, however the issue appears to be still apparent in the projects, especially in projects implemented together with another organisations. Furthermore, it was mentioned that this may cause conflict, decrease in motivation and distraction from project activities. We propose to prioritize the projects in each department and to create regular meetings with all team members to discuss the progress of project activities. Regular meetings can create the
illusion of a flatter structure as well as assist the team members to focus on project activities and to solve problems as they arise. Regular meetings were implemented in organisation ‘B’ and were highly appreciated (ranked 6.67 out of total 7) by questionnaire respondents and were seen as a strong support from stakeholders, therefore raising motivation among team members.

Third, the organisation constantly communicates with other donor organisations, governmental offices and NGO’s. Several projects discussed by interviewees included tight cooperation with those stakeholders. However, further questions showed that project managers rarely invite past project partners to join the new projects and are not interested in building relationships with past partners in project implementation Teams. Findings from questionnaires are also consistent with this recommendation, as Respondent 7 from organisation ‘B’ has noted that due to urgency and overload the organisation has lost valuable opportunity to establish relationships with and learn from other participants. Interviewee 2 stated that ‘[working with other organisations] creates more bureaucracy... we had problems with simple wire-transferring of money’. However, Respondents 1, 2 and 3 noticed that it is common for two or more organisations to implement similar projects creating duplicity. Therefore, we recommend establishing a partnership of donor organisations and organisations often involved in international development projects to share knowledge about the projects and lessons learned. Projects addressing the same issues can be grouped into categories to provide broader view. This will facilitate more knowledge sharing and joint projects and therefore decrease the risks by sharing it with partner organisation.

Finally, four factors were identified by the researchers as critical to implementation of international development projects in Kazakhstan. These factors were not included in the model proposed by Do and Tun (2008). We strongly recommend taking those four factors into consideration when working with international development projects in Kazakhstan. The four new factors are briefly discussed below and the adjusted model is proposed at the end of this section.

- Minimum difficulties in transition from planning to implementation phase

From the data we noticed that transition from planning to implementation is often problematic even in the projects that were deemed as successful by interviewees and respondents. For example: several respondents mentioned delays in receiving legal documents from the governmental offices which caused the need to crush scheduled activities together and lead to overloading and decrease in motivation.

The reasons for such situations lie in the nature of ID projects. First, interviewees 1 and 3 explained that they were not involved in the planning phase of most of the projects they implemented. Planning was either done by another team, department or organisation. In these projects it is apparent that the number of ‘clients’ to who the project manager has to report is substantially more than traditional projects which usually have two clients: top management of the company and the sponsor of the project. This situation provides additional bureaucratic obstacles and causes delays and reduces the decision making power of the project manager during the implementation phase. Interviewee 3 adds that ‘[in projects with many stakeholders] delays in starting the project can take long period of time... I had to wait for money to
be cleared up for half a year’. Moreover, due to limited decision making power and urgency stemming from already delayed projects, motivation declines and often team members are switched to other projects.

Second, interviewees 3, 5, and 6 mentioned that when long delays occur, the need to re-check the tactics for project implementation increases as the project environment is often turbulent. This is consistent with the results from questionnaires where respondent 7 for example, informs that ‘no actions were taken to invite more people or rearrange roles’ when the delay resulted in problems with schedules and workloads. Therefore ‘lost many opportunities in establishing good relationships with outside companies’ and ‘team members also haven’t been satisfied while working on projects’ (Respondent 7). Furthermore, re-checking of proposed tactics is also important when the project is planned by another team, department or organisation. This should be done in the beginning of implementation phase. However, if the project has other problems in the beginning of implementation phase, priority is more likely to be given to solving immediate problems rather than checking previous decisions.

Third, implementation is most the expensive stage both in IDP and traditional projects. Thus, if the project has problems in relations to transfer from planning to execution then the possibility that it will be terminated before start-up increases. Therefore, it is important to have easy and planned transfer form planning phase to implementation phase in IDP in Kazakhstan.

- Competence of stakeholders or recipients

International development projects aim to promote a better life-style for end users. These projects address political, socio-cultural and psychological issues among others. Such issues can affect the outcome of the project either positively or negatively. Interviewee 6 said that ‘measuring success of implementation phase of IDPs is not easy, most projects that I consider as failure have been properly implemented and reports show that there are many external factors affecting IDP overall success’. When analysing the problems presented as a failure external factor, we identified that competence or knowledge on the part of stakeholders about the importance of the issue that project addresses, and overall readiness of society to address the problem affects the project outcome.

Interviewee 3 explained about a project aimed at empowering women and improving equality, which has been assessed as unsuccessful, even though activities were executed on time and on budget. The project was a one week workshop and a sample was selected randomly by sending e-mails and brochures to business companies, NGO’s and governmental offices in the Caspian region. Gender equality issues are addressed in National Strategy, MDG’s and organisation’s goals. However, the project topic was rejected and the women invited showed a low degree of acceptance towards ideas of equality, equal opportunities and women’s empowerment. According to interviewee 3 projects for rural areas should not be based on progress in urban areas ‘there was lack of knowledge of the topic, participants were aggressive and half of the participants have left after the first workshop’, however the same workshop in the capital city Astana has been a deemed as successful by interviewee 3. This
suggests that more consideration needs to be put into issues of transferability at the initiation and design phases, prior to implementation.

Interviewee 6 adds, that environmental or health and safety issues get better acceptance from stakeholders and it is easier to receive support for such projects.

‘We supported a research on mutation of genes of people living in Kurchatov [danger area, nuclear testing centre was there] and stumbled upon over 30 families living near the contaminated [radioactive] area, the research outcome was presented to government offices which resulted in moving those families to safer area. What I mean here is that if the knowledge wasn’t delivered to those families and to the government offices these people would not move to the safer place. National companies helped a lot. It was unexpected outcome but this is what made the project more successful than similar research projects’ (Interviewee 6).

Therefore, researchers propose the competence of stakeholders, particularly with respect to understanding readiness of recipients to accept the outcomes and their ability to benefit from the project is another critical success factor for international development projects.

- **Troubleshooting**

An unstable project environment increases the risk of having problems occur during implementation phase. A functional structure of both organisations ‘A’ and ‘B’, therefore matrix structure of project teams were seen as ‘distracting’ from concentrating on project activities. This is evident in the explored project in organisation ‘B’ where respondent 7 said that initial delay caused rescheduling and overload to team members. Moreover, respondent 8 stated that many activities were deleted due to failure to solve the initial delay. Furthermore, interviewees add that it can negatively affect monitoring and control of the project implementation. Therefore, it is difficult to anticipate problematic issues and if they occur they are not being dealt immediately. Interviewee 7 states ‘one problem causes another’ and as many projects involve stakeholders during implementation phase ‘pointing fingers to each others starts soon enough, which is another problem’. This can lead to conflicts and decrease in team spirit. Interviewee 2 adds ‘money are allocated once and no additional funds can be allocated to solve the problems’, while interviewee 1 states ‘projects are planned with little contingency’. Moreover, interviewee 3 says ‘Identifying the root of the problem is important, dealing with it as fast as possible is critical’.

- **Competent Project Manager/Project Leader**

According to the CSFs proposed for IDPs by Do and Tun (2008), competency of project manger is only critical on closing stage of the project. This conclusion triggered our interest during the preliminary phase of the study as seems to contravene the traditional project management literature where a ‘competent project manager’ or ‘project leader’ is usually perceived as important for projects (Pinto and Slevin, 1987; Pinto and Kharbanda, 1996; Bellasi and Tukel, 1996, Westerveld, 2003; Dvir et al., 1998). The importance of this factor was most evident in questionnaire responses due
to the more specific discussion of individual projects. It was found that as Kazakhstan develops, more and more projects are about soft issues. Therefore, project managers are expected to be able to deal with politically, psychologically, and socio-culturally sensitive issues of such projects. Moreover, internal issues such as selecting qualified team members, training interns or volunteers, working with different reporting systems (rules and procedures) requires a strong guidance and leadership and such issues are common in IDPs in Kazakhstan.

4.3.1 The final set of critical success factors for IDP implementation in Kazakhstan identified by this research

In summary this research supports the critical success factors proposed by Do and Tun (2008) and based on an analysis of the data from this study we proposed additional factors that are particularly relevant to delivery of ID projects in Kazakhstan. The table below summarises the final set of critical success factors defined from our study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Critical success factors for implementation phase of IDPs in Kazakhstan</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Adequate supports of stakeholders</td>
<td>Applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>High commitment to project goals/objectives</td>
<td>Applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Competent project management team</td>
<td>Applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Adequate resources and support</td>
<td>Applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Compatible rules and procedures</td>
<td>Applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Effective consultations with all stakeholders.</td>
<td>Applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Minimum difficulties in transition from planning to implementation phase</td>
<td>Added</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Competence of stakeholders</td>
<td>Added</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Troubleshooting</td>
<td>Added</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Competent Project Manager/Project Leader</td>
<td>Added</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11. Critical success factors for implementation phase of IDPs in Kazakhstan
**SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 4:**

This chapter aimed to provide findings and discussion for both semi-structured interviews and the questionnaires. First, the interviews conducted revealed that in organization ‘A’:

1. There is no set of CSFs developed rather the selection or proposal of the projects is planned according to international and national strategy, mainly in accordance with UN’s Millennium Development Goals (MDG).

2. There is no official organisation-wide evaluation system for assessing projects success.

Moreover, with regard to extent of presence Do and Tun’s CSFs for implementation phase in organization ‘A’:

- **Adequate stakeholder support**: was described as ‘good to have’, but most projects are not supported by stakeholders during the implementation phase.

- **High commitment to project goals/objectives**: soft characteristic of IDPs usually result in debates such as the necessity of such projects, the readiness of society, which detracts from the commitment to project goals and objectives.

- **Competent project management team**: was rated as ‘highly desirable’ but it is hard to realize due to reasons such as, change/drop-out of the team members with long/delayed the implementation phase.

- **Adequate resources and support**: was described as critical since allocating sufficient resource within organization ‘A’, that has a functional structure and small number of employees, is difficult.

- **Compatible rules and procedures**: are critical since IDP implementation often involves organisations with different procedures, rules and policies, which may lead to excess bureaucratic work, and consequently to delays in project implementation.

- **Effective consultations with all stakeholders**: interviewees stated that there is little or no communication with stakeholders during implementation phase unless they are directly involved in project activities.

Second, the findings and discussion from questionnaires revealed the following in organization ‘B’:

- **Adequate stakeholder support**: ‘providing access to technical expertise’ and ‘regular meetings’ with the project team were rated as the most persistent, whereas the assistance provided for ‘extra resources’ and ‘project procedures’ as the poorest way of stakeholder support.

- **High commitment to project goals/objectives**: two thirds (%74) of the respondents noted that project team members internalized the goals and objectives of the project, whereas, the rest of respondents stated that there were problems in day-to-day tactics and work packages were not clearly comprehended by each team member.
‘Competent project management team’: management of ‘scope’ ‘quality’ and ‘budget’ were rated as being performed better in relation to other project management functions by the team members, which implies the orthodoxy of the ‘Iron Triangle’ within the organization B.

‘Adequate resources and support’: more than half of the respondents (%55.5) stated that the project had access to sufficient human capital, while, the rest (%44.5) stated that there was scarcity of e.g. administrative and technical staff, team leadership.

‘Compatible rules and procedures’: ‘inadequate technical expertise’ and ‘different cultural backgrounds’ were rated as the easiest, while, ‘different languages and legal infrastructures’ as the most difficult challenges to overcome when implementing IDPs.

‘Effective consultations with all stakeholders’: consultations with the ‘project coordinator’ and the ‘project team’ were rated as the most effective, whereas, with the ‘national government bodies’ and ‘population at large’ as the least effective during IDP implementation phase.
In this final chapter of the master thesis, a summary of our research results are presented. We also remind the reader of the limitations of the study and propose recommendations for further research.

The literature on effective implementation of international development projects is limited to only few studies, most of which have taken place in African countries. On the other hand, the topic of critical success factors has been researched for approximately half a century and offers rich foundation on project and project success issues. The literature distinguishes between success criteria and success factors. Success criteria, as defined by Lim and Mohammed (1999, p.243), are ‘the set of principles or standards by which project success can be judged’. Whereas, success factors are the set of circumstances, facts, or influences which contribute to the project outcomes’ (Lim and Mohammed, 1999, p.243). Nevertheless, this research is concerned with critical success factors. Two major findings were identified in the literature review conducted by this research and presented in Section 2. First, according to the literature, defining critical success factors can provide much need assistance to a project manager in navigating through turbulent project environment to a successful achievement of project goals and objectives. Second, there is no one set of critical success factors. On the contrary, academicians agree that the critical success factors vary from company to company, industry to industry and country to country, etc. Therefore, this study aimed to explore and identify the critical success factors of the development projects implemented in Kazakhstan.

The research was informed by the framework suggested by Do and Tun (2008) as well as by synthesis of other related literature. The study was limited to the implementation phase of the international development projects due to the characteristics of IDPs explained in more details in sections 2.2.4 of this thesis. Briefly, one of the main reasons for such decision is that often planning and designing of the project is done by donor organisation and governmental offices, however the implementation of the project is done by local project management team. Therefore, the project manager rarely participates in the initiation and design phases of international development projects.

To provide a better picture of the situation with the international development projects in Kazakhstan, we chose to conduct surveys in two organisations, code named ‘A’ and ‘B’, using three survey techniques, namely questionnaires, semi-structured interviews. Organisation ‘A’ is a donor organisation with many development projects and experienced project managers and teams. Organisation ‘B’ on the other hand is a joint-stock company that won the grant to implement the project. The project studied in thesis was the first international development project managed by organisation ‘B’.

The research has been structured in a manner where the findings and discussion from interviews conducted in organisation ‘A’ provide more general results, covering many projects discussed with experienced project managers and an overview of the field and overall situation with IDP in Kazakhstan. Then the research is followed by
comprehensive findings and discussions on a single project from organisation ‘B’. The survey of organisation ‘B’ included not only project team but also other stakeholders involved during the implementation phase, such as consultants or volunteers. This provided more detailed information regarding project success and events that occurred during the implementation of the project. Analytical results and recommendations were based on findings from both organisations. The research did aim not to compare or contrast two organisations but to get the better picture by studying both types of organisation, a donor (organisation ‘A’) and a recipient (organisation ‘B’).

5.1 Answering the research question

In order to understand the main research question - *What are the critical success factors in implementation of international development projects in Kazakhstan?* - the research objectives are restated as follows:

**Research objective 1:**

To test applicability of Do and Tun’s IDP implementation CSFs within Kazakhstan context.

The set of critical success factors provided by Do and Tun (2008) for implementation phase of IDP have been tested for applicability by questionnaire in organisation ‘B’ and semi-structured interviews in organisation ‘A’. Even though the small variation occurred during research, all the factors were deemed as important for success of an international development project in Kazakhstan. A short summary is provided on findings on each CSF of Do and Tun model (2008).

- **Adequate supports of stakeholders**

It was identified that this factor is ‘good to have’ however it is not an easy task to approach stakeholders as many projects concern sensitive issues therefore the risk of gaining ‘opposition’ from stakeholders is equally high. However, when external stakeholders, i.e. governmental offices or population, are involved and interested in the implementation phase, it was mentioned that the projects team becomes more motivated and such projects are perceived more successful than the ones who do not get public interest or support by project team. Support by stakeholders is usually showed in terms of providing expertise or trust rather than resources.

- **High commitment to project goals/objectives**

According to practitioners in the field of IDP, lack of commitment to project including its goals and objectives is a major obstacle to success of a project (Youker, 1999). Results of the study are consistent with literature as the findings show that there indeed exists lack of commitment to the project goals and objectives. However, in projects where the goals and objectives are clear and well-communicated the probability of successful outcome was deemed to be higher.

- **Competent project management team**

This factor was suggested by the literature as critical to success of a projects, however often overlooked (Pinto and Slevin, 1987). The findings support the above argument, as it was
stated to be highly desirable by project managers but rare in reality of international development project implementation in Kazakhstan. Often project team views success of project as satisfying the classic ‘iron triangle’ criteria. Thus, the project teams often overlook other management criteria such as management of communication, schedule and risk. It was noted that project team is important to project success however the competent project leader is of more criticality with regards to international development projects. Competent project manager/leader was proposed by researchers as an addition to the set of CSFs for IDPs in Kazakhstan.

- **Adequate resources and support**

It was identified that scarce resources were a common threat to projects undertaken in both organisations surveyed. However, in organisation ‘A’ project managers expressed awareness of such issue and mentioned attempts to approach external stakeholders for support in projects undertaken. However, the results in organisation ‘B’ were almost fifty-fifty, with one half of respondents stated that the project was provided with sufficient resources and the other half stated that the project was lacking in administrative staff, budgeting, technical skills and legal expertise. Nevertheless, the factor was deemed as critical to project success as even in projects discussed lack of resources provides alarming outcomes affecting motivation and team spirit among other factors. Therefore, influencing project success probability negatively

- **Compatible rules and procedures**

Lack of bureaucratic barriers is seems to be a dream of project managers working in international development field. Each international development project has more stakeholders to report than traditional project. Most of the donor organisations have specific rules and procedures that should be followed providing obstacles in project implementation. Language was found to be the most common barrier in IDPs, different legal infrastructure was perceived as most difficult barrier to overcome and different cultural background was alleged to be the easiest complication to overcome.

- **Effective consultations with all stakeholders**

The findings clearly show that insufficient communication can affect the project outcome negatively. The characteristic of an international development project is that it has more stakeholders than traditional. Therefore it is more difficult to achieve effective communication with both internal and external stakeholders. In case with organisation ‘B’, attempts made to consult and communicate with certain external stakeholders were perceived as not effective. The most difficult communication and consultations were with national government and the easiest communication link was with the project coordinator. Results from organisation ‘A’ are in line as respondents stated that there was no or little communication with external stakeholders during implementation phase of an IDP. However, the necessity for a more effective consultation was desirable by both organisations. It is more evident in case with organisation ‘B’ where findings show that ineffective consultation/ communication with an external stakeholder, i.e. national government, resulted in approximately 5 month delay in the project implementation and caused subsequent issues with overloading, conflicts and decrease in motivation of team members.
Research objective 2:
To identify other critical success factors that are specific to Kazakhstan IDP environment.

All the critical success factors identified by Do and Tun (2008) were supported by this research. Nonetheless four new critical success factors were identified by analysing the results from both interviews and questionnaires. The four new factors are:

- Minimum difficulties in transition from planning to implementation phase
- Competence of stakeholders
- Troubleshooting
- Competent project manager/project leader.

These additional factors were fully described in section 4.3 of this study. The adjusted model to include the new CSFs has been presented in section 4.3.1. Additionally, a brief overview of general issues in project environment was provided, several problematic areas were established and recommendations were proposed by researchers in section 4.3.

The limitations of the current research and recommendations for further research are proposed below.

5.2 Research limitations

This section outlines the limitations encountered during the conduct of the current study, as well as, it highlights the extent to which its results might be applicable within the project management knowledge area. Then, since the research scope together with the research methodology constitute the backbones of this study, limitations of this study are explored as those stemming from the research scope and from research methodology.

- Scope of study involves CSF identification for implementation phase of IDPs in Kazakhstan:

This study is focused on identifying CSFs of a specific project, IDPs, and in one country context, Kazakhstan. Therefore, the findings of this research can not be readily generalized to other sectors and project types in Kazakhstan. In addition, the findings of this study might not be applicable to IDPs within other developing country contexts as well.

In addition to this, the focus on the implementation phase of IDPs constitutes another boundary for scope of this research study. Due to time restrictions imposed, we decided to focus only on CSF identification of one phase, the implementation phase. Therefore, it should be taken into consideration that the findings form this study apply only the implementation phase of an IDP within Kazakhstan. Nevertheless, these limitations can be addressed by further research. Therefore, in the following section of ‘Recommendation for further research’ these restricting areas are discussed in depth.
• **Research Methodology**

**Biased sample**

From the statistical point of view the sampling procedure within this study raises the possibility of a number of biases that can detract from the quality of this research. First of all, the sample for semi-structured interviews in organization ‘A’, in which researchers have acquaintances, was constructed based on the researchers’ access. In other words, the researchers interviewed those that replied positively to the interview request asked by the acquaintances of the researchers. Time constraints prevented researchers from being able to interview those involved in other IDP implementing organizations in Kazakhstan.

Similarly, the sample for self-administered questionnaire in organization ‘B’, in which researchers also have acquaintances, was constructed again based on availability of access to respondents. The project team members, academic consultants, teaching and administrative staff who participated to the project s (subject to the questionnaire) were the target respondents. Random sampling could not be applied in this situation as the researchers can evaluate only those questionnaires which completed by respondents. This is an a type of ‘self selected’ sample, which Ticehurst and Veal evaluate as (1999) unavoidable when conducting a mail questionnaire. Although researchers attempted to bypass this limitation following suggestions of Ticehurst and Veal (1999), that involve maximizing the response rate by increasing the initial sample size, 188 e-mails that have been sent out, it is still highly possible that some of the stakeholders were not reached.

In addition, the low response rate is another issue threatening validity of the research findings. Since, despite the 188 e-mails being sent out only 28 were reached, that is approximately 15%, neither the statistical assumptions of central limit theorem (Berenson *et al.*, 2002) nor the most of the response rate limits set in the literature were satisfied (Sekaran, 2003; Ticehurst and Veal, 1999). Although there are also many researchers that accept this level of response rate (Bryman and Bell, 2003; Saunders, *et al.*, 2003; Comley, 2000), based on statistical principals, it might be doubtful to generalize findings of this research to extend to whole IDP implementation process in other developing countries.

**Data analysis technique**

The analysis of qualitative research technique was subject to possible biases as well. Due to geographical distance all interviewees were interviewed via phone and the communication was handled in the Russian language. Therefore, while translating and then transcribing the interview into English errors might have occurred due to incorrect translation of some terms.

In addition to this, the information gathered for this study involved past and present experiences of the interviewees. Thus, interviewee might have failed to recall some important events regarding research context that occurred in the past. However, this limitation was attempted to be minimised by the fact that several interviews have
been conducted to overcome this possible ‘recall bias’ by respondents in organization ‘A’

5.3 Recommendations for further research

This section proposes pathways for coming studies on IDP CSFs subject area. In the following section the recommendations not only provide a means for improving results of current study but suggest a basis for further research studies in this subject field.

- **Extend it to whole Project Life Cycle (PLC)**

Due to the time restrictions, researchers identified CSFs for the implementation phase in Kazakhstan. Therefore, further investigation might be done either for other PLC phase or for the whole PLC. Filling this research gap will enable project managers with a more comprehensive and sound guidance when implementing IDPs in Kazakhstan.

- **Apply within another developing country context**

Although the findings of this study might not be generalized and be valid necessarily within another country context, the structure and design of the study lends itself to repetition to some extent. In addition to Do and Tun’s (2008) set of CSFs, the CSFs identified by researchers of this study can be tested for their applicability and validity within an another developing country context. Such a study will not only reinforce the findings of this study together with Do and Tun’s (2008) but also it may identify other sets of CSFs that have not been identified in either study.

- **Conduct a more comprehensive research study**

Time restrictions imposed affected the design of this research study drastically. Since if adequate time was available, researchers might have conducted a longitudinal rather than a cross sectional study with variety of data collection techniques over a bigger sample size. For example, a longitudinal study over a big sample with multiple case studies would have yielded more insights regarding the research subject area and lend itself for generalisation. Thus such a study would provide an important contribution to the current literature by providing knowledge to the project management theory in developing economies.
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Westerveld, E 2003, ‘The Project Excellence Model: linking success criteria and


APPENDIX 1

(Brief overview of long-term strategic goals of Kazakhstan, taken from national strategy, “Kazakhstan 2030: Prosperity, security, and improved living standards for all Kazakhs”)

LONG-TERM PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIES OF REALIZATION THEREOF

THE MAIN THING IN THE WORLD OF OURS IS NOT WHERE WE STAND BUT RATHER IN WHAT DIRECTION WE ADVANCE

Holmes

For our country to achieve the prospects I mentioned above we have to implement the following long-term priorities:

1. NATIONAL SECURITY: Ensure development of Kazakhstan as an independent sovereign state preserving its complete territorial integrity.

2. DOMESTIC POLITICAL STABILITY AND CONSOLIDATION OF THE SOCIETY: Safeguard and strengthen domestic political stability and national unity. It would enable Kazakhstan put the national strategy into practice in the course of the current and the upcoming decade.

3. ECONOMIC GROWTH BASED ON AN OPEN MARKET ECONOMY WITH HIGH LEVEL OF FOREIGN INVESTMENTS AND INTERNAL SAVINGS. Gain realistic, stable and steadily growing rates of economic growth.


5. POWER RESOURCES: Effectively utilize power resources of Kazakhstan through rapid increase in extracting and exporting oil and gas with the aim of gaining revenues which would enhance stable economic growth and improvement of living standards of the people.

6. INFRACTRUCTURE, MORE PARTICULARLY TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION: Develop these key sectors in such a way that they add to strengthening of national security, political stability and economic growth.

7. PROFESSIONAL STATE: Establish an effective and up-to-date corps of civil servants and state-owned formations of Kazakhstan loyal to the cause they serve to and capable of acting as representatives of the people in achieving our priorities. For each of these long-term priorities we must elaborate and consistently implement a special strategy concentrating our efforts on specific actions outlined in one-year, three-year and, finally, five-year plans. These long-term priorities must serve the purpose of focusing the efforts exerted by both the state and our citizens, they must make the basis of criteria in forming the budget of the country and personnel policy.

## APPENDIX 2

### LIST OF MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS & TARGETS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target 1:</strong> Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target 2:</strong> Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target 3:</strong> Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target 4:</strong> Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005 and at all levels of education no later than 2015</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Goal 4: Reduce child mortality</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target 5:</strong> Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal 5: Improve maternal health</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target 6:</strong> Reduce by three-quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target 7:</strong> Halt, by 2015, and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target 8:</strong> Halt, by 2015, and begin to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target 9:</strong> Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target 10:</strong> Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target 11:</strong> Achieve, by 2020, a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX 3

### 2009 LIST OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Afghanistan</th>
<th>Dominica</th>
<th>Namibia</th>
<th>Mauritius</th>
<th>Egypt, Arab Rep.</th>
<th>St. Vincent and the Grenadines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>Dominican Rep.</td>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>Mayotte</td>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>São Tomé and Principe</td>
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<td>Mexico</td>
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<td>Moldova</td>
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<td>Armenia</td>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>Palau</td>
<td>Montenegro</td>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>West Bank and Gaza</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azerbaijan</td>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>Panama</td>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>Swaziland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>Gabon</td>
<td>Libya</td>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>Maldives</td>
<td>Russian Federation</td>
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<td>Benin</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>Mauritania</td>
<td>Kyrgyz Republic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhutan</td>
<td>Grenada</td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>Turkmenistan</td>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>Macedonia, FYR</td>
</tr>
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<td>Bolivia</td>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>Romania</td>
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<td>Guinea</td>
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<td>Guinea</td>
<td>Comoros</td>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>Guinea-Bissau</td>
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<td>Guinea-Bissau</td>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>Uruguay</td>
<td>Guyana</td>
<td>Lao PDR</td>
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<td>Brazil</td>
<td>Guyana</td>
<td>Samoa</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>Haiti</td>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
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<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>Haiti</td>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>Timor-Leste</td>
<td>Honduras</td>
<td>Central African Republic</td>
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<td>Burkina Faso</td>
<td>Honduras</td>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>Togo</td>
<td>Côte d'Ivoire</td>
<td>Yemen, Rep.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>Croatia</td>
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<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>Seychelles</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>Cuba</td>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cameroon</td>
<td>Iran, Islamic Rep.</td>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
<td>Iran, Islamic Rep.</td>
<td>Djibouti</td>
<td>Gambia, The</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cape Verde</td>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>Solomon Islands</td>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>Dominica</td>
<td>Georgia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonga</td>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>Dominican Rep.</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chad</td>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>Syrian Arab Republic</td>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>Grenada</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>Congo, Rep.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>St. Kitts and Nevis</td>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>Lesotho</td>
<td>Costa Rica</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>Kiribati</td>
<td>St. Lucia</td>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
<td>Liberia</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 4

- QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN
  • Project Role and Experience; Questions 1, 2, & 3
  • Adequate Stakeholder Support; Question 4
  • High commitment to project goals/objectives; Questions 5, 6, 7, & 8
  • Competent Project Management Team; Question 9
  • Adequate resources and support; Questions 10, 11, & 12
  • Compatible rules and procedures; Question 13
  • Effective consultation with all stakeholders; Questions 14, 15

APPENDIX 5

Questionnaire

Thank you for your interest in participating in this survey.

The purpose of this study is to identify factors which lead to success of International Development Projects implemented in Kazakhstan. Please note that this study is only focused on the implementation phase of the International Development Project.

This questionnaire is a part of master thesis in Umea University and is completely anonymous. It contains 15 questions and should take approximately 20 minutes to complete. If you have any concerns about questions or your privacy, please feel free to contact us at ainel_k@yahoo.com or vj20@hw.ac.uk.

1. Would you please describe your role in the implementation of this project? Please check all that apply.
   □ Steering committee member
   □ Project manager
   □ Project coordinator
   □ Project manager assistant
   □ Responsible for finance
☐ Responsible for administrative stuff
☐ Responsible for monitoring and control of project work packages
☐ Responsible for communication and reporting
☐ Consultant on academic issues
☐ I was not in the team but benefited from the project activities.

2. Have you performed similar roles in other projects?
   ☐ Yes
   ☐ No

   If you answered YES to the previous question – how many projects like this one have you been involved in the past?
   ☐ I have been involved in similar project 1 time before
   ☐ I have been involved in similar project 2-5 times before
   ☐ I have been involved in similar project more than 5 times before

3. Were you involved with the full implementation of the project?
   ☐ Yes
   ☐ No

   If you answered NO to the previous question – with which aspects were you involved? Please check all that apply.
   ☐ In activities towards facilitation and development of academic staff
   ☐ In activities towards development of undergraduate education curricula in accordance with the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)
   ☐ In activities towards development of postgraduate education curricula in accordance with the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)
   ☐ In activities towards development and implementation of appropriate quality assurance policies and procedures in accordance with European Quality Standards
   ☐ Others (please, specify)

4. In what ways did the stakeholders support the project team during implementation? Please, rank the following according to 1 - no support at all, 7 - highest support and N/A - not applicable.

| Regular meetings with the project team to address problems | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Assistance with extra resources when required | | | | | | | | |
| Assistance with procedures and protocols | | | | | | | | |
| Troubleshooting on behalf of the project team | | | | | | | | |
| Providing access to technical expertise | | | | | | | | |
| Trust/freedom in decision-making process | | | | | | | | |
5. In your opinion did all members of the project team fully understand the goals and objectives of the project when the implementation period started?
- Yes
- No

If NO, which aspects were not clearly understood? Please check all that apply.
- Tactics and work packages
- Time schedule
- Activity schedule
- Roles and responsibilities
- Short-term goals and objectives
- Long-term goals objectives

6. In your estimation, how long did it take for all members of the project team to fully understand the goals and objectives of the project related to project implementation? ___ days/weeks/months
- never fully understood

7. In your opinion were the goals and objectives of the project clearly communicated to stakeholders (other than members of the project team) when their involvement began?
- Yes
- No

If NO, with which aspects were not clearly communicated? Please check all that apply.
- Tactics and work packages
- Time schedule
- Activity schedule
- Roles and responsibilities
- Short-term goals and objectives
- Long-term goals objectives

8. In your opinion did all stakeholders fully understand how the project contributed to the overall goal (of the country, organisation etc) and why the project was important?
- Yes
- No

If NO, which stakeholders were not given that knowledge or understanding? Please check all that apply.
- Donor organisation
9. From your perspective how well the project management team performed the following functions? Please, rank the following according to 1 - did not perform at all, 7 - performed perfectly and N/A - not applicable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>N/A</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manage project scope</td>
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<td>Manage project schedules</td>
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<td>Manage project budget</td>
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<td>Manage deliver of quality</td>
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<td>Manage project risk</td>
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<td>Manage people and relationships</td>
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<td>Manage communications with all key stakeholders (including the project team)</td>
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<td>Other – please specify and rank</td>
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If you ranked any of these functions under 3 would you please briefly explain why?

_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

10. Were sufficient resources (people) assigned to the project?
    ☐ Yes
    ☐ No

If NO which key roles were lacking? Please, check all that apply.
    ☐ Project team leader
    ☐ Project coordinator
    ☐ Technical staff
    ☐ Administrative staff
    ☐ Others, please specify ________________

11. Was the budget allocated adequate to deliver the project scope?
    ☐ Yes
    ☐ No
If NO, which items of scope had to be omitted in order to balance the budget? Please check all that apply.

- [ ] Technical assistance
- [ ] Administrative assistance
- [ ] Excess bureaucratic work
- [ ] Team building activities, day off activities
- [ ] Other – please specify

12. What extra support would you have liked to have had from senior management or senior executives associated with the project?

a. _______________________________

b. _______________________________

c. _______________________________

13. We understand that you are dealing with a number of large organisations such the European Commission and the UN. On a scale of 1-7 (1 - being very difficult, 7 - being perfectly easy and N/A - being not applicable) how difficult was it to synchronise your procedures with these organisations?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To synchronise conflicts stemming from....</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>N/A</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Different languages</td>
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<td>Different legal infrastructures</td>
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<td>Different cultural backgrounds</td>
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<tr>
<td>Incompetent staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inadequate technical expertise</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inadequate administration</td>
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<td>Other – please, specify and rank</td>
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14. At the beginning of the implementation period or when particular stakeholders became involved, how effective were consultations with those stakeholders? Please rank according to the following structure: 1 - being not effective at all, 7 - being highly effective and N/A - being not applicable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholders</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>N/A</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Donor organisation</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Other participating universities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Administrative staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
15. If you ranked any below 5 in the previous question, then what were the main reasons for less than highly effective consultation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholders</th>
<th>Reason(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Donor organisation</td>
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<td>National government</td>
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<td>Other participating universities</td>
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<td>Project team</td>
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<td>Steering committee</td>
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<td>Project coordinator</td>
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<td>Teaching staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Population at large</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other – please specify</td>
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</table>

Thank you for your time and your opinions!