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Stakeholder Management in Mega Construction Projects

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CITC GLOBAL
Construction in the 21st Century



Introduction & Background



Framework

Mega Construction Projects (MCPs) in Greece →
large scale, high complexity, multiple stakeholders



Problem

Persistent inefficiencies and gaps in
stakeholder management practices



Aim

Improve stakeholder management effectiveness through empirical insights
for mega construction projects

Research Question 1 – “Challenges?”

What are the main
challenges in stakeholder
management?

Research Question 2 – “How to improve?”

How can lessons learned
improve future project
practices?

Introduction & Background

What Defines an MCP?

Mega construction projects (MCPs) attract public and political interest, critically impacting society, environment, and economy. The most important criterion is budget, typically exceeding €0.5 billion.

Additional characteristics include high complexity at technical, organizational, and managerial aspects, plus a considerable number of stakeholders with varying interests.

Why They're Different

MCPs differ from traditional projects in scale and extreme complexity—both technical and human. They are not simply scaled-up versions of smaller projects.

Managing stakeholders and considering their needs is a complex process but simultaneously an essential part of project management and a critical success factor.

Research Methodology

01

Qualitative Research

Semi-structured interviews with seven managing stakeholders in Greek MCPs.

03

Data Analysis

Interview responses grouped into 19 codes, then categorized into three groups: Skills, Influencing Factors, and Management Methods.

02

Grounded Theory Approach

Inductive methodology with continuous interaction between data collection and processing, allowing empirical data to guide analysis.

04

Phase-Based Framework

Results organized by project phase (initiation, planning, execution, monitoring & controlling, closure) for segmented analysis.

Data Collection & Participant Profiles

Semi-Structured Interviews

- Open-ended questions with uniform protocol
- Flexibility to probe deeper where needed
- Rich qualitative data with contextual depth



Participant Characteristics

7	17+
Senior Professionals	Years Experience
4 men, 3 women	Managing MCPs

€180M

Project Budget
Minimum threshold

All participants had technical academic backgrounds, postgraduate studies, and stakeholder management involvement. Anonymity preserved throughout.

Results

Skills

- Interpersonal communication
- Social skills
- Scientific background
- Use of expertise
- Environmental awareness



Influencing Factors

- Relations with local and public authorities
- Cultural sensitivity
- Flexibility and alternative planning
- Ensuring satisfaction of key stakeholders

Stakeholders' management methods

- Guidance/ Training
- Two-way communication
- Acknowledging stakeholder influence
- Support from Upper Echelon
- Standardized corporate processes



Results - Skills

Stakeholder Management Across Project Phases

Analysis of 19 interview codes mapped according to the PMBOK phases

Initiation

Skills: Build trust and early relationships

“Building trust and understanding between the project team and stakeholders is a key component for positively influencing the outcome of the project itself”

1

2

3

4

Planning

Skills: Adapt social skills to project contexts.

Most interviewees highlighted the uniqueness of each project as something unaffected by management tools and methodologies

Execution

Skills: Apply technical expertise & have scientific background

“Experience alone is not sufficient without knowledge, nor is knowledge alone sufficient without experience”

Monitoring

Skills: Maintain environmental awareness

“fear of complaints and damage to the company's reputation”

Results - Key Influencing Factors

1

Relations with Local Authorities – Initiation Phase

Early community engagement prevents risks. Informational letters and calls from responsible people distributed from project start to reduce negative publicity.

2

Relations with Public Authorities – Planning Phase

"The biggest obstacle was the public authorities." Small compromises necessary. Better to plan proactively how to deal with delays than wait for problems to occur.

3

Cultural Differences – Execution Phase

Language and behavioral impacts on collaboration. "Common communication code and terminology must be established, which will be used by all stakeholders."

4

Alternative Plans – Execution Phase

Flexible timelines to adapt to unforeseen events. Companies took corrective actions with people who could assist more in managing stakeholders, though not initially foreseen.

5

Stakeholder Satisfaction – Monitor & Controlling Phase

"Conflict of interests – you had to choose, but in the end, you had to satisfy everyone." Those who directly impact the project must be prioritized and satisfied.

Results - Stakeholder Management Methods

Initiation Phase

- **Guidance/Training:** Step-by-step handbooks save time on communication later
- **Two-Way Communication:** Direct discussions preferred over one-way information flow
- **Corporate Processes:** Guidelines for stakeholder identification help teams

Planning Phase

- **Recognition of Importance:** "A vital part of the project, the project doesn't proceed without them"
- **Empirical Method:** Relying on experience when formal tools absent

Execution Phase

- **Trial and Error:** "We hit a wall, learned, and moved on"
- **Upper Management Support:** Involving senior executives when PM experience limited
- **Documentation:** Keeping updated stakeholder lists

- **Critical Gap Identified:** Post-project reviews often missing. No documentation of management processes that could be utilized in future projects with similar needs.

Findings - Key Improvements



Early Stakeholder Involvement

The primary challenge identified in the research findings was the inability to identify all stakeholders at the start of the project. This recognition is completed before the start of construction, meaning two phases later



Continuous Engagement

The developed communication techniques should be different for managing internal and external stakeholders, but the ultimate goal will be to create a trust-based environment.



Training & Guidance

In corporate environment there are neither processes nor guidelines defined for managing stakeholders in MCPs, so, the two more commonly used techniques are the simple trial and error method and the empirical management



Lessons Learned

Post project evaluation of the stakeholder management in a MCP is missing. No action took place in the closing of the projects.

Conclusion

Key Takeaways

The proposed framework emphasizes that stakeholder management in MCPs is fundamental about **managing human relationships**. Success requires combining project manager competencies, early involvement for SP with structured organizational processes and continuous stakeholder engagement throughout all project phases.

Practical Implications

Post-project evaluation at closure captures lessons.

Stakeholder satisfaction depends on ongoing communication and trust.

Future Research

Develop stakeholder management manual for construction firms. Explore behavioral and relational dynamics in engagement.



Questions & Answers

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